

"THE JERUSALEM CHURCH OF
CHRIST: A PROPHET - HEALING
INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN KENYA"

BY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, the late Rufinus Nandi Musiko who passed away on 27/7/90. Through his encouragement and love for education, he inspired me to work hard. May the Lord rest his soul in eternal peace.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	African Divine Church
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AICN	African Israel Church Nineveh
COB	Church of Bethlehem
COBEA	Church of Bethlehem East Africa
COG	Church of God
CPK	Church Province of Kenya
EALB	East African Literature Bureau
JC	Jerusalem Church
JCC	Jerusalem Church of Christ
LM	Legio Maria
NCKK	National Council of the Churches of Kenya
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PAG	Pentecostal Assemblies of God
PAOC	Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Mummy - This term is used by all JCC members while referring to the foundress. The term means that the foundress is regarded as the spiritual mother of all JCC members. When a small 'm' is used in this context, the term 'mummy' then refers to all married women in the JCC. However this term 'mummy' is restricted to a married couple in this Church and all husbands are supposed to call their wives 'mummy' and not by any other name.

Daddy - This term is used by all JCC members while referring to the husband of the foundress. The term means that the husband of the foundress is regarded as the spiritual father of all JCC members. When a small 'd' is used in this context, the term 'daddy' then refers to all married men in the JCC. However, this term daddy is restricted to a married couple in this Church and all wives are supposed to call their husbands 'daddy' and not by any other name.

The Children of Mummy

This term means that JCC members regard themselves as children of the same spiritual family with one spiritual mother and father. This term is always used by JCC members while referring to one another.

Jua Kali - This term refers to either 'the children of mummy' or their places of worship. Worship in the JCC takes place in the open air due to lack of a spacious Church to accommodate all JCC members. Therefore, JCC members have to bear the unfavourable weather conditions especially, the hot sun as implied by the Kiswahili word "Jua Kali".

Revelations - These are oracles or visions that the prophetess is made to see and to declare to the people. This term also refers to the charismatic gift of prophecy which enables the prophetess to see through peoples lives and to predict or foretell forthcoming events. She claims that these revelations or visions come from God.

Registered Members

- This refers to JCC members who have registered in this Church and who regard this Church as their Christian denomination.

Unregisterd Members

- This category of membership is only found at the JCC headquarters where the foundress allows people from other Christian denominations, religions and creeds to worship alongside her registered members. The majority of these people come to the JCC headquarters so that they may be healed from their disparate social, physical and

mental ailments by Mary Akatsa.

Members of the JCC

- This term refers to both registered and unregistered members at the JCC headquarters. The term implies that the mission of the foundress is universal in spite of this Church being a Christian denomination with registered members.

Okello Pingo

This was a nickname used by the Prophetess while referring to the JCC Secretary at the headquarters. Mary Akatsa is a humorous character and she has the habit of even nicknaming her members. Subsequently, JCC secretaries both at the branch and headquarters levels are usually referred to as 'Okello Pingo' by JCC members.

Prophetess

- It is a title used in the Bible to designate a female prophet. A prophet is a person who teaches religion and is or claims to be, inspired by God. In the Bible, a number of women are referred to by the designation 'prophetess', but little is told of the nature and function of the office. In 2 Kings 22/14 for instance, King Josiah consulted a prophetess Hulda when a book of the law was found on the occasion of the temple restoration. In the NT, Luke 2/36 talks of the prophetess Anna who recognized Jesus as the Messiah. In this context, the foundress of the

JCC is designated 'a prophetess' because she is or claims to be inspired by God and teaches religion in her own Church.

Charisma - 'Charisma' or 'charism' is a spiritual gift or talent granted by God to the recipient not primarily for his or her own sake but for the benefit of others. In 1 Corinthians 12/7 Paul defines 'charisma' as the manifestation of the spirit for the common good, thus for the benefit of others. There are various charismatic gifts including prophecy which also involves revelation such as reading of hearts or prediction of future events. Prophesying or revelations in the JCC is the most cherished charismatic gift and it is only the foundress who can prophesy or reveal.

The Church The Church is both a spiritual and visible communion of believers who share common beliefs and practices and strive to continue the mission of Christ on earth. It is hence a collective body of Christians adhering to one particular opinion or form of worship and interested in both the spiritual and material needs of humanity.

The Foundress This term is used to show that the JCC was founded by a woman. Other terms which have been used interchangeably with it are 'prophetess', 'Mummy' or 'Mary Akatsa' (the common names of the foundress).

Prophet - Healing Church

- This term is used to refer to Churches which are called 'Zionist' in South Africa or 'aladura', that is the praying people in West Africa. Elsewhere in West Africa, they are often referred to as the 'Spirit' Churches. However, since the above designations are all either local in use or uncertain and limited in meaning, we require a term that takes account of both basic beliefs, the revelatory and the therapeutic and hence the use of the above double term which expresses the dominant concerns in a simple and concrete manner. In this context, the JCC is presumably a prophet healing independent Church.

Worship

The term 'Worship' expresses the response of a religious person to the Holy as one apprehends it. This includes a person's attitude of submission, devotion, respect and veneration and the acts prompted by this attitude. Worship is made up of 'ritual' and 'ceremonial' aspects. Although these two overlap in common usage hence creating confusion, the 'ritual' aspect of worship refers to the prescribed form of words which constitute an act of worship. On the other hand, the term 'ceremonial' in strict ecclesiastical usage refers to the prescribed and formal actions that constitute

worship. Therefore, worship is made up of a part that is done or actions and a part that is said or words.

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A B S T R A C T

This study is an investigation into the history, beliefs and practices of the Jerusalem Church of Christ. The study describes the historical background and development of the Church including membership composition. Secondly, the study attempts to identify the rituals and their significance. Thirdly, this study analyses the leadership aspect of the Church. Finally, the use of the Bible and the phenomenon of faith healing are also studied.

The Jerusalem Church of Christ was founded by a young Kenyan woman known as Mary Akatsa. The church's headquarters is situated at Kawangware estate in Nairobi and it has opened three branches in the Western province of Kenya. Prophecy and healing are the major attractions to this Church which appeal to people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

The Jerusalem Church of Christ provides for the existential needs of its members who are disoriented by the confusing trends of a Society undergoing rapid changes. Women members are the majority. They have been given leadership roles and thus have been accorded status, dignity and respect.

There are indigenous elements in the worship of this church such as dancing, clapping and ululations. The church has accommodated certain traditional beliefs and practices to make its Kenyan Africans who are the majority 'feel at home'. On the other hand, some traditional practices have been rejected because they contradict the dominant concerns of this church: thus prophecy and faith healing.

Kenya's national language, Kiswahili, is the worship language, but there is much use of "sheng", euphemistic and metaphorical expressions as well at the headquarters; hence services are relevant to the urban environment. Hymns are sung to the African tunes and melodies while the sacredness of the Bible is emphasized. Besides reading and interpretation, the Bible is also used as some kind of a fetish to heal, bless or even curse. Faith healing and revelations have a definite bearing on the leadership aspect of this church. They show that it is only the foundress who can lead this church because she has these charismatic gifts.

God and Jesus are viewed as persons while the Holy Spirit is seen as some kind of a divine force or power. God is pneumatologically viewed as present in power through the Holy Spirit who reveals His will, guides amidst dangers and fills the prophetess with the powers of revelation, prayer and healing.

This study concludes that Akatsa's charismatic powers well compensates her lack of education her youth and her being a woman. Secondly, there is room for growth in this church. Thirdly this church is a christian denomination of a prophet - healing type and not a sect or a cult. Fourthly, this Church has made a substantial theological contribution to christianity in Africa and even beyond by presenting a theology relevant to the people in their own needs, situations and aspirations. Finally, it is the local level that should determine the pastoral approach and methods in the Church.

For the improvement of this church this study makes some suggestions. The foundress should create room for her successor to avoid possible conflicts and schisms after her demise. Members of this Church should be allowed to speak in tongues. The Bishop should assist the foundress in her healing and prophetic services.

The national and even international bodies of the Universal Church should assist this and other similar churches in training their ministers and should also open dialogue with them as part of their ecumenical programme. This church should open branches in other parts of the country. The Church Universal should integrate the Gospel into people's cultures and should also encourage women leadership in its rank and file. Both governmental and non-governmental bodies should assist this church in training counsellors and self reliant instructors since it caters for both existential and spiritual needs of its members.

Finally, there is need for further research into this church. This study did not for instance exhaust the theological aspects. Certain concepts which inspire the teachings in the JCC such as sin, prophecy, salvation, discipleship and the concept of the 'Church' should be studied as a contribution towards a further assessment of this church and other prophet-healing movements.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Statement of the problem

The Jerusalem Church of Christ (JCC) is an indigenous independent Church in Kenya which was founded by a woman. The emergence of independent churches has been perplexing. These churches were seen in the colonial period as reactions against colonialism¹. It is surprising that despite the demise of colonialism, the phenomenon of independency among churches still goes on. There is even schism among these independent churches. In 1979, the Kenya Government refused to register new breakaway churches². Almost ten years after national independence in Kenya, Professor J.S. Mbiti lamented:

Christianity in Kenya has mushroomed denominationally, and the mushroom has now been turned into a messy soup. This excessive denominationalism is absolutely scandalous...³

This shows that there are other factors which are responsible for the emergence of these independent churches. Unravelling these factors is our concern in this study.

Some of these independent churches have been founded in Nairobi which, among other global centres, is increasingly becoming the hub of many religious movements in the world. Such movements have continued to appeal to people from different social, ethnic and racial backgrounds. There is need to study how such independent churches have been influenced by the environment in which they

have been founded and vice versa; and why mission churches are losing members who join these new religious movements in evidently great numbers. In this connection, the Jerusalem Church of Christ will be a case study.

There are independent churches of African initiatives which rely on charismatic leaders⁴. There is need therefore to give an account of their use of the Bible, their belief in and practice of spiritual healing and of prophecy and for the great importance attached to dreams and visions in order to highlight on indigenization aspect of such churches.

Women have played a very important role in African Independent Churches and this has been highlighted by scholars and theologians such as D.B. Barret⁵, G.C. Oosthuizen⁶ and B.G.M. Sundkler⁷ among others. Evidently, there is something of the feminine religious genius which the older churches are not taking advantage of. It is hoped that since this Church has a female superintendent who is also the foundress, a study of it may shed light on movements of a similar nature.

The Independent Churches in general aim at making the gospel of Christ relevant to the Africans in their social, economic and cultural set up. The researcher is interested to find out the extent to which this objective has been achieved in the JCC.

The JCC is a large religious movement with over five thousand registered members and possibly many more unregistered members⁸. This number is big enough to warrant an in-depth study. The JCC has also expanded geographically to Kakamega and Vihiga districts and it has been able to run its affairs without depending on foreign

donors as it is the case with most mission founded churches. Such self-sufficiency aspects of independent churches need to be investigated especially if they have contributed to the growth rather than to the disintegration of these churches.

Apart from newspapers and magazine accounts, detailed information about this Church is not available. This leaves an information gap that needs to be filled. There is need to unearth the historical background of the foundress and of the Church. There is also need to understand these independent churches as religious drives towards the attainment of a satisfying religion. We have already noted that explanations of these independent churches as reactions against colonialism have been unsatisfactory since these have continued to emerge despite the demise of colonialism.

Our major concern in this study will be to discuss these independent churches as religious movements reacting against what they consider to be distorted and unsatisfactory missionary and post-missionary Christianity. An attempt shall be made to study their theological outlook and this shall be our major concern here. However, other aspects of independency such as political, economic, social and psychological shall also be examined in as much as they contribute to the total picture. In a nutshell, we have taken the JCC as a case study of these independent churches mainly because, there exists an information gap which this study hopes to fill.

1.1 Research Objectives

This research has four main objectives:

1. To study the historical background and development of

the JCC paying special attention to the foundress. This will also include the composition and membership of the JCC.

2. To identify the rituals and their significance, including worship, baptism, burial and marriage.
3. To study the leadership aspect with a special reference to charismatism and the place of women in this Church.
4. To study the use of the Bible in the JCC and faith healing. This will also include the concepts of Godhead and eschatology and how the latter influences the way of life of its members within their social environment.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

Independent Churches in Kenya as well as in Africa as a continent have attracted a great deal of attention from journalists as well as scholars. However, in-depth studies of these churches are far and between. It is important for these independent churches to be studied in order to increase our knowledge of them.

During a workshop in Religious Research held at the University of Nairobi, it was noted that there was need to study these independent churches especially their theological outlook⁹. Certain efforts have been made towards this direction but with some limitations. Therefore, this study will be a contribution here since it is concerned with the theology of the JCC as a case study of one of these independent churches.

The JCC was chosen because it was founded by a woman who is also its superintendent. This is not a mean achievement

considering that mission founded churches have on the whole ecclesiastically marginalized women. Studies have shown that women now comprise the majority of the membership of independent Church movements across Africa¹⁰. In spite of these, detailed studies on the role of women in independent churches for instance in Kenya are lacking. There is even an established independent Church in Kenya which was initiated by a woman but where a man ended up with a title of "a messiah"¹¹. This points to the fact that the role of women in independent churches has been de-emphasized. A case study of the JCC should shed light on the role of women in such churches. The present study is therefore considered timely.

It is also important to study this Church because no serious account has been given to it so far. The JCC has attracted a great deal of attention from journalists who have provided interesting stories about its various spectacular activities. However, these write ups have only been partly helpful to those wishing to understand it. A short preliminary enquiry by this researcher into this Church made him realize that there was need for a more detailed study of this Church¹².

There are seven independent churches in the National Council of the Churches of Kenya¹³. This reflects their ecumenical concern. Ecumenism should not only be a matter of dialogue between the mainline protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church. It should also involve independent churches, hence their study is important since there is need for other churches to understand their theological outlook in order for ecumenism to be more successful. The present study of the JCC is only one of many case studies

needed.

Independent Churches have also been concerned with indigenization. The researcher would like to know the extent to which the JCC has attempted to make the Christian Gospel more relevant to the African Christians.

Records kept by the Secretary of this Church concerning registration of members together with geographical expansion of the JCC portray it as one of the fast growing independent Churches in Kenya. Mission churches seem to be losing most of their members to this and other similar churches. There is need to study what is attracting people to such independent churches so that historical churches may identify their loopholes and make corrections where necessary.

1.3 Literature Review

As already pointed out, the JCC has not yet received an in-depth study from a religious or theological perspective. Apart from newspapers, magazines and unpublished short reports by this and other students of religious studies, there is no other literature dealing with this Church directly. This study intends to fill the existing gap.

However, the phenomenon of independency among churches is not new in Africa and elsewhere and a number of authors have concerned themselves with it. In his book entitled Secterianism in Southern Nyasaland, R.L. Wislade points out that secterianism has been characteristic of the history of Christianity with the result that there are in the world today several thousand religious groups

paying allegiance to Christ¹⁴. Contributing to this observation, E.S. Gaustand has expressed the view that Western Christendom is no stranger to schism¹⁵.

In the light of the foregoing, it is evident that earlier studies on this phenomenon have been done and some of them may be of relevance to our study here. We have already indicated that feminine religious genius has attracted some amount of attention from some scholars in Africa¹⁶.

David B. Barrett is perhaps one of the leading authorities on the aspect of independent Church movements in Africa. In his book, Schism and Renewal in Africa, Barrett gives an analysis of six thousand contemporary religious movements in Africa. He discusses the phenomenon of independency in Africa as a whole. He analyses these movements and provides possible reasons for the schism. He accuses missionaries of lack of understanding, paternalism and unsympathetic behaviour in their attack on indigenous religious practices especially certain elements in society crucial to its existence but about which Biblical faith is silent. Barrett's most important contribution to our study here is on the role of women in these independent churches¹⁷.

Barrett analyses four aspects on which the role of women in these independent churches can be examined. These are: the prominent status of women in much of traditional society; the respect and status accorded them in the Bible; the unhappy lot of women in polygamous families when husbands accept mission baptism; and the predominantly female membership of most independent churches¹⁸.

Barrett notes that women have founded powerful organizations

which have been contained within mission churches while others have founded Independent Churches. He observes that the greater preponderance of women in the independent churches is due to a number of factors, including the fact that these churches meet or claim to meet, such deep unresolved problems of women as barrenness, delay in conception and domestic difficulties. According to him, mission churches have been unable to address these problems. Barrett mentions some of these independent churches and the women who have founded them such as St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission near Johannesburg founded by the Ndebele prophetess Ma Nku, and Mother Jane Bloomer of Freetown and her mother Davies confidential Association. He shows that some of these movements were founded by young women, some of whom had early marriages. His observation is that women in independent churches have gained prestige and authority which they never knew in the parent churches¹⁹.

Barrett is however concerned with the whole phenomenon of independency in Africa. Detailed information concerning these movements founded and led by women, such as their historical background or their theological outlook is lacking in his work. The present study aims at making some contribution.

In his co-edited book, Kenya Churches Handbook, Barrett has attempted to give an outline history of Maria Legio of Africa, a large catholic secession that took place between 1960-62. He highlights the central role of an unmarried Luo Roman Catholic mystic named Maria Ragot in the formative periods of this Church between 1930-1960²⁰.

Writing on the "Politics of Africa's Independent Churches", W.O. Odhiambo reckons that the new churches are also giving women an interesting and challenging new role to play. He adds that in some of the African Independent Churches, women are the top executives, and in nearly all of them, women are in key leadership positions²¹. However, Odhiambo avails no evidence for his general statements pertaining to the role of women in these independent churches.

In his classic study, Bantu Prophets in South Africa, Sundkler lists more than eight hundred African-led churches officially recognized by the South African government in 1948 and mentions a further one hundred and twenty-three known eight months later. He attempts to study many aspects of these churches such as leadership, worship and healing and eventually develops a typology for them as "Zionist" and "Ethiopian" churches. He also examines the role of women in these independent Churches²².

According to Sundkler, women in these churches arrange prayer meetings, occasional gift collections, they visit other congregations and they generally show more initiative and energy than men. He adds that in Zionist churches, some women are superintendents of certain churches. He concludes that "the influence of women leaders in the Independent Churches is a striking evidence of the rise in the status of women"²³.

Sundkler's work, however, only deals with the leadership aspect of women in these churches at the expense of social, economic and psychological aspects. It is also general due to the large number of churches he studied.

In his book, Post-Christianity in Africa, Oosthuizen gives a brief analytical history of the Lumpa Church of Zambia founded by an illiterate peasant woman named Alice Lenshina Mulenga. He attempts to show that Alice has been far more successful than expatriate missionaries in inculcating into her adherents a puritan morality and in discouraging polygamy. He further explains that she has persuaded her Lumpa followers that sorcery as well as witchcraft were against the will of God. Oosthuizen suggests that the foundress of the Lumpa Church neglects the Bible because she is illiterate and the sacrament of Holy Communion because she maintains that Lumpa faithfuls are not like other churches, thus meaning that Lumpa faithfuls have their own unique beliefs and practices²⁴. It is important to note here that Oosthuizen's study of the Lumpa Church in Zambia is more analytical than descriptive. Some descriptive details are missing in his study.

The shortcomings highlighted above call for a detailed study of single movements to examine the role of women in these Independent Churches. Our study intends to contribute to this area as stated in our objectives.

Some scholars have studied the theology of these independent Churches. M.J. McVeigh in his article, "Theological Issues Related to Kenyan Religious Independency", analyses christology, messianism, communality, sacraments and healing aspects among these Independent Churches and concludes that most Churches have no Christological conflict. He however mentions the Nomiya Luo Church which does not recognize Jesus as God. He observes that some churches have leaders who are regarded as 'Messiahs' or who have

crowned themselves with such titles. According to him, these churches are more community centred and some of them place less emphasis on the Holy communion than baptism, while generally they have an interest in faith healing²⁵.

Mcveigh generally concludes that independent churches are extremely interested in theological questions, hence they have an important contribution to make in the quest by Christians of all denominations for a theology uniquely relevant to Africa²⁶.

Barrett has seen in these independent churches an emergence of a whole vast complex of new forms of religious practices not found within institutionalized historical churches. He observes that these religious practices claim to be genuinely Christian and genuinely African, thereby, setting forth an indigenous African praxis or churchmanship²⁷. He concludes that the entire movement has discovered and implemented some of the major theological concerns being expressed elsewhere in the world concerning a reformation of the Christian Church²⁸.

Both Barrett and Mcveigh have therefore noted the contribution of these Independent Churches in making the Gospel of Christ more relevant to the contemporary African Christian. This is important for our study since we are also concerned with indigenization. However, these two authors have only provided a general picture as far as the theological outlook of these churches is concerned. Mcveigh for instance does not tell us why some movements have Messiahs while others do not. Information is lacking as to why some movements de-emphasize the Holy communion while others prefer baptism. The researcher believes that some

information gaps such as those cited here can be filled through an in-depth study of an individual movement.

Other scholars who are of relevance to our study here are M.L. Daneel, H.W. Turner, M.L. Martin and J.B. Webster. We shall briefly look at some of their contributions in the field of our enquiry.

In his book entitled Zionism and Faith - Healing in Rhodesia, M.L. Daneel examines faith healing as one of the major attractions of some of these independent churches. He notes that the Church headquarters has been turned into a hospital with living-quarters for the sick²⁹.

Writing on The African Churches among the Yoruba, J.B. Webster concludes that Independency among churches is a revolt against all aspects of imperialism whether religious, political or economic³⁰. Marie-Louise Martin has written a book entitled Kimbangu. The book is about Simon Kimbangu, an African prophet and his Church. He points to the fact that the theology of some of these Independent Churches is lived and sung and not formulated as it has been the case of the Church in the Western world³¹.

In his History of an African Independent Church Volume Two, H.W. Turner, an authority of Independency among churches in West Africa observes that Independent Churches are fundamentally religious in nature, and must be so understood³². This is significant because most studies have de-emphasized religious factors of independence among churches at the expense of social, political and economic factors to name only a few.

The foregoing observations are relevant to our study although

they are dealing with studies other than the JCC. By presenting these Churches as a revolt against religious imperialism, J.B. Webster agrees with their concern of making Christianity relevant to the African. The observations by M.L. Martin shows that there is need to study these independent churches since their theological contribution may be obscured with time. Observations by Daneel and Turner calls for an in-depth study of the religious factor among these churches.

The religious concern of independent churches as the main issue in our study has been prompted by the fact that most studies done earlier have tended to emphasize on socio-political factors. In brief, Adrian Hastings in his book, A History of African Christianity states that internal tension within the mission churches combined with growing dissatisfaction at the political condition of the colony and the scale of European settlement produced a series of movements both in the Central Province among the Kikuyu and in the West among the Luhya and Luo³³. Barrett has noted that independency among churches has been presented mostly as movements arising out of political frustration³⁴.

In a book entitled The Religions of the Oppressed, Vittorio Lanternari portrays independency as the quest of oppressed people for freedom from subjection and servitude to foreign powers³⁵. Sundkler maintains that the proliferation of independency among churches is on the part of the African, his logical reply to the whites' policy of segregation and separation³⁶. Thus racism has basically led to the emergence of most independent churches in South Africa according to Sundkler.

It is evident from above that socio-political factors have been sharply emphasized at the expense of other factors such as religious. Such studies have sought fundamental causes of independency in social disruption, due to for instance the apartheid policy, the occupation of tribal areas by Europeans and racial tension. Therefore, the religious dimension of independence among churches calls for further studies. Our study will be a contribution in this area.

We have already indicated that the JCC has attracted a great deal of attention from journalists. The Weekly Review has reported that thousands of Kenyans and others congregate daily at the headquarters of JCC in order to be healed from different ailments or to have their diverse problems solved. This journal has also reported on the appearance of 'Jesus' at Kawangware, the headquarters of the JCC³⁷.

The Kenya Times newspaper has reported on the surrendering of stolen goods by thieves at the headquarters of the JCC³⁸. The same newspaper has reported on a marriage union in this Church³⁹. While reporting on this Church, journalists have used the names Church of Bethlehem (COB) and Jerusalem Church (JC) interchangeably.

In summary, there is need to study this Church since there is no existing literature on it apart from what journalists have written and some unpublished brief reports by this researcher and others. We note that no scholar even those reviewed here has cited the JCC. We have added that earlier attempts to investigate the causes behind this phenomenon of independency among churches

have sharply emphasized on socio-political factors. We have also noted that earlier studies have dealt with the theological concern of these independent churches with some shortcomings. For instance, we have mentioned that some studies concerning the theology of these independent churches tend to be too general.

Our major concern in this study is theological. The assumption is that Independent movements among churches are fundamentally religious in nature. However, other aspects of independency such as social, economic, psychological and political will be also examined in as much as they contribute to the total picture of this study.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical conceptual orientation underlying this study is H.W. Turner's theory concerning the emergence of independent churches. Turner is an authority on independency among churches in West Africa and has concluded that the emergence of independent churches is one of the most pervasive and spontaneous movements in the continent of Africa in the twentieth century⁴⁰.

Turner observes that some of these independent churches owe their emergence to the influence of an individual prophet or prophetess than from a group secession. This may be a man or a woman within an existing Church, who acquires a personal position on account of his or her prayers, healings, preaching or other claims such as prophecy or revelations⁴¹. These spiritual gifts and claims may have caused tension especially where the prophet or prophetess does not belong very closely to the Church's hierarchy

or regular ministry and sooner or later came adrift of it due to certain circumstances that might have threatened his or her life. In the course of this, he or she might have attracted a large following enough to start an independent Church whose destiny will largely depend on the prophet or the prophetess.

According to Turner, such an independent Church will initially lay emphasis on prophecy and will tend to be far more in the nature of a popular and even populist movement drawing its members from Christians and non Christians alike and tending to transcend social and cultural backgrounds.

This is true of the JCC which derived its emergence from the influence of an individual prophetess, Mary Akatsa, than from a group secession. Mary Akatsa acquired a personal position through her prophecy and faith healing which caused tension within the COBEA because she did not belong very much to the Church's hierarchy. Her movement has tended to transcend social, cultural and even racial background especially at the headquarters level where she personally operates.

Turner notes that the independency of such churches is expressed in forms of worship, beliefs, policy and ethos that depart more obviously from western models. There are indigeneous aspects of worship such as drums, dancing, symbols and rites. Policywise, there is a combination of traditional democracy with the founder or foundress treated as chiefs, kings or queens. Lastly, dreams, communal living and polygamy among others form the ethos of these churches hence Africanization has certainly occurred in these directions.

Turner observes that much fundamental to these churches are the beliefs underlying the origins and practice of these newer independent churches. Their first conviction may be called a pneumatological view of God, envisaged as present in power through the Holy Spirit, who reveals His will, guides amidst danger and fills persons with new powers of prophecy, prayer and healing.

The second conviction concerning these churches may be called a practical and therapeutic view of salvation, as present deliverance from the powers of evil, and especially from sickness rather than from the guilt of sin. Some of these churches call themselves 'spiritual' churches because they are the channels of God's spiritual power for help to people in their present fears and problems. In turn, people must reject traditional magic and medicine and use only spiritual methods such as prayer and faith in their acknowledgement of the divine deliverance.

Turner prefers to call these kind of churches prophet-healing independent churches because revelations from the Holy Spirit through the prophet or prophetess and faith healing form their basic beliefs⁴². He observes that other designations such as 'zionist' by Sundkler, for instance⁴³ 'spirit' Church by Welbourne⁴⁴ or even 'a ladura' as they are known in West Africa are all either local in use or uncertain and limited in meaning.

1.5 Hypotheses

This study will test a number of hypotheses;

1. That prophecy and healing are the major attractions in this Church hence the JCC is a prophet-healing independent

Church.

2. That the future of the JCC will depend on the life of the foundress. This means that when she dies, the JCC will be stripped of her charismatic leadership and disintegrate.
3. The JCC appeals to people with low educational standards.
4. That the religious beliefs and practices of the JCC have been influenced by the Luhya traditional beliefs and practices.
5. That the JCC is concerned with spiritual matters than life here on earth.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The main areas of focus were the Muslim village of the sprawling Kawangware estate in Nairobi. This area was chosen because it is the headquarters of the JCC and has the highest number of members. The foundress also resides in Nairobi and directly presides over services at the headquarters. Our area of focus was accessible by public transport and Kawangware estate is about six kilometres from the city centre.

However, in order to have a comprehensive and comparative study, the main branches of the JCC in Vihiga and Kakamega districts were also studied.

1.7 Methodology

In this social enquiry, both literary and field researches were used.

Library, Archival and Documentary Materials

About two months were spent on library research. During this time, all relevant literature on independent movements among

churches and the African traditional beliefs and practices were consulted. Archival materials and unpublished articles in the department of religious studies were also studied.

The constitution of the JCC was obtained from the Registrar of Societies. Church records and history were also perused. Police files were obtained with permission from the Commissioner of Police and perused. Newspapers and magazines were also studied. Because there is no authentic existing literature on the JCC as stated earlier, the researcher depended more on field research.

Field Research

The methods used during field research were participant observation and oral interviews. These methods were aimed at gaining an insight of the COBEA of which the foundress was a member before founding the JCC. This was because, the former, like the latter had no literature on it. However, the focus of our research was on the JCC.

Participant Observation

This method offered first hand information and enabled us to know the attitude of outsiders towards this Church. The researcher participated in worship services at the headquarters of this Church and her main three branches in Kakamega and Vihiga districts. Thirty services were attended, thus twenty four in Nairobi and the other six services at Mlimani, Ebusiralo and Eshirandu branches respectively.

He noted the verbal expressions made by members and leaders

in the JCC especially the foundress concerning their beliefs in the sermons, prayers and testimonies. This enabled the researcher to come to some conclusion about the beliefs of the JCC. The researcher attended different types of services and ceremonies including baptisms, marriages, funeral, women's assemblies and leaders' meetings in the JCC. The researcher deployed three assistants with whom he later compared notes to arrive at what appeared to be a balanced observation.

Initially, the researcher participated covertly in JCC services and ceremonies taking notes in a tiny note book with an intention of not attracting the attention of surrounding members. It is believed that other churches usually send 'informers' to the JCC to exploit possibilities of disrupting services of the foundress hence the need for any stranger taking notes to be careful not to be victimized by Mummy's children. Later, the researcher was introduced to certain leaders in this Church by the foundress for assistance after he had approached her concerning his research. From this time henceforth, the researcher was provided with a seat at strategic places in every service or ceremony of the JCC which he attended. For reasons best known to the foundress, the researcher was not formally introduced to all JCC members. However, this did not inhibit the researcher from looking, listening, enquiring and recording relevant information. His assistants were not introduced to the foundress but some JCC leaders were aware of their presence after the researcher had explained to them the burden of his work and the need to involve assistants. The researcher also used a tape recorder to record the Church

proceedings and what was found relevant in this social enquiry.

Another problem experienced during this method was that the researcher was disadvantaged to attend Friday women assemblies because of being a man. Although the foundress allowed him to attend them, the women members and the leaders were rather sensitive and the researcher had to deploy a female research assistant to attend them on his behalf. She also recorded the proceedings which were later compared with her notes in order to enable us arrive at what appeared to be a balanced observation. The same applied to the JCC branches.

Oral Interviews

This method was also important because the questionnaire was not used during the field research as intended before. The reason is that the JCC members are a reserved group and since most people tend to associate handouts with officialdom or with the government, the questionnaire was withdrawn in our field research because it could inhibit information. However, the questions on the questionnaire were adopted during this method. The researcher and his assistants had to know these questions by heart and when to ask them. They had also to learn how to ask these questions in a discreet manner without arousing any suspicion from the respondents especially during the recording of the answers. Where allowed, a tape recorder was used.

Because this method was through a personal contact, the researcher was able to explain the purpose of the study in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding. The researcher explained and

discussed extensively with members of this Church about matters pertaining to their Church including their faith and rituals. The interviews were organized through the assistance of the foundress and other Church leaders with whom the researcher had established a friendly relationship since he had expressed his desire to register in this Church after completion of his research. The researcher also visited JCC members at their places of work especially police officers who were contacted through the assistance of the Commissioner of Police. Much time was spent on collecting data from each respondent. More than 50 members were interviewed and although the researcher did most of the work due to his established relationship with the JCC members and the foundress, he was assisted by his research assistants where necessary with whom he later compared notes. Where possible, the researcher also conducted group interviews occasionally. During such group interviews, other members gave their own clarification whenever a member gave incorrect information.

Although most interviews with the foundress were postponed due to her busy religious schedules, the researcher managed to interview her thrice. Due to her sensitivity and reservedness, the researcher did not use a tape recorder while interviewing her. The foundress also fulfilled her promises to the researcher by answering some of his questions in the course of her preaching. She also referred the researcher to certain members in this Church to complete those questions she had left hanging.

Each interviewee was hand-picked because of one reason or the other. A list of these interviewees, their biographical data and

dates of interviews and the reasons why each one was interviewed is available in the appendix. Recording was done in a note form. Photographs about this Church's services and ceremonies were taken and they have been included in the appendix.

However, there were several other interviewees who requested anonymity due to their sensitive positions in this Church. Their designations are: The Senior mother assembly and the secretary at the JCC headquarters; the Senior Pastor and the JCC Bishop at Ebusiralo branch; the JCC secretary at the Eshirandu branch and finally, the husband of the prophetess.

We did not also provide photographs concerning burial and baptism in the JCC. The prophetess as will be shown in Chapter Four is an ardent believer in the mystical powers of witchcraft as the cause of all misfortunes and sufferings in our society. For that reason, strangers were prohibited from taking photographs during funerals and baptismal rites in the JCC since such photographs can be bewitched, according to her.

1.8 Research Problems

Since the researcher had done a short preliminary enquiry into the JCC in 1991, he did not experience problems in the course of his study. However, JCC members are sensitive to outsiders and for this reason, his research assistants experienced problems in obtaining information from informants. Research assistants had to be trained on how to avoid asking some questions directly and how to record information in a discreet manner. Participant observation

method also helped to solve this problem since it entailed minimal questions.

Women members were reluctant to discuss their marital problems in the presence of the researcher during Friday meetings. To alleviate this problem, the researcher had to deploy a female research assistant to attend these meetings on his behalf.

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CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

2.0 Why the JCC was chosen for study

The Jerusalem Church of Christ is a prophet-healing independent church in Kenya. Prophecy and healing are the major attractions of people to this church and as it will be shown in Chapter two, the JCC is one of the fast growing independent churches in Kenya. The phenomenon of independency among churches has attracted the attention of many scholars and journalists. The JCC is not an exception. This church attracted the interest of journalists in Kenya who wrote fascinating stories about its various spectacular activities during its formative period. That is how the researcher came to know about this Church.

However, since these write ups by journalists have only been partly helpful to those seeking to understand the JCC as a religious movement, the researcher has decided to undertake a study of this Church. During one of his postgraduate courses in the department of Religious studies of the University of Nairobi, the researcher conducted a short preliminary enquiry into this church. He discovered that the JCC was founded by a young Kenyan woman who was also semi-literate and yet her church attracted thousands of followers from diverse backgrounds including Asians and people of European origin. Therefore, this called for a deeper study to verify the strength of the JCC. A historical and theological approach was chosen for this study because most earlier studies on the causation of independency among churches have tended to concentrate on social-political factors.

In order to understand the JCC, there was need to describe the historical background and development of this Church including membership composition. Special attention was paid to the prophetess. There was also need to identify the rituals and their significance including worship, baptism, burial and marriage. The third aspect was to analyse leadership in this church with special reference to charismatism and the place of women in the church. Finally, the use of the Bible and faith healing were also to be studied. This also covered concepts of God head and eschatology and how the latter influenced the way of life of its members within their social environment.

This church was also chosen for study because it was founded by a woman. Studies have shown that women now comprise the majority of the membership of independent church movements across Africa. In spite of these, detailed studies on the role of women in independent churches for instance in Kenya are lacking. A case study of the JCC was therefore to shed light on the role of women in such churches.

Independent churches have also been concerned with indigenisation. The researcher wanted to know the extent to which this church attempted to make the christian message relevant to the African needs, situations and aspirations.

The National Council of the Churches of Kenya has seven independent churches. This reflects their ecumenical concern. Ecumenism should also involve independent churches and not just a matter of dialogue between the mainline protestant churches and the Roman Catholic church. Therefore the study of independent

churches is important since there is need for other churches to understand their theological outlook in order for ecumenism to be more successful. The foregoing explains why I chose to study this church.

We have noted earlier that independent churches in Kenya as well as in Africa as a continent have attracted a great deal of attention from journalists as well as scholars. We have also added that the JCC has attracted thousands of followers from diverse backgrounds. It is important for these independent churches to be studied in order to increase our knowledge of them. There is also need to study what is attracting people to such independent churches so that historical churches may identify their weaknesses and make corrections where necessary.

2.1 Socio-political, Religious and Economic Background to the JCC

The scope of this study was Nairobi and Western provinces in Kenya as shown in figure one of appendix D. The JCC headquarters is based at the sprawling Kawangware estate as indicated in figure two. The biggest JCC branch was founded at Ebusiralo in Vihiga district as shown in figure three while the other two branches were founded at Milimani and Eshirandu in Kakamega district as indicated in figure four. Nairobi province is comprised of four divisions administered by district officers. It is headed by a provincial commissioner.

Kawangware is one of the six sub-locations which comprises Dagoretti division. It has a chief, sub-chief and village headmen to facilitate administration at the local level. Kawangware borders

Kangemi, Riruta and the posh Lavington estate.

According to the 1979 population census, Kawangware had a population of 24, 413 residents on an area of four square kilometers. This census report also indicate that there were 134,000 Luhya in Nairobi and they were the third largest ethnic group in Nairobi by that time.

Studies have shown that the Luhya are the second largest group in Kawangware¹. Other studies have also shown that the Luhya are the largest ethnic group in neighbouring Kangemi estate². The majority of Luhya migrants in kangemi come from Kakamega and Vihiga Districts of Western Province. This chapter shows that the majority of JCC members are Luhya and most of them come from Vihiga and Kakamega districts where JCC branches are found. We may observe here that the JCC has a strong ethnic background at the headquarters level due to its strategic position. We should however add here that JCC Luhya members at the headquarters level are drawn from different parts of Nairobi although it is also likely that most of them reside at either Kangemi or Kawangware due to their large Luhya population.

According to Mwatha³, Kawangware is characterized predominantly by recent migrants who are married, with low education levels and who are employed in the informal sector activities of the economy of the city. In the course of our study, we discovered that housing in Kawangware is substandard in terms of a number of criteria such as overcrowding and the density of housing structures. This is due to housing by-laws and the building code which were inherited from colonial administration.

These by-laws and codes laid down very high standards for any dwelling built in urban centres hence squatter settlements emerged in Peri-urban zones such as Kawangware and Kangemi which were removed from harassment by city commission officials. These Peri-urban zones emerged to house large number of migrants who could not afford housing in the city.

Informal sector activities picked upon by more than a half of Kawangware residents are outside government regulations, hence they have no access to the formal credit institutions. The operations of some of these activities are often illegal, for instance peddling of bhang, brewing and selling of illicit brews and even prostitution due to a majority of men over women in most urban areas.

Studies have shown that housing in most peri-urban zones in Nairobi are provided by private entrepreneurs who do not provide adequate sewages, latrines and disposal sites⁴. Uncontrolled urban settlements to these areas has led to overcrowding and lack of privacy. Overcrowding is a health hazard. Unemployment has contributed to increasing insecurity exemplified by theft and robbery with violence for instance. Most migrants are either unskilled or semi-skilled hence they cannot compete favourably in a market economy.

According to Mwatha, Kawangware experiences pressure of little facilities or social amenities provided by the city council such as schools and hospitals while some parents cannot afford medical or education expenses. It is no wonder that the author lists illiteracy, juvenile delinquency and a high incidence of marital disorders as

some of the social by products of kawangware⁵. We can also add here an increase in diseases (due to lack of medicine in government hospitals and health centres), unemployment (due to lack of education and training) and generally poverty as additional social problems.

At both headquarters and branch levels, the JCC is operating in a post-missionary era. This period is characterised by emergence of various religious movements and independent churches. Around the JCC headquarters, we have the African Divine Church (ADC) church of Bethlehem East Africa (COBEA), African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN) and the pentecostal assemblies of God (PAG) churches among others⁶. All these are indigeneous founded churches apart from the PAG church which is missionary founded. We shall show in this chapter how Mary Akatsa attempted to join some of these denominations and religions before founding the JCC.

According to the Kenya Churches Handbook, there were more than twenty independent churches in Kakamega district (which by then included Vihiga) by the year 1973⁷. This is the area where JCC branches have been founded. We may conclude therefore that the JCC is operating in an environment that is experiencing emergence of Independent churches and religious movements. It may be assumed that in this area, there is competitive religious manifestation as each movement is attempting to outweigh others in attracting followers. Why the JCC has succeeded in attracting more adherents than neighbouring movements, denominations or religions is part of the investigation in this study.

The Western province of Kenya where the JCC branches are

founded is made up of five districts. These are Bungoma, Kakamega, Busia, Mount Elgon and Vihiga. The provincial commissioner is the head of this province while districts are administered by district commissioners. Districts are further subdivided into divisions headed by district officers. Under these divisions, there are locations administered by chiefs and sub locations headed by assistant chiefs. Villages are under village headmen.

The 1979 census showed that Kakamega district had the highest population of over one million people in Western province which had a total population of about 1.9 million residents. The JCC branches are based at Vihiga and Kakamega districts which have the highest population density in western province. The total area of western province is 3054 square miles.

Due to the high population density in kakamega and Vihiga districts, land ownership has become a problem. Some people are landless due to increasing population while others occupy very small pieces of land which can not support them. Land related lawsuits are therefore common. Residents of Vihiga and Kakamega districts import food (especially maize) from other neighbouring districts at exorbitant prices. Cash crops such as tea and sugarcane are grown in Kakamega and Vihiga districts. Some cash crops such as sugarcane take long to mature hence economic difficulties and lack of enough food especially where almost the whole land has been put under a cash crop as it has been the case with most sugarcane farmers. Therefore, most residents of Kakamega and Vihiga districts respectively experience famine and even malnutrition almost yearly.

Kakamega and Vihiga district residents also grow foods like maize(which is the staple food) cassava, potatoes, vegetables, soghum, millet and fruits among others. Due to scarcity of land, capital and technology, Kakamega and Vihiga districts are not self sufficient foodwise. Cattle, goats and sheep are domesticated. These animals including hens are slaughtered during important ceremonies or as sacrifices while cows are paid as dowry during marriage. There are many college and school dropouts and still more parents who cannot afford schoolfees or college fees for their children.

It is therefore upon this background that most able bodied people from Kakamega and Vihiga districts have moved to urban areas in search of greener pastures. Studies have shown that whereas the Luhya are the largest ethnic group in Kangemi estate of Nairobi for instance, the majority of these Luhya come from Vihiga district (Maragoli subtribe)⁵. Therefore this further re-emphasizes what we have noted ealier that Kakamega and Vihiga districts have a high population density accompanied by many push-factors listed before that have facilitated rural-urban migration.

Like other ethnic groups in Kenya, most Luhya are not completely seperated from their traditional worldview in regard to suffering and misfortunes. As it will be shown in chapter two and elsewhere, the foundress believes that witchcraft is the cause of suffering and misfortunes in society. JCC members believe that the charismatic powers of Mary Akatsa enables her to handle witchcraft and misfortunes effectively. These charismatic gifts (prophecy and healing) are also the major attractions of people to this church. Since the majority of JCC members are Luhya, it implies that most

Luhya still believe in the traditional causation of misfortunes inspite of the long history of Christianity in Luhyaland.

Among the Luhya, religion was seen as a way of life which was lived rather than preached. Religion freely accommodated their social customs and practices as well as their rituals. To add on this, religion safeguarded and perpetuated indigenous social and spiritual values. Six areas of beliefs among the Luhya can be outlined in brief. These are:

- a) Belief in God who is the supreme being, creator and unrivaled. God is known either as 'Nyasaye' or 'Wele'⁹.
- b) Belief in spirits especially the ancestral spirits regardless of whether the spirits belonged to the dead men or women members of the society¹⁰.
- c) Rites of passage that accompanied crucial turning points in human life for instance birth and conception, initiation rites, marriages and death¹¹.
- d) Sacrifices and various sacred rites connected with the beliefs already mentioned. There are sacrifices for instance related to the rites of passage, ancestor veneration and worship of God.
- e) There were ethical and ceremonial laws and prohibition (taboos).
- f) Practice of medicine and magic existed. There were both evil

and good magic. The former manifested itself in witchcraft hence the existence of witches in the society. Other religious specialists such as diviners, rainmakers and medicine men among others were also found in the Luhya community.

Most earlier studies on the Luhya have not highlighted the role of women in religion. However, evidence even from the little studies done show that women just like men played a dominant role in the Luhya community. The curse of a woman especially an old woman was greatly feared among the Luhya¹². The same women were also associated with blessings¹³.

Both men and women among the Luhya were associated with mystical powers¹⁴. Both the spirits of the dead women and men were venerated among the Luhya¹⁵. The Banyore subtribe of the Luhya had the best rainmakers in Luhyaland. This technique of rain making among the Banyore originated from a non-Luhya woman¹⁶. There were also women diviners among the Luhya¹⁷.

This chapter shows the influence of Lorna Sangolo on Mary Akats in respect to Luhya traditional morality. The chapter will show that the prophetess has borrowed a lot from her grandmother who lived in both traditional and Judeo-Christian worldview. The belief in witchcraft as the cause of suffering and misfortunes in society was borrowed from the Luhya traditional religion. Mary Akatsa is viewed as a mother (Mummy) of all JCC members hence capable of cursing and even blessing as was characteristic of mothers in traditional Luhya society. Women during worship in the JCC sit on the floor while men sit on seats. This is also what was happening during various gatherings in the traditional Luhya

society¹⁶. Akatsa's emphasis on strict morality as will be observed in this chapter has its basis in the traditional Luhya community.

The JCC emerged during the era of one party system of government in Kenya and has continued into an era of multi-party system of politics in Kenya. The foundress claims that she is a life member of the ruling party, KANU. However she does not indulge herself in politics by for instance influencing or convincing her followers to support a particular party in Kenya.

Opposition figures however featured prominently in the JCC during the height of multi-party elections in Kenya which was also coincidentally, the period when this research was being conducted. The current MP for Dagoretti constituency, honourable Chris Kamuyu presided upon two fund raisings to buy a plot for building a church for the JCC. Mary Akatsa's followers registered as voters at Kawangware and voted for honourable Kamuyu. The former MP for Makadara, who was also a pastor in JCC, Fred Omido was suspended by Akatsa and eventually demoted for transporting voters from Kawangware to register at his constituency as voters. He lost his seat to an opposition figure.

The foregoing implies that the JCC has influenced politics especially at the headquarters level where most members voted for an opposition MP due to his generous contributions of more than 50 thousand Kenya shillings in form of fund raisings to this church. Luhya members who are the majority in this church supported their Mummy by withdrawing support for their own 'son' Fred Omido (a Luhya) who had not contributed generously to this church during fund raisings. However, due to their small number, JCC members

at branch level were not able to influence the political trend of the day.

2.2 The Foundress: Historical Background

The Jerusalem Church of Christ was founded by Mary Akatsa, a young small fragile looking woman from Western Province of Kenya. Her full names are Sinaida Dorcas Mary Akatsa. She is married to Francis Akatsa from the same Province and they have a baby son called David Bahati Akatsa. To her faithful followers, the foundress is popularly referred to as Mummy¹⁹ while the term Daddy²⁰ is used for her husband. Her followers are therefore called "the children of Mummy"²¹ or simply "Jua Kali"²².

Mary Akatsa was born in the small village of Ebusiraloi; Ebusakhale sub-location in the West Bunyore location of Vihiga District. The stories and circumstances surrounding her birth and childhood are both rather mysterious. Mary Akatsa was born in December, 1964 at Kima Mission Hospital of the Church of God in East Africa (The Mission Hospital was later transferred to Mwhila in the same district). Her birth was through an operation three hours after her mother had been pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

Mary Akatsa narrated, "My mother (the late Veronica Akoye) was a nurse at Kakamega hospital and was only seven months pregnant when her co-wives poisoned her due to envy"²³. However, nurses and medical officers noticed that the seven months baby she was carrying in her womb was still alive. A team led by a white

sister in-charge known only as 'Sinaida' decided to operate on her mother's body to remove the baby. The operation was successful and a baby girl, Mary was delivered alive. "Sinaida" is one of the names given to Mary Akatsa in honour of the white sister in-charge at Kima mission hospital. The baby was to stay at the hospital nursery for another two months before it was handed over to its father, Stanley Jogoo (still living).

Meanwhile, the body of the late Veronica Akoye was buried at her parents home after her husband's refusal to bury her. Stanley Jogoo was a police inspector and a polygamous man with over one hundred wives and concubines. In spite of this, it was alleged that Mr. Jogoo was very angry because he had incurred a loss of a wife after having paid dowry to Veronica's family. Her death was a big blow since the offspring she had left behind was a baby girl who was of no benefit to him. Mary Akatsa observed, "My father had no respect for my deceased mother because her first born child who was also poisoned by her co-wives was a baby girl²⁴. Veronica's household was therefore forgotten as one which had not contributed a heir for Stanley Jogoo.

When the baby was given to its father, none of Jogoo's wives or concubines was willing to take care of the infant. Although he had accepted the custody of his daughter from the hospital, Jogoo was not willing to exercise this responsibility. He had no love for the baby girl. To Veronica's co-wives, baby Sinaida symbolized the resurgence of Veronica's household and they were determined to stop it.

Mary Akatsa's father is said to have sought various ways and

means of disposing his infant daughter. The foundress told the researcher that her father abandoned her in some distant forest. He was accompanied by one of his closest wives. A day before this inhuman act, Stanley Jogoo is alleged to have approached a senior pastor of the village Pentecostal Assembly of God (PAG) Church, Pastor Shem Sirima to take care of the three month old baby Sinaida since he was a born again Christian leader. When the pastor declined, her father decided to dump her naked in the forest where she stayed for three days and three nights²⁵.

During this time, the late Veronica Akoye approached her mother Lorna Sangolo in a dream and instructed her to rescue her baby girl from the forest. The dream revealed that the baby would be the house of God, thus the messenger of God on Earth²⁶. She was also given detailed directions to the place where the baby had been dumped.

Following the instructions given in the dream, Lorna Sangolo found her grand-daughter where she had been dumped. Although the forest was inhabited by wild animals, none had touched the mystery baby Sinaida. Lorna's rescue mission was timely. The sight where the baby was dumped was horrifying. It was surrounded by a thicket and the infant was dumped naked under a giant gum tree. There was nothing around not even a piece of cloth to protect her. The baby was still crying albeit with difficulty as some crawling insects had bitten her on the nostrils, ears and mouth.

Lorna Sangolo did not want to attract the attention and the wrath of her powerful enemies who had committed this callous act. For this reason, she did not take her grand-daughter to the

hospital. She removed the insects from the baby's body and bathed it in lukewarm water. The baby was fed on porridge and after sometimes, it recovered from the insect bites and could also eat other foods. Baby Sinaida was never taken to the hospital and she never fell sick during her childhood. Even after the death of her husband, Sangolo Alubaka Ombima, Lorna Sangolo struggled to bring up her mystery granddaughter. She earned her living through the selling of salt and sugarcane. Lorna was a pious member of the Isirongo Pentecostal Assemblies of God and she regularly attended the Church services with her granddaughter Sinaida who was given the name Mary at her baptism in this Church. The name Dorcas was later added to her other two names.

Meanwhile, Mary Sinaida was doing well at the Itabalya Nursery school near Emutete and was soon to start her primary education at the same school. Mary Akatsa says that at the age of seven, she joined both the children's and the adults choir at the PAG Church at Isirongo. She also continued to attend primary school at Itabalya and she claims to have been very bright and always at the top of her class. Mary Akatsa explained "I was excellent in both sports and athletics. I was nicknamed 'mummy' by my admirers because I always led others in everything I set my hands upon"²⁷. Therefore, her fame spread in the location and attracted her father's attention.

Stanley Jogoo made every effort to reach his daughter. After setting his eyes on her, he was convinced beyond doubt that her daughter was rescued either coincidentally or miraculously by her maternal grandmother hence he used his influence as a police

inspector to fabricate stories concerning her daughter's childhood so that he could have her back. He claimed that he was the rightful parent of Mary Sinaida and that Lorna Sangolo had stolen the child from him after the death of his 'dear wife' Veronica Akoye. There was a case about her custody. She was asked to choose and she decided to stay with her grandmother but her father used his office to win her custody. By this time, the eight year old Mary had attended school only upto standard three.

Life in the hands of her father was a nightmare. She was constantly beaten by both her father and his wives. She was denied food and sometimes fed on remains. She was not bought cloths and her father never took her to school. She went through a horrifying experience and she was so frustrated that she contemplated drowning herself in the nearby Elyesabu river but before she could do so, she heard the voice of her maternal grandmother commanding her not to commit suicide. She went back home and shut herself in her room and prayed. After this, she fell asleep.

She heard the voice of her maternal grandmother once more and this time, it came along the wall of her room loud and clear. Before she could grasp what was being said, she soon realized that it was the voice of the Almighty God talking to her. It was a terrifying sound but she was not afraid since she knew that she was in the presence of the Almighty. The voice told her that she had been chosen for the important mission of spreading the word of God on Earth. She was assured protection and guidance. She was instructed to begin a Church which should be known as 'Jerusalem

Church of Christ'. The Church was to be the mother of all the churches on Earth and was to prepare people of all races, religions and creeds for heaven which was imminent. After God had made His will known to Mary, Jesus also appeared to her. She immediately recognized him as Jesus Christ although she had never seen Him before. Subsequently, the Holy Spirit came upon her and she started speaking in tongues. Therefore, Mary Akatsa experienced a Trinitarian vocation to her mission. This was around 1972 which according to Mary marked the birth of her Church.

After this incident, Mary Akatsa found herself filled with extra-ordinary powers which enabled her to foresee other peoples lives and to detect origins of evils within her surrounding. She could identify witches in public and reveal what they had done in the past. However, she did not seriously and conspicuously start utilizing her powers. She decided to solve her problems first. Therefore, she ran away from her father's home and joined her caring grandmother Lorna Sangolo. They continued living in abject poverty which forced her to marry Francis "Franco" Akatsa in 1977, who was however also destitute.

By then, Mary Akatsa was only thirteen years while her husband was seventeen. The young couple went to live with Franco's uncle at Eshirandu in Kisa Location. Franco's uncle wanted Mary to marry his own son but she refused and he therefore threw them out of his homestead.

The desperate newly-weds went to Khwisero in Kisa location where they met an old woman named Sarah Mukhwana, who took them in and gave them a piece of land on which to build a house. They

also built a house for Franco's mother and her children. During this time, Mary's prophetic powers were increasing and she was considered a threat in her neighbourhood. Some people thought that she was mad. She occasionally prayed and spoke in tongues. Franco's family was encouraged to do away with her. Serious attempts were made to separate the young couple.

Mary and Franco Akatsa had their first child, a boy, in December, 1982, they named him Kodhek. The baby did not live long. Mary Akatsa claims that while she and her husband were away at a Church service, the boy, who was then four months old, was strangled by unknown person. The murderer was paid three hundred shillings by Mary Akatsa's enemies. The same murderer later poisoned Mary Akatsa and she fell very ill. She could not eat or swallow anything and she was taken to different hospitals but they failed to treat her and she was taken to her father's home to die.

Mary Akatsa narrated that she 'died' in march, 1983 and went straight to 'heaven'²⁵. That 'heaven' is more beautiful than our own earth and it is filled with happy white-robed people. That while she was dead, she heard her mourners wailing and talking but she could not respond. In 'heaven', she found a long row of people waiting to be weighed. She said that if a person never reached the required weight, he or she was immediately taken by satan and there was yelling and tribulations for those who were condemned to hell. Those who tipped the scales and reached the required weight were taken by the waiting angels and given white robes.

When the turn for Mary to be weighed on the heavenly scale

came, she encountered Jesus Christ who came to her and told her that she could not be weighed and that she would have to go back to earth and complete the mission she had been assigned. She protested but 'Jesus' remained adamant. Mary claims that when she woke up from her death, everybody who had come to mourn her except her father, husband and grandmother ran away in fear.

She was then taken to Victoria hospital, a private medical institution in Kisumu town where she was operated on her tummy and a wild snake was removed from her stomach*. The foundress became alive and healthy once more after being dead for three days and three nights. Her prophetic powers redoubled and she continued to identify witches, magicians and wizards in her environment, exposing all the evils they had committed. She asked all her listeners to repent and come to Jesus since the Kingdom of God was about to come.

She was very critical of Church leaders who had led people astray because they were 'devil worshippers'. She compared them to foxes in sheep's skin. Once again, her fame spread and this won her more enemies than friends. Those whom she identified as witches, wizards and magicians sought to revenge while Church leaders were threatened since they were losing their faithful followers to 'this mad girl'.

She told the researcher that, "how can one get saved if you

*Victoria Hospital is a private wing of the New Nyanza Hospital. There is no evidence to the effect that a wild snake was removed from a patient named Mary Akatsa in 1983

do not tell him or her publicly what he or she did secretly? In heaven, all your sins are exposed in public before you are condemned to hell"²⁹. As she continued to reveal the evils of the people in the villages around, Church leaders, religious specialists, witches, the local administration and Franco's family all ganged up and finally expelled her from the village with her husband.

Without enough money, the destitute couple decided to travel to Nairobi by train. They arrived at the city's main railway station in mid May 1983. As God had revealed to her in a dream while in the train, the young frustrated couple met Njoki Njoroge (whom they had not met before) and her husband, Samuel Njoroge who live at Kang'ethe Ondere in Kikuyu. This couple took the destitute couple with them and gave them a place to stay and provided them with food. Mary Akatsa and her husband lived at Kikuyu for two years by which time her acknowledged faithhealing powers were already widely known in the area.

Later, the good samaritans could no longer continue the upkeep of the destitute couple. Mary Akatsa found a job as a housemaid for a married woman named Mary Wamboi and the couple moved to her home³⁰. Meanwhile, Franco's family was able to trace the Akatsa's at Kikuyu and Franco's mother made frantic efforts to have her son marry 'a normal wife'³¹. Mary Akatsa told the researcher, "My mother-in-law brought wives for my husband eleven times because I was 'barren' and that I had misled their son. During these temptations, I was patient and prayed to my God to intervene. All kinds of witchcraft were employed by my mother-in-law to separate us but I just continued to pray. Even my employer

who is now the Mother Assembly sympathized with me and took me to a doctor so that I could be examined to find out why I was barren. However, I declined to have my private parts to be examined by a male doctor because I believe that it is only God who can give a child to a barren woman and not a doctor"³².

In 1985, Mary Akatsa moved to the Muslim village of Kawangware area to continue with her mission. This was in accordance with God's directives to her because Kawangware was full of 'sins' hence it badly needed salvation. She managed to rent one room along Muthiora road belonging to the late David Muthiora of Muslim village in Kawangware. She continued prophesying and praying for people and soon, her presence dominated the whole compound. Her landlord's son was healed from some incurable ailment. For that reason, he did not mind her to use her compound for purposes of praying and prophesying.

Meanwhile, Mary Akatsa visited different denominations, religions and creeds. She told the gathering, "I even joined Muslims in their mosques and Hindus in their temples to pray to our only one God"³³. The researcher discovered that while at Kawangware, she occasionally joined members of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), African Divine Church (ADC) or Church of Bethlehem East Africa (COBEA) for Sunday services. Finally, she joined the COBEA as an ordinary member after finding out that she could not cope up with the other two churches above³⁴.

In Kawangware, Mary Akatsa travelled around, praying and performing her faith-healing and her reputation, as well as the number of her followers, began to grow rapidly. When her faithfuls

begun swelling, she confined most of her activities to the one and a half acre plot of her compound of which her landlord allowed her to use. Soon after, everything in this compound and, indeed the village revolved around her. In the COBEA, Mary Akatsa dominated everything due to her prophetic powers and faithhealing. Leaders of the COBEA viewed her with suspicion and dislike which finally boiled down to a split between the JCC and the COBEA in 1989. On 18th of October 1990, her Church was registered by the Registrar of Societies and given the registration number 14762.

2.3 The influence of Lorna Sangolo on Mary Akatsa in respect to Luhya traditional morality

Mary Sinaida was not brought up like most other children. As shown in her life history, her grandparents, especially Lorna Sangolo who lived longer than her husband, took care of her from her childhood to her womanhood. For this reason, she had the opportunity of gaining a lot of knowledge about the past from her grandparents especially knowledge concerning the Luhya traditional morality. Most of what she learnt has influenced the beliefs and practices of the JCC. A look at some aspects of Luhya traditional morality shall be important in this study.

The term 'moral' generally concerns principles of what is right and wrong behaviour³⁵. S.I. Akaranga notes that among the Abaluhya, rites of passage were central because they provided avenues for teaching morals of the society³⁶. He observed that morality was taught to ensure that spouses lived peacefully in their lives. There were oaths, curses, taboos and prohibitions which were

taught to the youths in their sleeping cottages and in seclusion after circumcision. These acted as social controls for both the young and the old³⁷. As reflected in his appendix one, most of Akaranga's informants were old people and some of them were old women above seventy years³⁸. Therefore, Mary Akatsa also received a lot of information from Lorna Sangolo who was acknowledged to have lived for more than a hundred years³⁹. It was a moral obligation in the Luhya society to discuss matters concerning matrimonial conflicts such as a spouse failing in his or her matrimonial duties⁴⁰. Desire for offsprings among the Luhya found expression in numerous matrimonial customs such as polygamy and remarriage of the widow to the deceased husband's brother. A strong preference was given to male over female children. Infact, a wife who gave birth to sons commanded more respect from the society than a barren woman or one who gave birth to daughters.⁴¹ Virginity was valued⁴².

Virtues of kindness, truthfulness, obedience, diligence and bravery among others were taught. Respect to elders, sacred places, and to gods was encouraged⁴³. On the contrary, vices such as laziness, theft, jealousy, meanness and witchcraft among others were discouraged. There was a strong belief in the existence of mystical powers in people, animals and in inanimate objects that could cause suffering or counter misfortunes⁴⁴. The dead were treated with respect while witchcraft was bad and was associated with most suffering in the society⁴⁵. Magic was sometimes employed for positive purposes such as promoting agriculture or love⁴⁶. Generally, anything that was good was encouraged and taught while

what was considered wrong was discouraged. There is a lot concerning morality among the Luhya tribe but the above shall be considered relevant to our study for now.

Having been brought up by Christian grandparents, Mary Akatsa was influenced by their teachings from both Judeo-Christian and Luhya traditional morality which she later adopted in her church. The proceeding chapters will show that Mary Akatsa ardently believes that witchcraft is morally wrong and that it is the cause of suffering in our society. We shall show in chapter four how she attempts to counter witchcraft in her Church.

The background of the foundress reveals that her father was a polygamous man which was right among the Luhya. Her mother was not respected by her father upto her death because she did not bear a son for him. The foundress was also a victim of witchcraft which allegedly caused her 'death' in 1983. As a married woman, she experienced the bitterness of barrenness or delay in conception because the traditional Luhya morality valued children. She lived in abject poverty and learnt to accept any job.

The foregoing will help us to understand the foundress as a beneficiary of both Judeo-Christian and Luhya traditional morality from Lorna Sangolo that shaped her life and influenced JCC religious beliefs and practices. Youths as shall be observed in this chapter are discouraged from immorality and given gainful employment of any nature when they turn away from their immoral behaviours such as stealing. Polygamy is tolerated under certain restricted conditions while witchcraft is fought vehemently. Friday women assemblies have been launched as will be shown in chapter three to address

deep seated marital problems especially those facing women like delay in conception, unhappy marriage and barrenness.

2.4 The Church: Historical background

The name "Jerusalem Church of Christ" was given to Mary Sinaida in 1972 during her divine vocation to spread the word of God on earth. She did not begin her Church immediately due to her age and other domestic problems. All the same, the above year marked the beginning of her Church.

According to this divine vocation, the JCC was meant to be the mother of all the churches on earth. Mary Akatsa explained that "God intended to have only one Church on this earth and through the JCC, the hope of uniting various denominations on earth was made possible"⁴⁷. The foundress asserted that there is no other Church in this world known by the same name as her Church.

The JCC is identified with the Jerusalem city in Israel. This is very significant according to Mary Akatsa because Jerusalem was chosen by God to be his city. Secondly, Jesus Christ triumphantly entered Jerusalem as a King. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem hence the holiness of her Church's name. The words "Church of Christ" imply that the foundress is a true representative of Jesus Christ on this Earth. During her Church services, she oftenly reasserts that, "I am a photocopy while Jesus is the original"⁴⁸.

The name 'Jerusalem Church of Christ' was officially used for the first time in 1990 during the application for registration. Between 1989 and 1992, Mary Akatsa opened three branches of the

JCC in western province. The earliest branch was founded on her father's farm at Ebusiralo in Vihiga district. There is a semi-permanent building at this site which was hitherto used by the PAG Church⁴⁹. However, services take place in the open air since this building cannot accommodate the number of JCC members of this branch.

The second branch was opened at Eshirandu village near the home of her husband in Kisa East Location of Kakamega district. The third branch was opened in July 1991 at Mlimani village of Lugari division in Kakamega district. The foundress intends to open other branches all over the country in future if God wills, according to her.

2.5 The contribution of the Church of Bethlehem East Africa and the Pentecostal Assemblies of God on the JCC

(a) The Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG)

Mary Akatsa received her early Christian background from the PAG as was noted in her life history. Her grandmother was a pious member of the PAG Church at Isirongo and invariably took her little granddaughter with her to Church. Mary was baptized in the PAG Church and through it, she met Pastor Shem Sirima whom she later converted to her Church and appointed him Bishop of the JCC⁵⁰. Therefore, a brief look at the PAG will be vital in our study.

The PAG is a large national Church which begun in 1910 and was subsequently supported by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). It is strongest among the Luhya of western Kenya.

Countrywide, it is divided into five subdivisions: Western Region (in western province), Luo Region (in Nyanza province), Gusii Region, Rift Valley Region (in Rift Valley province), Central-Coast Region (in Central, Eastern and Coast provinces). In 1973, there were 642 churches, 314 assemblies and 314 pastors in Kenya. The churches were active congregations with buildings and pastors were salaried ministers (mostly ordained) in charge of from 1-8 congregations forming an assembly (which must be able to pay a pastor)⁵¹. By this time, the number of churches, assemblies and pastors might have increased.

According to W.J. Hollenweger⁵², pentecostal churches are generally spiritual churches characterized by a special gift of understanding and communication through enthusiastic spiritual manifestations, thus helping to build up a community and a fellowship. This means of communication includes hymns, speaking in tongues, dreams and spontaneous forms of worship such as clapping, dancing and drumming. Hollenweger deals with some features of pentecostal churches which we may summarize as follows:

- (i) Seeking and submitting to the teaching of the spirit both for the individual and the corporate body of believers.
- (ii) Believers baptism replacing infant baptism; this is baptism by immersion.
- (iii) Profession of baptism of the Holy Spirit with initial signs of speaking in tongues.
- (iv) They favour a return to apostolic simplicity in worship.
- (v) They teach believers that they ought to separate

themselves from the world.

- (vi) They teach that believers should look for imminent return of Jesus Christ to set up his millennial rule.
- (vii) They are characterized by a rapid growth.

As shall be observed in the proceeding chapters, the PAG has contributed a lot to the JCC in as far as the latter's religious beliefs and practices are concerned. For instance, all the PAG features from i-vii with the exception of feature (iii) have been adopted in the JCC. Feature (v) has been modified a bit by Mary Akatsa to allow her members to own property. The reasons for this Church's attitude towards features (iii) and (vi) shall be explained in chapter four. Names such as 'pastor' or 'assembly' came from the PAG. Spontaneous forms of worship such as clapping, dancing and drumming were borrowed from the PAG.

(b) The Church of Bethlehem East Africa (COBEA)

Mary Akatsa was a member of the COBEA for three years before founding her own Church in 1989. This study considered it important to briefly examine the historical background of the COBEA, their beliefs and practices and how far the JCC was influenced by this Church.

The history of the COBEA goes back to the year 1969 when it broke away from the African Divine Church (ADC). The ADC had split from the PAOC mission in 1949 partly over the desire to wear uniforms⁵². The COBEA was registered in 1973. It was co-founded by eight people whose names and designations are as follows:-

- (i) Absolom Amoi who is the Bishop and head of the COBEA.

- (ii) Stans Amoi, a brother to the Bishop and a Senior Pastor at a Nairobi branch of the COBEA.
- (iii) James Mfogo, a senior Pastor at a Nairobi branch.
- (iv) Hezekiah Onvango, a treasurer at the Kenvatta branch which is the headquarters of all Nairobi branches of the COBEA.
- (v) Hezbon Munekane, a Senior Pastor at a Maragoli branch in Vihiga district.
- (vi) Ambomiko Mukanjala, a senior Pastor at an Eldoret branch.
- (vii) Johnstone Azivilwa, Vice Bishop based at the Maragoli branch.
- (viii) Benson Sabatia, a senior Pastor at the Maragoli branch.

It was claimed that the COBEA broke away from the ADC because leaders in the latter struggled over leadership instead of spreading the gospel of Christ. Therefore, the COBEA was formed with the aim of preaching the gospel. However, the fact that the founders of the COBEA now hold senior leadership positions in their Church show that they were also interested in leadership. A founder member of the COBEA informed the researcher:

We met for seven consecutive days meditating and praying to God until the Almighty revealed the name of our Church through our bishop. We used to meet together at Kenvatta hospital in a building which was hitherto used as a Church by the members of the armed forces. We broke away with the whole ADC assembly of Kenvatta hospital of which I was the pastor. James Omufogo who was the ADC pastor at Kabete came along with the whole of his flock.⁵⁴

The COBEA has branches in the major towns of Kenya and the founder members aimed at preaching the gospel to the Eastern countries of Africa. The COBEA headquarters was shifted from Nairobi (at Kenyatta hospital) to Kiriba village in central Maragoli location of Vihiga district. This is where the bishop also resides. The transfer of the COBEA headquarters took place in 1989 when the JCC split from the COBEA accompanied by a mass exodus of faithfuls from the latter to the former which almost spelt the demise of the COBEA. The reasons for this split and the exodus of faithfuls shall be given later in this chapter.

The leadership structure of the COBEA is such that the Bishop is the head of the Church and is assisted by the Vice-Bishop. Below him are the senior pastors and the pastors. Parallel to them are the Secretary, Treasurer, Mother Assembly⁵⁵ and Mother branch⁵⁶. Two or more assemblies in the COBEA form a branch.

Baptism is through immersion. Those immersed before in other denominations are issued with new baptismal cards bearing the name of this Church when they become members. The Holy Communion is not celebrated.

As we shall observe in chapter three, the JCC borrowed its leadership structure from the COBEA. All the foregoing COBEA offices exist in the JCC with an exception of that of Mother branch and the Vice-Bishop. The JCC chose to have a Mother assembly to be in-charge of women affairs in every branch instead of a Mother branch. The JCC Bishop's office is a ceremonial one aimed at making this Church's leadership structure resemble that of the COBEA.

The JCC also practices the COBEA's system of baptism by immersion for the adults as shall be observed in chapter three. Unlike the COBEA, the JCC observes the Holy Communion although it has not yet found a central and significant place in the life and thought of the JCC as shall be shown in chapter four. Therefore, the COBEA has influenced the JCC in as far as the latter's leadership structure and practices are concerned.

2.6 Mary Akatsa as a COBEA Member and her founding of the JCC

Mary Akatsa joined the COBEA in 1987 and she occasionally attended the Church's services at the Kamisa branch near Katina in Kawangware. Meanwhile, she continued praying and prophesying to her faithfuls in her landlord's compound at the Muslim village. Mary Akatsa's prophetic powers and faith healing reputation had spread by this time and sooner, she restricted all her Church activities to the Muslim village due to her large number of faithfuls who preferred to have a particular place where they could be prayed for. There was no official branch of the COBEA at the Muslim village although pastors and even the Bishop of the COBEA attended Church services at the Muslim village especially on Wednesdays and Saturdays and preached to people while Mary Akatsa prayed and prophesied.

Even so, the presence of the prophetess at the Muslim village dominated everything due to her charismatic gifts of faith healing and prophecy⁵⁷. COBEA faithfuls deserted their branches in order to be prayed for by Akatsa while their leaders attempted to appoint leaders at the Muslim village as a means of limiting the influence of

the prophetess in order to avoid any possible split within their Church. The greatest mistake made by the COBEA leaders is that they excluded Mary Akatsa from the Muslim village's COBEA branch cadre of leaders. She was not even appointed a junior pastor because it was claimed that the COBEA constitution did not provide for women ministers⁵⁵. However, the fact that Mary Akatsa was not even made a mother assembly or a 'branch'⁵⁹ official implies that the men founders of the COBEA were determined to frustrate the prophetess even from the field which had been temporarily surrendered to her by her landlord for the purposes of praying and prophesying. The names of those appointed leaders at the Muslim village and their designations are as follows:

- (i) Duncan Amangala, the Pastor.
- (ii) Joram Emusigo, Assistant Pastor
- (iii) Margaret Anyona was the mother assembly who was later succeeded by Rebecca Muhonja.

All these leaders came from Vihiga district, the district where the COBEA headquarters is now based⁶⁰. Between 1988-1989, Mary Akatsa targetted her prophetic powers to the COBEA leaders. As shall be observed in chapter three and four, Mary Akatsa is believed to have the gift of prophecy which enables her to detect the cause of one's problems, misfortunes and ailments. She is also believed to have the powers which can enable her to detect the name of a stranger and even describe where the stranger comes from and whatever good or bad a person has done in a life time. To prove the authenticity of her prophecy, the prophetess has the habit of giving tangible evidence such as giving directions of where, for

instance, a thief has hidden a stolen item. Her prophecy is believed to be all truth by all her faithfuls and she had already established her prophetic records in Kawangware by 1987⁶¹.

Therefore, whatever Mary Akatsa revealed concerning the COBEA leaders at the Muslim village was believed to be true⁶². In 1988, the prophetess revealed that Margaret Anyona had gone around collecting money from Indians claiming that she was the popular Mary Akatsa of Kawangware who would bless them. Following this, Anyona abandoned the Muslim village gathering and also resigned from her role as the Mother assembly at the same time.

Her successor, Rebecca Muhonja was also revealed later by Mary Akatsa to have committed the same offence which enabled her to acquire a television set from an Asian who badly needed prayers due to his son's mental problem. She also followed the same suit before the prophetess could provide further tangible evidence through her prophecy⁶³.

In 1989, Akatsa revealed that pastor Duncan Amangala was a devil worshipper who had a domesticated snake in his rural home. The foundress was allegedly ready to lead her faithfuls to the home of the pastor, so that she could show them where their 'man of God' had hidden his witchcraft pet. Keeping of pets such as a snake or a leopard as a practice in witchcraft among the Luhya is not unusual⁶⁴. For a Church minister, it was like worshipping another god other than the Almighty God hence contrary to the ten commandments. The pastor allegedly disappeared.

The last 'prophetic hammer' fell on the COBEA Bishop Absolom Amoi after he had officiated over Mary's wedding to her husband,

Francis Akatsa at the Friends Church headquarters in Nairobi⁶⁵. The Bishop was present when the prophetess amazingly revealed to the whole congregation that he made love to his daughter which was incest of the highest degree⁶⁶.

The COBEA Bishop allegedly attempted to deny this revelation but the prophetess challenged him to recall his daughter from his rural home so that she could bear witness for her. The Bishop who was very embarrassed left the Muslim village never to come back again. The failure of the Bishop to recall his daughter and his decision to abandon the Muslim COBEA gathering altogether, indirectly confirmed the revelation of Mary Akatsa concerning his incestuous act. He transferred his headquarters from Nairobi to Vihiga district and this marked the final split between the COBEA and the JCC. Mary Akatsa retained the majority of COBEA faithfuls among others. Therefore, whereas the COBEA broke away with at least two branches of the ADC in 1969, they incurred a heavy blow when twenty years later, Mary Akatsa retained the majority of COBEA faithfuls.

All the same, the COBEA leaders are to blame due to their male chauvinistic attitude towards women Church leaders. They wanted to oppress women leadership in independent churches ecclesiastically and the repercussions were painful. This shows that women are determined in ecclesiastical equality and there is nothing that will stop them.

Sundkler has given us the example of a woman called Filipina Buthelezi Dlamini who had to quit many churches including the Lutheran church because she was ecclesiastically oppressed. Filipina

was allegedly possessed by the Holy Spirit who enabled her to perform faith healing. Other churches could not tolerate her at all. She finally joined the Holy Apostolic Gaza group which was tolerant and where she virtually became the powerful leader of the local group⁶⁷. This shows that women just like men have the potential to lead and when frustrated, they may likely find an alternative to the detriment of their frustrators.

For instance, when the researcher visited the COBEA branch at Kenyatta Hospital which is the headquarters of all Nairobi based branches, there were only five faithfuls waiting for their male pastor impatiently. It was already past midday. Obviously, this was a miserably poor attendance and may point to an imminent demise of this Church⁶⁸.

After winning her ecclesiastical freedom, Mary Akatsa named her new team of JCC leaders. The group included her former employer, Mary Wamboi whom she had worked for as a house maid. The Pastor was John Nyawalo who was later replaced by a one time member of Parliament for Makadara Constituency, Fredrick Esao Omido. George Opeywa was a Sunday school teacher, while Aggrey Otieno was the treasurer. On the JCC constitution, Aggrey Otieno is indicated as the Senior Pastor while Priscilla Kakai is the treasurer⁶⁹. There is no contradiction here. The foundress has been hiring and firing leaders in her Church due to one reason or the other. As we shall observe in chapter three, even some people whose names appear on the constitution of the JCC are no longer leaders. All the same, the JCC has given a woman a chance for self display and assured her of a great measure of power and prestige

as shall be seen in chapter three.

2.7 The Church: Composition and membership

(a) Composition

Mary Akatsa is a phenomenon that is drawing a large and growing number of believers (as well as on-lookers) not only from different parts of Kenya but from neighbouring countries and overseas as well. In the course of the field work, we found that the vast majority of her followers are Kenyan Africans. However, people of different races, ages and social classes go to her Church at the Muslim village of Kawangware area seeking cures for various physical, mental and social ailments although the majority of her followers are women who come along with their children.

There are three branches of the JCC which are all based in the western province of Kenya. The total number of registered members⁷⁰ was 11,222 as by January 1993. The headquarters of the JCC at Kawangware in Nairobi has around 8,000 registered members⁷¹. It is followed by the JCC's main branch at Ebusiralo where the foundress comes from which has about 2,800 registered members⁷². The branch at Mlimani in Lugari division of Kakamega district has 256 members who have been registered⁷³. The branch at Eshirandu in Khwisero division of Kakamega district has about 166 registered members⁷⁴. The headquarters of the JCC is unique in the sense that it has two categories of membership namely: the registered and unregistered members. The unregistered members⁷⁵ are the majority during all services at the headquarters and provide a recruitment base for the JCC because most registered members in this Church

have at all times existed as unregistered members.

There is an allegation among the JCC members that this Church has over 900,000 registered members worldwide. The researcher found out that such an allegation is obviously untrue. Our own findings which are based on the membership records at the JCC headquarters and the three branches in western province of Kenya show that there are a total of 11,222 registered members of this Church. At least 15 unregistered members appear before the foundress every week on Sunday seeking registration as members. About 10 adults are usually accepted to become registered members every week. In 1990, there were 5,000 registered members of the JCC⁷⁶. This means that the total number of registered members in this Church has doubled within two years.

We have already pointed out that women are the majority in this Church both at the headquarters in Nairobi and in all the branches. These women come along with their children especially on Sunday who later group together to form the 'Sunday school children of the JCC'⁷⁷. The majority of these women are illiterate⁷⁸. Problems which bring most women to this Church are barrenness, delay in conception and unhappy marriages⁷⁹.

The majority of JCC registered members are Luhya and most of them are drawn from Kakamega and Vihiga districts where the three existing branches of this Church have been opened⁸⁰. The majority of her Luhya registered faithfuls come from the Banyore, Maragoli and Kisa subtribes of the Luhya ethnic group. The foundress comes from the Banyore subtribe where the Ebusiralo branch of the JCC is also located. This branch has a Bishop and it

is the largest at branch level in terms of registered members. According to the researcher, it is not fair to conclude that the JCC is essentially a Luhya phenomenon. The number of people from other ethnic groups is steadily increasing. Therefore, this Church has also achieved a remarkably wide ethnic range and has even attracted people from other races such as Asians and people of European origin (see footnote 63).

At the ethnic level, the Kikuyu are the second largest to the Luhya as far as registered members are concerned⁸¹. The third in this order are the Luo and the Kisii are the fourth. The other ethnic groups such as the Kamba, Taita, Kalenjin and Maasai among others are only a handful. The same also applies to Indians and whites whose presence is conspicuous. Indians come almost on a weekly basis while whites come once in a while.

The JCC has attracted people from neighbouring countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Zaire whom the researcher came across. Some of them have registered membership in this Church⁸². These people have come to Kenya in search of employment and business opportunities. Most of these 'greener-pasture seeking' people have been forced out of their countries by social political reasons. The majority of these aliens are from Uganda⁸³.

Most of the JCC members belong to the lower social and economic class and they have been hit hard by unemployment either due to lack of enough education or training⁸⁴. The number of individuals in the upper class who are well disposed to this Church is not large. However, some upper class members have registered

in this Church while others belong to the category of unregistered members. These include some prominent people in our Kenyan society such as politicians⁸⁵, professionals and businessmen. In fact, it is not possible for one to find a parking space in the forecourt of the compound by midday and one can see limousine drivers jostling for space with the drivers of less prestigious cars. This demonstrates the wide socio-economic strata of the children of Mummy. What is most important is the JCC's conviction of having a mission to the whole global community, and her ability to attract even a small elite and people from other races is significant.

As far as the age-structure is concerned, most members in this Church are in their middle life that is between 18-55 years. Children come second while the old (55 years and above) are the least in number.

Most JCC members are drawn from her neighbourhood. At the headquarters level, this refers to Nairobi area, especially those residential places occupied by the low income people which are known as the 'eastlands'. They include Kawangware estate (where the Muslim village is situated), Kangemi, Riruta, Kibera, Huruma, Mathare, Kariobangi, Kikuyu and Katina to mention only a few. Other members are drawn from Nairobi's prestigious estates such as Lavington, Loresho, Kileleshwa, Spring Valley, Westlands and even Parklands among others. From such prestigious estates, the majority of her faithfuls are domestic workers⁸⁶. We should also note here that people travel from other towns such as Machakos, Kiambu, Muranga, Naivasha, Gilgil and others to the JCC headquarters for prayers. Some of them are registered members while others are

unregistered members.

At the branch level, the issue of neighbourhood also determines membership. For instance, most JCC registered members at the Ebusiralo branch are the Banyore followed by the Maragoli because this branch is located in Emuhaya division (among the Banyore) and borders the Maragoli. These areas are within Vihiga district. At the Eshirandu branch of Khwisero division in Kakamega district, the majority of registered members here are the Kisa subtribe of the Luhya ethnic group⁸⁷. At the Mlimani branch, different Luhya subtribes are represented since this area is regarded as a settlement scheme which was occupied or settled later by mostly Luyhas who were moving away from their already overpopulated ancestral lands in Kakamega and Vihiga districts⁸⁸.

Therefore, at the branch level, the JCC is essentially a Luhya phenomenon although the prophetess is making an impression on other ethnic groups among the Luyhas such as the Kikuyu, the Teso and the Luo⁸⁹. Like Nairobi, the JCC branches also attract people from distant areas who are registered members and who occasionally attend branch Sunday services. The researcher discovered that some JCC registered members from Busia and Siaya districts attended JCC Sunday branch services at Ebusiralo and Eshirandu respectively. Some registered members in Kitale and Webuye travelled for over 30 kilometers to attend Sunday services at the Mlimani branch in Lugari division.

At the occupational level, the majority of JCC members are unemployed or lack permanent jobs. The membership also consists of small traders and farmers, clerks, artisans, drivers, watchmen,

policemen and military personnel. The presence of policemen and military personnel in this Church indicates that the foundress has made a great impact on them as we shall explain in this chapter.

Among those visitors from abroad the majority of whom are simply curious, are tourists from Italy. The researcher came across an Italian couple who usually bring catholic tourists from Italy to Kenya to visit the JCC among others. The couple has allegedly had a lucrative business in this venture since the phenomenon of independence among churches and the role of women in such a phenomenon is not only unique but also interesting to the predominantly Roman Catholic Italy. The man told the researcher that he had resigned his job as a physics lecturer in an Italian University in order to seriously exploit this opportunity as a tour agent⁹⁰.

(b) Membership in the JCC

According to the JCC constitution, membership in this Church is determined by the following⁹¹:

- (i) One becomes a member after accepting Christ as his or her saviour and upon acceptance, one lives and leads a Christian life.
- (ii) Membership is open to all who accept to conform to the rules and objectives of the JCC.
- (iii) Any person who deviates from the objectives of the JCC is expelled and ceases to be a member immediately.
- (iv) Any person so removed or expelled shall not be entitled to any refund of any subscription contributed by him

or her to the JCC.

- (v) Any member who infringes the rules and or objectives of the JCC shall be expelled by the leader of the Church, such expulsion shall be exercised where, if the leader feels that such a member should be expelled on the grounds that the member's conduct has adversely affected the reputation of the Church.
- (vi) Every member shall pay an annual subscription of such sum of money as may from time to time be determined by the Patron's committee in consultation with the Assembly Committees.

Although baptism is one of the objectives of this Church, the constitution does not mention baptism by immersion through which full membership is effected.

The JCC branches consist of only registered category of members. These are adult men or women who personally decide to belong to the JCC as their Christian denomination. After registration, the new members have to meet expenses for their worship robe which may be either made locally by their Church tailor or purchased at the JCC headquarters in Nairobi. These people are usually registered by the Church leaders at the branch level and they are expected to be presented before the prophetess for confirmation or refusal of their registration when she visits the branches. These presentation may take long since the foundress takes some lapse of time before visiting any given branch⁹⁴. However, Mary Akatsa maintains that she 'visits' these JCC branches spiritually through her gift of 'revelation' which enables her to keep

in touch with all her members and the world at large⁹³.

At the JCC headquarters, registered members are admitted to this Church with the consent of the prophetess who must be satisfied through her gift of 'revelation' that one is worth to be a registered member. This normally takes place on Sundays every week. The foundress prefers that all those seeking to register at the headquarters first participate in the JCC services as unregistered members. Infact, it is very common for those seeking to register to be asked to state how long they have participated in the JCC as unregistered members. The aim of participating in the JCC services for a certain period before registration is meant to prepare one to become a responsible member. It also gives one enough time to decide so that he or she may not regret afterwards⁹⁴.

Since membership is a personal decision, those who have decided to register in this Church would come on a Sunday and sit among the registered members at a space especially set aside for them. They have to wait patiently for the arrival of the prophetess to either confirm or reject their bid to register in this Church. All of them must appear before her for 'revelation' whereby, whatever evil they might have committed in the past and also on the material day is revealed before the congregation of registered members. Those whom the foundress will find to be 'spiritually half-baked' are given more time to continue attending the services with the unregistered members until their right time comes. Both men and women who have either separated from, deserted or divorced their partners without any apparent reasons are requested to reconcile

their marriages before being allowed to register. Married women must be accompanied by their husbands who are supposed to give consent before their wives are registered.

Even so, Mary Akatsa encourages both the husband and the wife to register in her Church for the sake of religious harmony and the general stability of the family. She also encourages unmarried women to find husbands before seeking to register in the JCC. However, single women who also include widows are allowed to register although they are the least in number as far as the population of registered members in the JCC is concerned. The same also applies to the unmarried men who can also register after appearing before Mummy. We should note here that the registration age is from eighteen years and above. The majority of those who register in the JCC are the married.

Members of a polygamous family are allowed to register. Upon registration, one is not supposed to take up another wife in addition to the one or ones he already has. Such an offence may lead to the expulsion of one from the JCC. The unmarried who register in this Church must not lead a promiscuous life and they are expected to seek for marriage partners from their homes of origin preferably in the rural areas⁹⁵. Inter-marriage between JCC members is strongly prohibited because members of this Church regard each other as brothers and sisters with one mother (Mummy) and one father (Daddy).

JCC registered members are expected to avoid certain prohibited foods such as the Nile perch, pork, pigeon meat, sacrificial foods and carcasses. They must shun witchcraft, magic

and sorcery. Registered members are not supposed to consult traditional medicinemen or use traditional herbs whenever they fall sick. Prostitution, smoking and alcoholism must be avoided. Members must also avoid visiting night clubs, discos, movies and cinema halls (except when they are featuring a Christian film). Members of the JCC must also avoid certain gatherings that may bring the Church into any antagonistic relationship with the government.

Women seeking to register in the JCC are not expected to use any artificial means of family planning because it is believed that only God can plan a family. Women are not supposed to plait their hair. They are not allowed to visit saloons, apply eye-elbows, lipstick or even cutex. They must not wear earrings or even bangles. A female member is not supposed to wear a pair of trousers or shorts. They must avoid miniskirts, high healed shoes or transparent clothes. The foregoing are associated with prostitution and that they are not necessary to make one descent. In brief, the JCC is puritanical in its attitude towards the western culture. Some aspects of traditional African religion are discouraged. It has certain taboos drawn from the O.T. This is also what Welbourn discovered of the AICN as a 'spirit' Church⁹⁶.

Those accepted by the foundress to register in this Church have to pay 47 shillings for registration renewed annually. The money is paid to the Secretary who issues the neophyte with a serialized receipt whose numbers henceforth become the registration number of the neophyte. During the roll call which usually takes place every Sunday and occasionally during funerals, this number

is marked against by the secretary and his assistants to indicate the presence or the absence of all registered members.

The neophytes are expected to introduce themselves to the congregation of registered members through a public address system as soon as the prophetess accepts them to register. One will start by greeting the said congregation telling them his or her names, where he or she comes from and why he or she has decided to register in this Church. Finally, he or she will request the registered members to accept him or her to join them⁹⁷. This self-public introduction is done in Kiswahili which is the national language in Kenya and it goes like this:

Neophyte: Children of Mummy Praise the Lord...

Members: Praise Him...

Neophyte: Praise Him again...

Members: Praise Him...

Neophyte: My name is ... and I come from ...

Mummy prayed for me and I healed from an incurable ailment. Therefore, I have today decided to join you so that we may suckle Mummy's milk⁹⁸ together. Please do you welcome me...?

Members: You are welcome ...!

It is common for members registering in this Church to claim that they or their relatives have been healed by Mary Akatsa of an incurable ailment hence prompting them to register in this Church.

Neophytes pay for their worship robes which is only won by registered members during funerals and Sunday every week. The

worship robe is tailored by the Church tailor appointed by the foundress. Remnant pieces from worship robes are destroyed by the foundress to ensure that enemies do not bewitch them and hence her children. If possible, male members must wear their worship caps wherever they go.

The JCC worship robe for women is a white long dress with sky blue standing collar, sky blue cuffs and sky blue belt. For men, long white robes with front opening, sky blue standing collar, sky blue cuffs and sky blue belt. Women wear white headscarfs, and for men, white blue white and top blue caps. Upon expulsion or ceasing to be a member, the uniform of the expelled member is returned to the Church and his or her money is refunded⁹⁹.

After the blessings of ready made worship robes by the foundress, elderly registered members are called upon to officially dress the neophytes. This is done on Sunday before the entire congregation of registered members. The worship robe must be worn on top of other ordinary clothings¹⁰⁰. Worship robes are not shared¹⁰¹. The sacredness of the JCC worship robe is reinforced by the belief that it was the one 'Jesus' was wearing when he visited the JCC headquarters in 1988¹⁰².

The JCC uses different recruitment techniques to acquire members for her Church. We have already noted that at the headquarters level, one is expected to participate as an unregistered member before Mary Akatsa allows him or her to register. Therefore, the maintenance of two membership categories at the JCC headquarters is a recruitment technique since this Church draws most of her registered members from the unregistered congregation.

There is also membership by birth whereby, those children whose parents have registered in the JCC are also regarded as members in the category of registered members. However, on attaining the age of eighteen years, these children are expected to register like other adult members. This shows that the JCC expects her Sunday School children¹⁰³ to make a personal decision whether to belong to this Church or not.

The JCC also acquires her members through faith-healing associated with the prophetess. As we have noted earlier, the majority of registered JCC members believe that they or their relatives were healed by the foundress of ailments which were otherwise incurable. It is their testimonies which have kept alive Mary Akatsa's reputation as a faith healer¹⁰⁴. JCC members believe that registering in this Church minimises the chances of any relapse for those who had been healed. Since the causes of most ailments in the JCC are mystical, it is usually advisable for all family members to register in this Church as a way of taking preventive measures.

Therefore, healing is a recruitment technique in the JCC and Mummy has appointed a resident photographer to be taking photographs of her healing miracles. JCC members usually show these photographs to non-members wherever they are talking about their Mummy and the miracles God performs through her. This is the way most Indians found their way to this Church through their African workers who happened to be Luhyas from western province of Kenya¹⁰⁵. These workers were JCC members.

The foundress also uses her mysterious gift of revelation to

attract people to her Church. Visitors are for instance told by the foundress their reason for coming to the JCC headquarters. Usually, they concur with her giving the impression that this gift of revelation or prophecy enables her to see through peoples lives and to reveal the truth about them. It is very common for the prophetess to identify AIDS patients, impotent men and barren women in her Church during revelations. She claims that she usually reads peoples problems on their faces or on her own watch or palm during revelations¹⁰⁶. In the course of our research, people from different races were revealed by the foundress and they confessed before everybody that the foundress had revealed the truth about them¹⁰⁷.

It is a tradition for Mary Akatsa to reveal people in this Church before praying for them. This practice is very popular among JCC members who seek answers to their complex situations hence they end up coming to this Church for revelations. Most of them finally register in this Church because registered JCC members are subjected to a lot of revelations since they have more time with the prophetess than the unregistered members.

Other people became members of the JCC because they read about Mary Akatsa through the media. The local dailies have carried more than thirty articles on various spectacular activities of the JCC since 1988. These have obviously attracted people to this Church due to curiosity¹⁰⁸.

The labour aspect of the JCC is also noteworthy. Youths leave their antisocial ways in order to serve Jesus and the prophetess finds jobs for them so that they may not backslide. At least twenty

youths are offered gainful employment by the foundress every week. The JCC is like a labour office for sinners who repent and join it. Other members come to be prayed for so that they may find jobs¹⁰⁹.

Jobs are usually offered by Mummy's prominent children¹¹⁰ who believe that they owe their success to her due to her prayers. These are Asians, prominent businessmen, civil servants and above all, politicians who solicit votes from the JCC¹¹¹. These employers believe in the revelations of the foundress as axiomatic and also trust employees from this Church because they are directly recruited by the foundress through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Most employers also claimed that their employees from this Church can be relied upon and are very disciplined because they are 'born again' Christians. This suggests that most people tend to believe that religion moulds one's character to be good and reliable. Employers also believe that they or their business is blessed when they employ a job seeker from this Church. Drivers are expected to have driving licences while other jobs may not necessarily follow the qualifications of an employee¹¹².

Most jobs offered in the JCC are temporal such as working at the construction site for male members and baby sitting for female members. However, they offer an alternative means of earning a living instead of, for instance, indulging oneself in prostitution or theft. Because Mary Akatsa was a maid herself, JCC members are encouraged to take up any job and work diligently so that they may be blessed like her.

The oratorical expertise of the foundress must also be noted, that is, her ability to hold the attention of thousands during her

services for long hours. She is also a humorous character¹¹³, a hymnal of her Church and the chief choir master¹¹⁴. All these attract people to this Church.

Other people join the JCC because of the way registered members are catered for during life crises, in this context, death. This Church usually takes care of all funeral expenses and provides labour and food to the home of the bereaved including digging of the grave. This lures thousands of people to this Church especially those from low income class residing in Nairobi who may not afford to foot funeral expenses when death knocks on their doors. The JCC owns two mini-buses which may be used during funerals.

The fact that JCC members are not expected to intermarry and yet encouraged to register in this Church after marriage is a recruitment technique for new members. This is because, new members find their way into this Church through the institution of a family.

During funeral services, the foundress usually preaches to non-members highlighting how well her Church treats her members who are bereaved. This is actually a recruitment technique to attract non-members to this Church. Normally, non-members are challenged to come to the JCC headquarters and witness for themselves miracles God performs through her and her gift of revelations. She therefore uses such occasions to 'market' her spiritual endowments to those who know little or nothing about her.

The foundress also appoints senior military and police officers in the JCC to positions of responsibility in this Church¹¹⁵. This prompts them to encourage their juniors to come along with them

which has always been the case in this Church. Appointments are therefore used as a recruitment technique by Mary Akatsa and this may explain the conspicuous presence of police officers and military personnel in the JCC. Some JCC members registered in this Church following a dream in which they were either directed to the JCC headquarters or to the prophetess in the course of their or their relatives' ailments¹¹⁶.

In summary, the majority of JCC members found their way into this Church due to their various physical, social and mental ailments. Therefore, healing and revelation are the major attraction of people to this Church. The majority of JCC members are the unregistered who consider this Church as a healing and revelatory institute. The registered members and those seeking to register in this Church consider the JCC as a stable religious home comparable to any other Christian denomination and therefore, hope to benefit from what this Church offers to registered members.

2.8 Footnotes

1. Mwatha J.K. : Uncontrolled urban settlement in the Rural-Urban Fringe of Nairobi: A case study of Kawangware Township (M.A. Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1979). P. 115.
2. Matsuda Motoji: Urbanization and adoption: A reorganisation process of social Relations Among the Maragoli Migrants in their Urban colony, Kangeme, Nairobi (M.A. Thesis, University of Kyoto, Japan 1984). P. 17
3. Mwatha J.K., op. cit. P. 119.
4. Matsuda M., op. cit pp. 17-25
5. Mwatha J.K., op. cit. pp. 119-123.
6. This was discovered in the course of our field research.
7. Barrett D.B. (1973) op. cit pp 230-251.
8. Matsuda Motoji; op. cit pp. 25-34.
9. Wagner G, op. cit. pp. 167-178.
10. Wagner G, op. cit. pp. 159-163.
11. Wagner G, op. cit. pp. 295-500.
12. Wagner G, op. cit. p. 103.
13. Ibid.
14. Wagner G, op. cit. pp. 111-148.
15. Wagner G, op. cit. pp. 159-163.
16. Wagner G, op. cit. pp. 152-156.
17. Wagner G, op. cit. p. 242.
18. An interview with Mrs Susana Musala Wamboye, 80 on 24/12/92 at Butere in Kakamega District.

- 19 See operational definitions
- 20 Ibid;
- 21 Ibid;
- 22 Ibid;
- 23 Interview with the foundress on 17/10/92.
- 24 Ibid;
- 25 Mr. Shem Sirima is the Bishop of JCC and he confirmed this information as true before the whole congregation on 29/11/92.
- 26 Mary Akatsa explained on 17/10/92 that this dream prophesied for the first time her mission on the world as a true agent of Jesus Christ.
- 27 Interview with Mary Akatsa on 13/1/92.
- 28 Ibid;
- 29 Interview with the prophetess on 17/10/92.
- 30 Mary Wamboi is the Senior Mother Assembly at the headquarters of the Jerusalem Church of Christ in Nairobi.
- 31 Franco's family believed that Mary Akatsa was a mad girl and also a witch who had employed witchcraft (love portions) to influence their son to marry her.
- 32 The researcher also interviewed the Senior Mother Assembly on 22/11/92 and she confirmed the information as true.
- 33 Mary Akatsa said these words on 5/12/92 while she was preaching to members of the JCC about the need for unity since there is only one God.
- 34 Interview with Mr. Staus Amoi, Senior Pastor of the COBEA, Kamisa branch on 2/1/93 in Nairobi.
- 35 Cowie, A.P., Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (London,

- OUP, 1989) p. 804.
36. Akaranga, S.I., Birth and initiation into adulthood in relation to Baptism and confirmation among the Avaioogoli of Kenya (M.A., unpublished thesis, University of Nairobi, 1986). pp. 201-203.
37. Ibid;
38. Akaranga S.I. Op. cit., p. 32.
39. Mary Akatsa's narration of her life history to the JCC members on 11/10/92. She disclosed that the late Lorna Sangolo was over a hundred years when she passed away in the year 1989. This information was also confirmed by Mary's father when he was interviewed later by the researcher on the same day.
40. Wagner G., The changing Family among the Bantu Kavirondo (London, OUP, 1939) p. 11.
41. Wagner G., Op. cit., p. 10.
42. Ibid;
43. Ibid;
44. Wagner, G., The Bantu of western Kavirondo: with special reference to the Bukusu and Logoli (London, OUP, 1970). P. 90.
45. Wagner, G., Op. cit., (1970) pp. 159-167 and Osogo, J., Life in Kenya in the Olden days: The Baluhya: (London, OUP, 1965). p. 49.
46. Wagner, G., Op. cit., (1970), pp. 96-101.
47. Interview with the foundress on 17/10/92.
48. This implies that she derives her powers from Jesus Christ. The urban environment has influenced her language style.
49. Mr. Stanley Jogoo surrendered the site which was being used

by the PAG Church for prayers to her daughter so that she could build her Church on it.

50. The prophetess told JCC members on 18/11/92 that she appointed Shem Sirima to be a Bishop in the JCC although he had declined to take care of her before her father dumped her in the forest. The appointment was meant to make him realize the need for Christian responsibility and also to make him regret his earlier unchristian act. The Bishop was present and he concurred with her.
51. Barrett, D.B. (ed) "Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498-1973. (Kisumu, Evangel Publishing House, 1973) P. 248.
52. Hollenweger, W. The Pentecostals (London, SCM Press Ltd., 1972) PP. 3-72.
53. Barrett, D.B. op. cit., (1973), P. 231.
54. Interview with Staus Amoi on 3/1/93 at Kenyatta Hospital branch of COBEA.
55. A woman member appointed to deal with women affairs in an assembly of the Church.
56. A woman member appointed to deal with women affairs in a branch of the Church.
57. The majority of those who came to the Muslim village wanted to be prayed for by the prophetess and not to listen to sermons by COBEA leaders.
58. According to Staus Amoi, Mary Akatsa was expelled from the COBEA because she attempted to grab leadership unconstitutionally.

- 59 On 3/1/93, Staus Amoi claimed that the Muslim village was not yet an official branch of the COBEA .
- 60 Interview with the JCC historian, John Francis Okeno on 28/10/92.
- 61 The researcher witnessed this practice in the JCC for more than one year. Those paraded before the entire Church and subjected to these revelations were also interviewed. In brief, they all confirmed her revelations.
- 62 Interview with Renison Muyekho Burudi on 3/11/92.
- 63 Interview with John Francis Okeno on 29/10/92.
- 64 Wagner, G. The Bantu of Western Kavirondo (London, OUP, 1970) P. 130.
- 65 On 3/1/93, Staus Amoi narrated to the researcher that Mary Akatsa was initially obedient to COBEA leaders. Later, she became 'big headed' after our Bishop Absolom Amoi had presided over her wedding in 1989. This wedding stabilized her marriage hence making her to become arrogant to her 'mentors'. He reiterated that Mary's prophetic revelations have no truth in them. They are fabrications.
- 66 Interview with John Francis Okeno on 29/10/92.
- 67 Sundkler B.G.M., Op. cit., P. 143.
- 68 The researcher visited the Kenyatta branch of the COBEA on 3/1/93.
- 69 The list was obtained by the researcher from the office of the Registrar of Societies as part of the JCC constitution.
- 70 See operational definitions for the meaning of the term 'members of the JCC'.

- 71 The researcher perused the JCC records at the headquarters. JCC members who assist the Secretary in marking the roll call were also interviewed. They requested anonymity.
- 72 The researcher visited the Ebusiralo branch on 13/12/92 and interviewed Reverend Harrison Anyoso and a Church elder, John Masira on the same day.
- 73 The researcher visited the Mlimani branch on 6/12/92 and interviewed the Secretary Mrs. Jones Jamwoba and a youth leader Benson Andego.
- 74 We visited the Eshirandu branch on 20/12/92 and interviewed the secretary who seemed to be the only church leader on temporal basis. He also requested anonymity.
- 75 See operational definitions for the meaning of the term 'unregistered members'.
- 76 This information is derived from the JCC constitution.
- 77 These are children of registered members. They are all under 18 years hence the need for them to be prepared to live and to lead a Christian way of life.
- 78 The researcher extensively interviewed more than 50 members of the JCC who consisted of women, men and children.
- 79 Ibid;
- 80 During her demonstration of this church's national outlook, the Luhya are not referred to as an ethnic group. Instead, Mary Akatsa would prefer to refer to them by their subtribes or their district. For instance, 'my children from Bungoma' here will be referring to the Bukusu. This shows that she is aware of the ethnic majority of the Luhya in the JCC and tries all

her best to play down this fact.

81 In an attempt to demonstrate the national and even the international outlook of the JCC, the foundress may on request or on her own ask members of this Church from different ethnic groups to be lifting up their hands against the name of their ethnic group when she calls it. This happened severally at the headquarters and even during funerals. It is possible to identify ethnic numerical incidence in this manner.

82 Interview with Charles Selubiri, a Ugandan and Bomboko Rousseau, a Zairean on 15/11/92. They are both registered members.

83 The foundress requested her children from Uganda to sing a hymn during a funeral function at Githunguri division in Kiambu district on 30/6/92 in an attempt to demonstrate the international image of her Church. Six Ugandan registered members turned up and entertained mourners in Kiganda dialect.

84 It is possible to observe this during a job recruitment time where hundreds of members struggle for a few temporal jobs being offered.

85 Until June 1992, Mr. Fred Umido, a one time member of Parliament for Makadara Constituency in Nairobi was still a Pastor in the JCC.

86 This has been referred to in footnote 60.

87 The researcher is a Luhya and he was able to identify these Luhya subtribes and their numerical incidence. Khwisero

division is the homeland of the Kisa subtribe.

88 Lugari is a settlement scheme which has basically attracted
Luhvas from Vihiga and Kakamega districts.

89 The Ebusiralo branch has some Luo registered members while
a Teso woman is the secretary of the Mlimani branch.

90 Interview with Claudio Tomatis and his wife Carme Tomatis on
8/8/92. The two were freelance tour agents without a tour
name.

91 See appendix C.

92 The Mlimani branch in Lugari division was opened by Mary
Akatsa in July 1991. However, we discovered that she had not
visited this branch again by December 1992.

93 Sermon by the foundress on 20/12/92 at the JCC headquarters.

94 This was said by Mary Akatsa on 15/11/92 while addressing
JCC members.

95 This may lead to tribal or regional marriages which is
antithesis to National unity.

96 Welbourn F.B., Op. cit. P. 149.

97 This is like taking an oath before fellow registered members
to show that one has totally surrendered himself or herself to
God as it is expected of all registered JCC members.

98 This term means benefitting from the spiritual gifts of the
foundress such as revelations, healing and prayers.

99 It is not stated so in the JCC constitution. All the same,
those who were expelled returned their uniforms to the
foundress who in turn refunded their money.

100 Upon expulsion, one surrenders the worship robe there and

then hence the need to have casual cloths to remain with in case this happens to one.

101 However, upon expulsion, the worship robe is handed over to a deserving unregistered member picked upon by the prophetess to replace the expelled person.

102 JCC members who were interviewed claimed that 'Jesus' was dressed in robes which resemble the JCC worship robes hence the sacredness of their worship robe. However the researcher also believes that there was need to change the colour of the worship robe since the JCC had split from the COBEA. The latter's worship robes resembles that of the JCC by design except the fact that the JCC's sky-blue colour has replaced the COBEA's green colour.

103 This is our own interpretation.

104 See footnote 60.

105 The researcher interviewed ten Indians who occasionally come for prayers at the JCC headquarters.

106 Interview with the foundress on 17/10/92.

107 This information was derived from our informants during our field research.

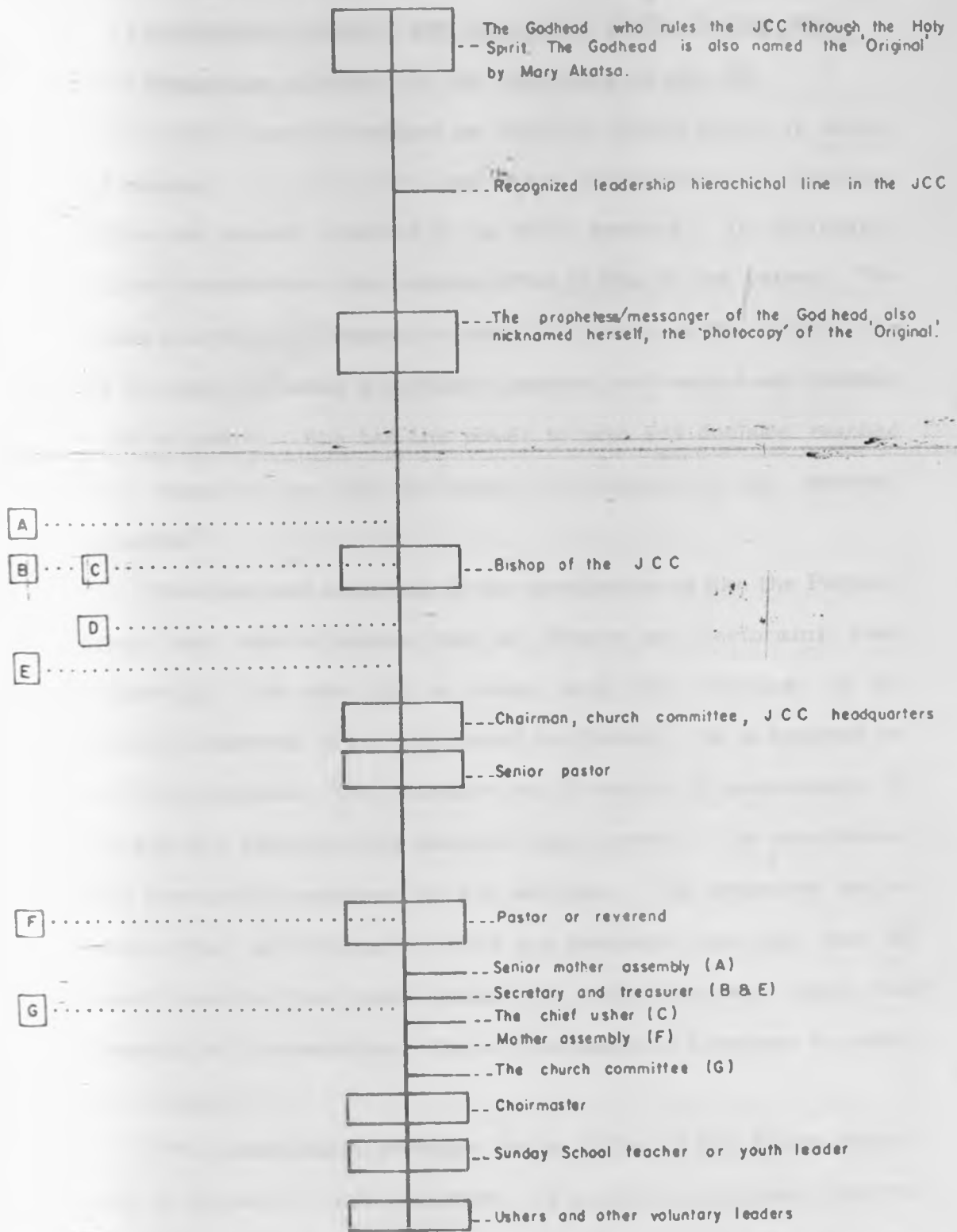
108 See also Sunday Nation 26/4/87, Sunday Time 1/2/88, Kenya Leo 28/2/88, Standard 26/6/88, Kenya Times 22/1/90 and Kenya Times 23/4/90.

109 Testimonies are usually given by JCC members during every service to prove that certain JCC members had obtained jobs after being prayed for by the foundress. During prayers, documents are usually blessed by the foundress to make them

more effective to earn a job for their bearers.

- 110 These are JCC members from the upper social economic class.
- 111 Former Makadara MP, Fred Esao Omido and current Dagoretti MP, Chris Kamuyu are JCC members partly for political reasons.
- 112 The researcher witnessed a JCC member being recruited by the foundress to work on a job that required computer and managerial skills and yet she lacked all these. Our follow-up show that she is still being taught these skills and earning a salary beyond the dreams of graduates and yet she is only a form four.
- 113 This shall be discussed in chapter three under the topic on "worship in the JCC".
- 114 There are two choirs in the JCC and it is alleged that most songs in the JCC have been composed by Mary Akatsa. However, some hymns are copyrights, the most common hymn being that one called "Neno litasimama" (the word shall stay) by kenya's popular gospel singer, Mrs. Nancy Torome.
- 115 A major in the Kenya Army is the chairman of the Church committee while a number of senior police officers are members of this committee.
- 116 Interview with Eliud Werunga Nvongesa and his wife, Sarah Nasimiyu Wafula on 13/10/92.

Diagram illustrating the leadership structure in the Jerusalem Church of Christ.



Key

<p>..... Leadership office</p> <p>A..... Senior mother assembly, JCC headquarters</p> <p>B..... Secretary, JCC headquarters</p> <p>D..... The chairman, church committee JCC hq.</p> <p>F..... Mother assembly</p>	<p>..... Positions of some JCC leaders on the leadership hierachical line, according to their role in the church</p> <p>C..... The chief usher, JCC headquarters</p> <p>E..... The JCC treasurers</p> <p>G..... Committee members in the JCC</p>
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CHAPTER THREE

LEADERSHIP, WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS RITES IN THE JCC

3.0 Prominence of women in the leadership of the JCC

A leader may be defined as one who guides others in action and opinion¹. In the JCC's and other constitutions of societies, leaders are usually referred to as office bearers². In accordance with the constitution, the highest office is that of the Patron. The Patron is overall and executive head and leader of the Church who has the absolute power and right to appoint and remove any member or office bearer. She has the power to veto any decision reached by a committee and has to attend all meetings of the Patrons' committee³.

The chairman according to the constitution is like the Patron's deputy and has to ensure that all officers are performing their duties well. He also has to attend and chair meetings of the Patron's committee in the absence of the Patron⁴. He is assisted by the vice chairman. The secretary has to record all proceedings of the Patron's committee and maintain them properly. The constitution also provides an assistant for the secretary. The treasurer has to ensure that all financial records are properly kept and that all money received has been banked and only disbursed under the direction of the committee. There is an assistant treasurer to assist the treasurer⁵.

The constitution provides for an office of the Senior Pastor who is in charge of other pastors. He performs marriages, baptism and burials. The pastors are responsible for teaching Bible lessons and conducting baptismal classes. They can also perform wedding

and burial ceremonies in the absence of the senior pastor.

The constitution also provides the existence of mother assemblies. An assembly is a group of people who have come together for a specific purpose. Each assembly has a mother assembly and there is a senior mother assembly in charge of other mothers of assemblies. The constitution provides a secretary and a treasurer for every mother assembly. These mothers of assemblies act as counsellors and have to ensure that the women members of the Church maintain a Christian character.

There is a youth section in the constitution headed by a youth leader empowered to coordinate youth activities within the objectives of the Church. The constitution also provides for the office of the choir master who is responsible for organizing choirs in the JCC that conform to the Christian teaching. The youth leader and the choir master have no constitutional assistants.

There are two committees in accordance with the constitution. The Patron's committee consists of only senior office bearers excluding the youth leader and the choirmaster. They are supposed to advise and assist the patron on all matters concerning the society's objectives and general running of the Church. The foundress may co-opt to the committee any other persons she may consider fit. The second committee is the general committee which consists of the pastor, mother assembly, youth leader, choir master, two women representatives and two youth representatives. The committee has the powers to amend the constitution of the Church. Finally, we have the auditor and trustees whose duties will be explained in the appendix C⁶.

Mary Akatsa is the patron of the JCC. She has the absolute power and right to appoint and remove any office bearer. For instance, a pastor was demoted to an ordinary member because he was introducing politics into her Church⁷. The foundress can also accept or refuse one's attempt to register in her Church. She can also suspend or expel a member of her church. All available evidence shows that she is powerful because she founded the JCC. However, the actual basis of her powers lie in the fact that she is regarded as a charismatic leader. Healing is one of the charisms recognized in the Bible⁵. Testimonies from Mary Akatsa's patients have kept alive her reputation as a faith healer⁹. We have also described the foundress as a prophetess¹⁰ and prophecy is one of the biblically based charisms¹¹. Her prophecy is manifested in her revelations which she claims come from God. Her revelations were confirmed true¹². To crown all these charismatic qualities, she is a preacher with an oratorical expertise which enables her to hold the attention of over three thousand people in a single service. We have shown that Mary Akatsa had a divine vocation to be a prophetess and therefore, her perplexing historical background prove that she was chosen for a purpose of spreading the Gospel of Christ on Earth¹³.

Upon this background, we may conclude that Mary Akatsa is a charismatic leader whose office is both earthly and spiritual¹⁴. However, the spiritual factor is overwhelming since there is nobody in her Church who can match her spiritual qualities. Her members believe that she is the last messenger of God and apart from Jesus nobody greater than her will come¹⁵.

Nobody but the foundress has the mystical powers of revelations. She further claims that her Church is a spiritual Church led by the Holy Spirit through her. This means that her words and actions are divine and therefore unquestionable. The prophetess is greatly respected and she is treated like a goddess with members striving to touch her dress or worship robe so that they may be blessed or healed. To acknowledge her powers, members fall on the ground when she slightly pushes them during revelations. While talking to her, members go down on their knees and avoid looking straight into her face. During her departure from a JCC service, she is mobbed by her members who keep running beside her car until her driver speeds off. In fact, the foundress is treated like a reigning queen with divine powers. Both JCC leaders and members show her excessive humility which even include prostrations due to her charismatic powers of revelations and faith healing.

Since this Church is led by the Holy Spirit, it does not strictly operate within the limits of a society's constitution. For instance, there is only one committee at the headquarters which is neither the patrons nor the general committee. It is simply referred to as the Church committee and the foundress briefly joins it for a few minutes every Sunday before presiding over her Church. The chairman of this committee is Geoffrey Mwangi, an Army Major. Other members are drawn from different ethnic groups in Kenya to maintain the national outlook of this Church. Besides Mary Akatsa, there are three women committee members. One of them is Mary Wamboi, the senior and apparently the only mother assembly at the

headquarters and the other is Consolata Shinyanga, who is the JCC's secretary at the headquarters. These two women do not attend the committee's proceedings since they are always engaged elsewhere.

The other 24 members of the committee are men who were directly appointed by the prophetess to this committee due to their commitment to this Church and loyalty to her. All committee members are registered members and monogamists except one member. The committee members are neither paid nor given any fringe benefits. The name of a one time MP for Makadara, Fred Umido appears on the list of committee members but he is not regarded as one since he fell out of favour with Mary Akatsa¹⁶. The list of the committee members also show that the JCC was co-founded by both Mary Akatsa and her husband, Francis 'Franco' Akatsa¹⁷. However, the husband of the foundress does not play any conspicuous role in this Church. The Church committee simply honoured him by naming him as one of the co-founders of the JCC. According to the chairman, the church committee is concerned with the promotion of the Church's objectives and the general running of this Church.

However, our research findings show that this committee is just a rubber stamp of Mary Akatsa since this Church is led by the Holy Spirit through her. Moreover, the secretary who is also the overall secretary of the JCC headquarters does not attend committee meetings due to her other commitments. This makes it difficult to assess the progress of the Church through the Church's committee.

At the branch level, there are general committees which are simply known as Church committees. They are made up of all

branch leaders appointed by Mummy such as the pastor, the treasurer, secretary, mother assembly, youth leader and choir master. The branch at Eshirandu has only one branch leader known by the nickname, "Okello Pingo"¹⁸; hence there is no Church committee. The branch committees have the same duties as the committee at the headquarters. The JCC branches have their own treasurers and bank accounts to assist their members during funerals. At the headquarters level, matters of finance are strictly dealt with by Mary Akatsa and a few selected women who are signatories to their account. The foundress allegedly picked upon herself this financial responsibility after discovering that men office bearers who had been entrusted with this responsibility had swindled the Church of millions of shillings¹⁹. This is not unusual. Sundkler discovered that the Zulu prophet, Isaiah Shembe entrusted women with financial responsibilities because he found them to be more honest than men in this capacity²⁰.

Like committee members, all JCC leaders are not entitled to monthly salary or any fringe benefits. Leadership is voluntary in the JCC. This can be best exemplified by the church historian, John Francis Okeno who offered himself to be keeping historical records of the JCC for sometime before he was later confirmed by the foundress. He is the only leader in the JCC who operates independently. All other JCC leaders including ushers operate under the direct supervision of Mary Akatsa. Apart from the bishop and a senior pastor at Ebusiralo, the rest of the leaders at the branch level have not been confirmed although they have been appointed by Mummy to act in their various respective capacities.

The JCC Bishop and the Pastors are old persons above sixty years. Mary Akatsa claims that older persons can make better leaders because they lack the youthful blood that may lure one into immorality and that they can also exercise self restraint. With an exception of the JCC Bishop, none of JCC leaders has acknowledged faith healing powers. The JCC Bishop is said to have been a charismatic leader in the PAG Church in the early 60's who spoke in tongues and healed the sick²¹. Perhaps this may also explain why Mary Akatsa appointed him Bishop at the JCC. However, it is only the foundress who reveals and prays for the sick in the JCC.

The foundress is not close to any JCC leader although it is obvious that the chief usher, Francis Ligaya (popularly known as professor) is closest to her. This is because, he has to guard the prophetess closely throughout the meeting in order to ensure that she is not bewitched by 'enemies' in the pretext of seeking for blessings. In brief, although it is possible to reach the foundress, the 'professor' is in fact her "bodyguard" during Church services who may refuse one to see her. He is also the one who always relays her messages to her members whenever she misses to attend the meetings. JCC Pastors have not been trained in any theological school or college.

Contrary to expectation, the bishop is not a deputy to the foundress. Even during his presence at the headquarters, the senior mother assembly still preaches to the registered members before the arrival of Mummy. In brief, there is only one absolute leader in the JCC: the foundress, who was 'chosen' by God to spread His Gospel on earth. This leader rules through the power of the

Holy Spirit and therefore, this rules out the possibility of leadership wrangles. The powers of Mary Akatsa are not questioned or challenged by any JCC leader or member. She occasionally consults JCC members or the Church committees as a formality. The whole power rests with the Holy Spirit who runs this Church through her²¹.

The JCC is a self-reliant Church. The Church raises money through fund raisings²². Another source of money in this Church is through generous donations²³. The current iron sheet shed used for worship at the JCC headquarters was contributed by Mr. Surjit Sing, an Asian when his six year old daughter Sunita Viridi was healed by the foundress from a strange skin disease that had not responded to conventional treatment²⁴. The JCC also raises money through contributions from members during services that take place thrice a week. The contributions are usually generous and at least three thousand people attend a single service at the JCC headquarters. The prophetess also contributes enormously to her church. During a funeral of a member, her mini buses may be used to transport the body of the deceased. The Church has purchased a plot in Kawangware and plans are underway to build a big Church on it.

The foundress has been appointing and dismissing leaders since the JCC first split from the COBEA. During the application for registration of the JCC, the list of the office bearers differed remarkably from that of JCC leaders appointed immediately after this Church had split from the COBEA. Today, there is no treasurer or

a Pastor at the JCC headquarters and Mary Akatsa has only maintained one mother assembly, a secretary, the Church committee, two choir leaders, two Sunday school teachers and four ushers. During baptisms, the bishop and a pastor are recalled from the JCC branch at Ebusiralo. At the headquarters and branch levels, leadership in the JCC has increasingly become a woman phenomenon.

At the higher level, then, Mary Akatsa wields a lot of power. At the lower level, women wield enormous powers. For instance, we have already noted even in the occasional presence of the bishop at the headquarters on a Sunday, the mother assembly preaches to the congregation of registered members while awaiting the arrival of Mummy. The chief usher does not preach to the congregation in her absence in spite of his closeness to her. Therefore, the mother assembly's powers at the headquarters are not limited to women affairs as it is the case with her branch counterparts; she also has an ecclesiastical role to play that even surpasses that of the bishop of the JCC.

The secretary of the JCC headquarters, Consolata Shinyanga keeps all Church records and occasionally represents the foundress during funerals involving registered JCC members at the headquarters. Together with the mother assembly, she presides over Friday women assemblies where both play the role of counsellors and even preachers²⁵. From the time men office bearers were revealed to have allegedly swindled the JCC of almost four million Kenya shillings²⁶, women led by the foundress took over the responsibility of the treasurer at the headquarters. This has made women leaders to be the most influential persons because the running of any

institution largely depends on its financial management. Mary Akatsa has also appointed a woman registered member at the JCC headquarters to be a flag bearer²⁷. In other independent churches, this position is specially reserved for men²⁸.

At branch levels, women are still outspoken and occupy prominent leadership positions. At the Mlimani branch for instance, women leaders occupy the positions of the mother assembly, the branch secretary, Sunday school teachers and the treasurer respectively. The secretary of this branch, Jones Jamwoba also plays the role of a general counsellor to the members on Sundays by repeatedly reminding them to adhere to what the foundress expects of them.

The leadership structure of women at the Mlimani branch is also parallel by that of the Ebusiralo branch where women also occupy the positions of a Sunday school teacher, a secretary, treasurer and mother assembly respectively. At the Eshirandu branch, women are the majority and assist in the branch organization. Their role is not however clearly specified since the Church is usually presided over by a male leader who is also the branch Secretary. In brief, women in the JCC take care of the church records, control the Church finances and attend to emotional needs of their fellow women folk. Men leaders such as the Bishop and the Pastor conduct burial and funeral ceremonies while the rest assist in keeping Church records and sitting arrangements. The foundress is not only the superintendent of the JCC, she is also the champion and the protector of women rights and dignity. She maintains that women must be taken seriously because unlike men,

they are strongly attached to their families and generally concerned with the welfare of their children. She preaches against ecclesiastical subordination and suppression of women as is the case in many missionary and post-missionary churches noting their prophetic role and the freedom they enjoyed in the hands of Jesus²⁹. Akatsa displays an explicit disapproval for polygamy and maintains it subordinates the status of women in the society. She shows a lot of respect to the first wife by forcing her husband or co-wife to register her first before members of a polygamous marriage are allowed to register in the JCC. A JCC registered member is immediately expelled or excommunicated when he takes a second or an additional wife.

In the JCC, the foundress constantly campaigns against vices especially dominating men such as drinking alcohol or smoking since these habits consume and strain the family resources and cause suffering to women and children who are dependants. She abhors prostitution because it reduces the dignity of a woman and has deadly consequences not only to the mother, but also to her children who are innocent sufferers. The foundress is alleged to have powers which can bring drinking of alcohol, smoking of tobacco and prostitution to an end³⁰. She also pays a lot of attention to women's deep seated problems such as barrenness and domestic difficulties. Having been a victim of these problems, she attempts to solve them in her Church providing herself as the best example to these women. For instance after giving birth to a baby boy in June 1992³¹, she assured her barren and sterile women members that they will conceive as she was shown in a dream³². She dedicated her service

to 'revelations' of barren women reminding them that God had blessed them through her and that they will give birth to male children as it was the case of Biblical women³³. According to the foundress, these cases show that God has a very special bias towards women especially the despised (barren) women in the society whom He has always used as His instruments of revelation in different historical epochs³⁴.

To show the importance of women in this Church, Mary Akatsa has set aside Friday every week specifically for women assemblies presided over by the mother assembly and the secretary or occasionally by Akatsa herself. All women members in the JCC apart from those with unavoidable commitments are expected to attend these meetings. These are occasions for counselling JCC women members with domestic or other social problems. They aim at encouraging women to maintain a Christian character. Both single and married women members above 18 years attend these Friday assemblies. Briefly, Friday women assemblies discuss the following issues:

(i) A woman must address her husband 'daddy' and the husband is expected to address her 'mummy' as a way of showing respect to each other and cultivating intimacy.

(ii) **Personal hygiene and general cleanliness:**

Women are taught how to keep their environment clean especially their houses, children and themselves. They have to carry a cotton wool or a clean piece of cloth in readiness for their monthly periods. They should brush their teeth with

toothpaste or salt so that their mouths do not smell for their husbands. They must bathe before going to bed or wipe their private parts with a dry clean piece of cloth or toilet paper every day before wearing their pants. Pants must be washed daily and if one has a few or only one pair, a wet pant can be put on with a nylon paper inside it. When the pant is dry, the nylon paper should be removed. Pants and private parts must be kept clean to avoid odour. Mary Akatsa believes that husbands run away from their wives and go for prostitutes because some women do not know how to keep themselves neat.

(iii) **Improvement of husband/wife sexual and general relationship:**

Women are taught how to love their husbands both in words and in actions in order to improve their sexual relationship in particular. The foundress believes that unfaithfulness and polygamy is caused by lack of sexual satisfaction in marriage and that women can bring this anomaly to an end. First, women must improve their general relationship with their husbands. They should warm bathing water for their husbands and undress them before escorting them to the bathrooms. Alternatively, they can wash their husbands' feet after work and escort them or support them to the bedroom after supper³⁵. Mummy admits that men are like babies and when handled properly, a woman may get everything she wants from them. She therefore encourages women to be opening gates or doors for their husbands, kissing them and

carrying their luggage for them to the house. This should be a habit so that their children or neighbours will not ridicule them. In the bedroom, a woman should undress her husband and herself but she should retain her pant. Her pant can only be removed by her husband when necessary.

Women are taught that there are different sexual styles and therefore, they must try their best to satisfy their husbands sexual desires any time. Pressing domestic issues must be discussed in bed preferably after sexual intercourse. Akatsa's photographic portrait must always be kept in a woman's brazier or under the pillow while in bed. It is believed to influence the man to listen and to love his wife³⁶.

Generally, women are taught how to live in harmony with their neighbours and to respect their husbands' relatives³⁷. They must shun gossip groups and associate themselves with development-oriented groups. They should bring up their children in a Christian way and form the habit of taking them along to Church. Rudimentary skills or self-reliance activities such as poultry keeping, hawking and tailoring are also taught. Special groups of women such as widows and the single women are also taken care of. Both groups are taught how to shun promiscuity and to lead a Christian life. Widows are supposed to devote their lives to Jesus and to take care of their children. They must resist being remarried³⁸. Single women should not marry as second wives and are supposed to seek for husbands outside the JCC³⁹. Women are encouraged to constantly keep Mary Akatsa's photograph in the bosom in the belief that it can assist them to resist prostitution and

even to find good husbands.

As noted earlier, Akatsa accepts registration of a woman in her Church so long as the husband has given consent. The woman is then used as a bait to fish the man and thereby the whole family into the JCC. Women take a lot of pride in Biblical verses that exhort the religious importance of women. They all join in celebration whenever one of them manages to register her husband in the JCC. That is why JCC women are taught how to treat their husbands with a lot of care (like babies) so that they can eventually win them to this Church. Friday is also seen as a special day when women devote their prayers to God so that He may take care of their family afflictions⁴⁰. At the end of the assembly, the mother assembly usually presides over a spontaneous prayer for all women.

Women assemblies are usually characterized by singing of hymns, personal testimonies, laughter, friendliness, emotionalism and spontaneity. There is explicit dislike of subordination of women and God is identified with the suffering women who eventually triumphs when a husband registers in the JCC. Special issues concerning a member of the assembly are dealt with in public where fellow members spontaneously suggest solutions. Difficult problems of a member which cannot be solved by consensus are referred to Mary Akatsa. All women interviewed admitted that these Friday assemblies are useful to them and that they should be a perpetual feature of this Church⁴¹. Others observed that since these assemblies have had a remarkable improvement on the lives of those who attend them, a favourable day should be found if possible like Saturday morning before the beginning of the Saturday service so that those

unable to attend on Friday may also attend them⁴². Generally, these Friday assemblies are very popular and the foundress regards them as a forum for instilling discipline in women. Husbands are encouraged to allow their wives to attend them, so that they can have disciplined wives. The majority of women who attend these Friday assemblies are registered members and most of them are full time housewives.

3.1 Worship in the JCC

Worship in the JCC depends on the foundress. Being the overall leader of this Church, she determines what is done and what is said in the worship both at the headquarters where she directly presides over the worship and at the branch level where she has appointed branch leaders. Therefore, a brief look at her worship language is important. The foundress is a charismatic preacher whose oratorical expertise enables her to hold the attention of thousands of her members throughout the day. As a prophetess, she is a messenger of God, who through the Holy Spirit, dictates to her by way of revelations what she should tell her listeners. She claims that she was sent by God to talk openly on issues which the post missionary Churches have not been talking about because they are dominated by men. These are problems concerning the sexual life of Christians which she alleges that clergymen avoid to deal with in their churches because some male Church leaders are themselves immoral⁴³. Therefore, the foundress spends at least half of her time during worship in JCC, sorting out family and sexual problems of her members openly. She says that there is nothing to

hide before God and that on the day of judgement before God, openness prevails⁴⁴.

The language of worship in all JCC congregations in Kawangware and the branches is Kiswahili which is Kenya's national language. This language is understood by the majority of JCC members who are ordinary people in our society. Therefore, she is able to communicate to the common man and to all Kenyan's from different ethnic groups including Asians. Non-Kiswahili speakers such as foreigners are usually given an interpreter. This way, the problem of communication barrier experienced in most post-missionary churches especially those which conduct their services in their mother tongue is solved. During the worship, the prophetess also appeals to special groups such as the youth by speaking 'sheng'⁴⁵ or to various ethnic groups by speaking different dialects. For instance, the foundress boasts of knowing all Kenyan dialects/languages including Somali and Hindu languages and even occasionally speaks some Hindu language to any Asian who might be in her service to prove her claims.

She fluently speaks Kikuyu language⁴⁶ and sings hymns in Kalenjin, Kisii, Kiganda, Luo, Somali and many other Kenyan languages or dialects. This way, members from different Kenyan communities feel at home in her Church. In fact, she encourages her members from various ethnic groups to sing hymns in their mother tongues before all JCC members. The foundress also occasionally speaks a bit of English with difficulty amidst laughter and cheers from members. Many JCC members believe that the special ability of the foundress to 'know' most Kenyan languages is

a proof that she is a special messenger of God sent to Kenya, Africa and even the whole world.

While speaking on sexual matters, the language of the foundress is sometimes vile and vulgar and usually, she employs euphemism to make it polite due to the presence of children in the congregation. To give examples, the Phallus is known by different names such as 'sausage'⁴⁷ or 'kalamu' (pen). Akatsa will sometimes say to a man "kalamu vako haiandiki" ("your pen does not write"). A polygamous man is compared to a student who has more than one file. Therefore, while being instructed by Mary Akatsa to satisfy both or all his wives, the prophetess tells him "tembeza kalamu yako katika faili zako zote" ("let your pen write in all your files").

The sheng word "kusosi" refers to the act of sexual intercourse. Both euphemistic and metaphorical terms are also used to describe or to refer to the sexual act. Such terms are "kupiga saluti" ('to salute'), "kuvunja mfupa" ("to break a bone"), "kwenda London" ("To go to London"), "Kulima shamba" ("to plough the farm"), "Kumsalimia bibi" ("to greet a wife"), "Kuendesha gari" ("to drive a car") among others. This way, the foundress may talk about sexual matters without attracting the attention of children who attend her services along with their parents. Topics concerning sex are very popular in the JCC and they break the monotony of listening to sermons which are strictly based on the Bible. Everybody is usually amused as is evident by their loud laughter which implies their understanding of the above terms. Members of the JCC also use the above or similar terms while expressing their problems to the foundress.

During one Sunday service, a woman was revealed by the prophetess that she was unfaithful. She confirmed the revelation as true but added that her husband did not sexually satisfy her. Her language was metaphorical and euphemistic. She confessed: "Yeye si dereva mzuri. Gari vake hukwama kwa mlima". The literal translation is "He is not a good driver. He cannot climb the mountain". This can be interpreted to mean that her husband was not a good love maker because he could not satisfy her sexually. The woman was warned by Mary Akatsa that she would contract AIDS if she did not stick to her marriage. She ~~was~~ also given some hints on how to go about with her problem. Mary Akatsa instructed:

"Ukimkasirikia mmeo, hata kitu chake⁴⁵ pia kinakasirika. Wewe mbembeleze umpe kikombe cha kahawa na njugu kidogo. Ngojia mpaka wakati ndarama itakapokauka⁴⁹ au gari litakapopiga stati...⁵⁰"

The literal translation is:

"When you are annoyed with your husband, his thing also gets annoyed. You lure him by giving him a cup of coffee and a little groundnuts. Wait until when the drum shall dry or when the car shall start..."

Therefore, the woman was advised to improve her sexual relationship with her husband. She was asked to avoid being moody in his presence and to be making a cup of coffee and some groundnuts for him perhaps to improve his sexual desire. She was also told to avoid being impatient while in bed with her husband. Thus she was advised to be giving him enough time to achieve a proper erection before they could make love.

These examples demonstrate that the foundress of the JCC has her own unique style of expression or personal idiosyncrasy⁵¹. These and other idiosyncrasies indicate that she is not only a humorous character but also an innovator who through her style of language attempts to satisfy various groups in her congregation. The use of 'sheng' identifies her with the youth members in the JCC and also shows that the foundress has been influenced by the urban environment. Her employment of euphemistic and metaphorical language enables Mary Akatsa to communicate to the adult members of her Church on sensitive matters without embarrassing their children. Her endeavour to speak different languages from disparate Kenyan communities enhances her interaction with her members making them to feel at home with their 'Mummy' who is frank with her children on matters which post missionary churches have tended to play down. At the JCC branches, the mother assembly and the secretary also imitate Akatsa's style of communication during Friday women assemblies.

Worship in this Church takes place thrice a week, thus on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. At least three thousand people attend a JCC service at the headquarters and the highest number is attained on Sunday which is the worldwide worship day for Christians. These service days are usually presided over by the foundress. At branch level, Sunday is the only worship day. At the JCC headquarters, the three worship days are characterized by the following: Singing and dancing that accompanies revelations; Bible reading and interpretation; public testimonies by JCC members; healing by faith and finally a prayer for all. In between the

foregoing, there are certain interceptions. For instance, the worship may come to a premature stop when another Christian denomination is passing on the road on a Sunday singing and dancing. Obviously angered by this disturbance, the foundress would then lead her members in cursing the denomination that is passing by uttering the words "Mshindwe na Mshindwe na..." ("Be defeated and be defeated and...")⁵². The service may be also halted when the foundress decides to conduct a marriage reconciliation in her Church which is otherwise mistakenly called a 'wedding'. This follows a specific revelation⁵³.

Services at the JCC headquarters begin at around 11.00 a.m. after the arrival of the prophetess. Occasionally, she may come earlier than this or as late as 1.30 p.m. Members begin arriving as early as 6.00 a.m. in order to occupy vantage points near the centre of this Church so that they may have a proper view of Mary Akatsa. The sitting arrangements in the JCC is taken care of by the ushers who ensure that there is enough space to ease free movement and that men do not mix with women members. The services take place in an open area which is about half an acre and roughly divided into three regions by two series of corrugated iron sheet houses. The Western region of this field is set aside for registered members. The central part which is also the smallest is meant for the Church choir and Sunday school children. The eastern region which is the biggest in size and situated right opposite the public road is reserved for unregistered members. This arrangement only applies on Sundays. We shall take the eastern part to be the central area of this Church because all major activities take place here. On

Saturday and Wednesday JCC members can sit along any region depending on their arrival time.

Therefore, the central area of this Church is divided into two, leaving a two metre wide path we shall call the "sacred path"⁵⁴. Halfway above the central area is a shade of iron sheets and tents that create the impression of a Church under construction. There are seats in this area meant for male members while female members are supposed to sit on the ground. This area is fitted with powerful sound communication systems like amplifiers, speakers and microphones. Mummy uses a remote control microphone to enhance her free movement among her children during revelations while at the same time remaining audible. This communication system enables all JCC members to follow the JCC services by their ears for those who cannot see the actions at the central area of this Church.

Closer to the central area of this Church, some space is reserved for people suffering from various afflictions which they or their relatives believe that Mary Akatsa can cure. Before the foundress arrives to preside over a service at the JCC headquarters, volunteering members lead the rest in singing and dancing for God. Musical instruments used in this Church are drums of varied sizes, a guitar and metallic objects. Hymns are sung in Kiswahili and occasionally interpreted into local languages especially Luhya. The singing is characterized by spontaneous dancing, applause and exclamatory response. The hymns in the JCC are not entirely God-centred. They are also about the mission of Mary Akatsa on this world and the attitude of members towards the headquarters of this Church. The foundress is seen as a God's elect sent to redeem the

world while Kawangware is portrayed as 'a Holy city of God' or a 'Jerusalem' where God through His elect is showing His will known to the world. One chorus of a hymn in the JCC is as follows:

Soloist: Halleluhya Jerusalem...

All: " " "

Soloist: Halleluhya our Mummy...

All: " " "

Soloist: Halleluhya 'Jua Kali'...

All: " " "

Soloist: Jua kali Jerusalem

All: " " "

Soloist: Our Mummy was sent...

All: " " "

Soloist: To lead us away from our sins

All: " " "

Soloist: To take us back to our Lord Jesus

All: " " "

Another chorus is briefly this way:

(1) If you want everything... (2) You will be asked...

Go to Kawangware,... where were you...

You will see everything... when they prayed in

Our Lord Jesus is healing... Kawangware....

Here in Kawangware... Did you not hear?

Hymns are very important in this Church. JCC members sing and dance for God spontaneously. They dance until they are transformed into another world of frenzy and ecstasy. When they come back to our world, they find themselves relieved from the

tensions of our daily lives. Hymns are part and parcel of worship, revelations, healing, rituals and everything in this Church.

Therefore, Kawangware which in this case refers to the JCC headquarters, is no longer just an estate in Nairobi but a Holy city, a new Jerusalem where the Lord Jesus is reigning in spite of the 'Jua kali'. Mary Akatsa ceases to be just another faith healer, she becomes a God's elect set aside for a particular purpose. There are many other hymns that imply this. However, the above are considered to be representative enough. The singing and dancing goes on until the arrival of the foundress which is marked by a lot of tension as ushers rush up and down clearing the path from the gate to the sacred path. The prophetess is expected to run along the sacred path and this is ceremonial⁵⁵.

The singing and dancing is brought to an abrupt end and all JCC members are made to sit when Mary Akatsa arrives at the gate of the JCC. While running, JCC members join her in the shouting of the word "Iende Iendee...." ("Depart, Depart..")⁵⁶ at the top of their voices since it is believed that members afflictions especially madness disappear at this time⁵⁷. The running is a 'to and fro way' and usually she stops at the centre of the Church, kneeling down with her hands raised to the sky to pray silently.

Members resume the singing and dancing as soon as the foundress kneels down. After her prayer, she is presented with a remote control microphone by a member who goes on his knees while doing so as the foundress remains standing. She would then order the singing and dancing to come to an end before addressing her members. She would start by giving her thanks to God for having

taken good care of her and for enabling her to attend another service at the JCC. She would then briefly disclose the programme of the day's service to her members. For instance, she would tell them "today, I will not reveal anybody since a member of my Church is dead and I have to make funeral arrangements. Therefore, I will just pray for everybody. I am therefore requesting you to have faith so that you may depart from this place with my blessings. I know that you will just get what you have come for at the end of this prayer".

On another service day, she would declare "today, I am filled⁵⁸ and I don't want anybody to disturb me because I want to do the work of the Lord". This is usually good news to JCC members because it implies that there would be revelations. Sometimes, the foundress does not disclose her programme to her members. She may simply embark on revelations after running along the 'sacred path'. Therefore, if there is no particular commitment for the prophetess, revelation is normally given the first priority in her programme. Revelation may be either at random or follow some order. In the first case, the foundress will walk among her faithfuls picking on certain members and bringing them to the centre of the Church to await revelation. According to Mummy, this selection entirely depends on the dictates of the Holy Spirit. After the Holy Spirit through the foundress is satisfied that she has picked enough people, the foundress brings the singing and dancing which has been going on to an end and then starts her revelations.

Each individual is told by the prophetess through her remote control microphone why he or she was picked on and why he or she

came to this Church on the material day. He or she is then challenged to deny the revelation before everybody. Therefore, after being revealed, one moves towards the public microphone at the centre of the Church to confirm or deny the revelation. Nearly all of Mary Akatsa's revelations were confirmed as true while others were true but were not directly concerning the victims in question. For instance, a woman may be revealed that she is married to a Mr. George as the second wife. The victim will then clarify that while this revelation is true, it is actually her sister who is married as a second wife to a Mr. George. If she has said the truth, the prophetess accepts the information jovially adding that the Holy Spirit can see far and wide. There were at least ten cases of this type. Those passing on the road may also be called or shouted at by the prophetess although they may not be members of this Church in order to show that the spirit of the Lord (Holy Spirit) has a long hand that can bring sinners to the Lord Jesus. During revelations, Mary Akatsa usually looks nervous and highly strung. Nobody is expected to move around lest he or she courts a revelation.

Revelations may also follow a certain order whereby the foundress may pick upon a certain row and reveal all people sitting along it. She may even reveal four rows consecutively. Revelations are always accompanied by hymns led by the foundress herself. For example after some revelation, she would lead her members in a hymn singing loudly and dancing for God. She may even dance herself to a state of frenzy and utter some inaudible words which are literally taken to be her way of speaking with tongues. She would then abruptly stop the singing and resume her revelation

exercises. This happens so many times in a service.

Our research findings show that nobody ever outrightly denied these revelations as false. Those pleading with the foundress not to reveal more about them or those reluctant to confirm or deny the revelation normally invite more severe revelations about them. There were seven cases of this type. In one case, 'the angered Holy Spirit' revealed that the man in question was putting on a blue bleached pant which had a hole in the centre⁶⁰. He was challenged to deny this humiliating and severe revelation so that Akatsa could order a group of men to forcibly confirm this revelation. Feeling ashamed and defeated, the man gave in. Similar or related threats were also issued to the other six victims and the results were the same giving an impression of truth in these revelations.

Some revelations are amazing. A woman was revealed to have kept a piece of meat in her private parts and later fried it for her husband so that she could win his love. A man was revealed to have kissed the clitoris of his girlfriend. Both victims confirmed these revelations as true! There were dozens other amazing revelations concerning incest, witchcraft and love potions which we cannot all mention here. Thieves who are revealed return their stolen property to this Church. The researcher among others accompanied a thief who was revealed to have hidden an institution's cooking pan under his tiny bed. The thief exactly fished out the sufuria under his bed and brought it to the JCC⁶¹.

Revelation is therefore the most interesting part of the worship in this Church and it takes most of the time. It is sometimes dramatized, for instance when a thief is made to walk

around the church carrying his stolen goods on the head amidst the famous Kiswahili chorus "kila mtu atauchukua mzigo wake" ("Everybody will carry his own burden") or when an old woman is made to walk around the Church with a young man she has been cohabiting with as the foundress leads her members in a chorus:

All women are dogs...

All women are dogs,

When will they get saved...?

This chorus is reversible in the case of an old man to a young woman. During these revelations, members may be also slapped by the prophetess at the request of their relatives or JCC members. An amorous husband is for instance slapped at the request of his wife. This is 'a holy slap' and it is believed to scare away the devil that causes unfaithfulness. Revelations are believed to be a blessing and a method of healing. For instance, when a certain barren woman is revealed that her pant was taken or stolen by her co-wife who bewitched it by 'burying' it under the hearthstone, she believes that she will conceive. Therefore, people pray silently to God so that He may enable the foundress to reveal them. Those revealed are made to run along the sacred path in turns before Mummy finally prays for them either individually or in groups. Those seeking to marry bring the photographs of their partners to the foundress who reveals to them the kind of persons their partners are. Those whose relatives are lost also consult the foundress on their whereabouts.

Revelations are usually preceded by faith healing or prayer

for the sick. Through revelations, the foundress detects the cause of an ailment. Witchcraft emerges out as the most common cause of suffering in our society and it cuts across tribal and racial boundaries. During healing period, Mary Akatsa emphasizes on faith. She also refers certain cases to the hospitals such as malaria, measles or physical injury. In fact a woman member was slapped by the foundress for bringing her child who had measles to this Church for prayers. The prophetess employs different methods in the course of healing which shall be discussed later in chapter four.

Healing is then followed by a time of giving personal testimonies. JCC members queue towards the public microphone in order for them to tell the congregation what the Lord Jesus had done for them through Mummy. They start by praising the Lord for enabling them to see that material day and requesting Him to grant the foundress with more life and power. The salutation to the congregation is, "Watoto wa Mummy Bwana asifiwe" ("Children of Mummy Praise the Lord") while members answer "Asifiwe"! (Praise Him). Some members offer their donations to this church either in cash or in kind. It is common for those giving their personal testimonies to usher a lot of praises for the foundress and pouring scorn on the skeptics.

Testimonies are very important in this Church because they give the foundress confidence that she is still powerful hence God is still using her. They also make members of this Church to have confidence in Mary Akatsa that she can still heal them in spite of the rumours by members of other denominations that her powers have faded away. They also encourage those with different ailments

and their relatives that nothing is impossible before God through the foundress. Through such testimonies, the prophetess has managed to maintain her members confidence in her.

Testimonies are followed by Bible reading. The foundress gives the name of the book, the chapter and the verse to be read. Any JCC member then reads the Bible which is then interpreted by the foundress. The end of the service is marked by a prayer for all. Before Mummy finally prays for everybody, she asks every member to confess his sins before God and ask for His forgiveness. Everybody spontaneously prays for himself or herself for at least five minutes amidst deafening shouts cursing the devil to depart. The prophetess then calls upon them to keep calm before she begins praying. While praying, she mentions different ailments while at the same time cursing them to depart in the name of the Lord. Religious specialists such as witchdoctors, herbalists and sorcerers are also cursed. Anything that may cause suffering to human beings is usually cursed or commanded to depart in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the end of the prayers, ushers then clear the way for the foundress to leave the Church while the rest are supposed to remain in their seats. The foregoing, thus revelations, healing, public or personal testimonies, Bible reading and finally a prayer for all is what normally takes place during service days. However, there are certain additions that take place on Sundays.

The foundress for instance comes earlier than usual and after running across the sacred path, she goes to the western region reserved for registered members. She will briefly join the Church

committee before presiding over certain functions and problems among her registered members. For instance, she is supposed to reveal those members seeking to register in this Church. She is also expected to solve problems among her registered members ranging from suspensions to funeral arrangements. This is the only day when Mary Akatsa can actually talk to members of her own Church. The foundress also preaches to the registered members after a Bible reading and finally prays for them before joining the unregistered members on the eastern region or alternatively the central area of the Church. During this time when she is with her registered members or even before her arrival, dancing and singing in both regions take place simultaneously. This gives an impression of two denominations in one field only separated by two long series of corrugated iron sheet houses. However, the Church becomes one when Akatsa later joins the unregistered members. Registered members also join the unregistered members in a procession hence it is ceremonial.

The first procession is led by male registered members led by a 'flag bearer'. The foundress or a member leads the whole congregation in a hymn as those in the procession go around the Church clad in their worship robes singing and dancing for God. Those in full worship robes are usually in front and later join the unregistered members after going round. Male members stand along the fence posing like security personnel while others sit anywhere among registered members. Women registered members also go through the same procession before sitting among unregistered members. This is followed by the Sunday school children's

procession led by their group leaders and their procession takes place along the sacred path.

There are three groups of Sunday school children depending on their ages; thus those under 8, those between 8-12 years and lastly those above 12 years⁶². Selected children from these three groups have been taught how to memorize certain Biblical verses, to pray or to sing before the whole congregation. JCC members usually show their appreciation to each group representatives due to their courage and personality by clapping for each one of them. This is what is referred to as the Sunday school children service. It is followed by the procession of the Church choir who sit at one place near the centre of the Church after singing one or two hymns for the congregation.

It was noted earlier that services take place only once a week, thus on Sunday at branch levels. There are no revelations here because it is only the foundress who can reveal. The membership category consist of registered members alone. A confirmed or acting male Church leader presides over the service. Children's Sunday service is similar to that one at the headquarters but children are given a standing ovation while arriving in the Church through a procession. Their procession is followed by that of the branch choir. There are no processions of registered members. Like the headquarters, women sit separately from men and those in full uniform usually sit in front rows. Men sit on benches and other seats while women sit on the floor. The services at branch levels end at around 1.00 p.m. since some members come from far. There is no clear cut between the foundress's teachings and the teachings

of Jesus. She is monotonously quoted in places where Jesus is obviously supposed to be quoted. Branch hymns are similar to those sung at the JCC headquarters. Visitors to any branch are normally requested to introduce themselves before the Church. The presiding JCC leader reads the Bible and gives his interpretation. Like at the JCC headquarters, all members spontaneously confess their sins before the final prayer.

A time is set aside for announcements before the closure of the Sunday service at branch levels. During this time, branch leaders highlight JCC members on the future prospects of this Church. A lot of time is spent on requesting members to adhere to the teachings of 'Mummy' which are claimed to derive directly from God Himself. Those who have recently visited the JCC headquarters are often given chances to address other members on "their Jerusalem" at Kawangware. They make constant praises of the prophetess and her increasing spiritual powers⁶³ which enables her 'to keep an eye' on all her members. Cases of those who have encountered misfortunes because they allegedly ran into trouble with the foundress are repeatedly cited and emotionally narrated. Non committed members are warned to surrender from the JCC before they encounter God's holy wrath through 'Mummy'. After all these, the Sunday service at branch level then comes to an end.

3.2 Religious rites in the JCC

Laying on of hands and adult baptism

The advent of a new life in a Christian community and the entry of a member into the JCC are associated with appropriate

rites. A rite is a formal act constituting a religious observance⁶⁴. These two rites have a biblical justification. Baptism is important because even Jesus was baptized before he began his mission⁶⁵. The laying on of hands was in fact introduced by Jesus Himself⁶⁶. It is also through baptism that full membership in the JCC is confirmed. For the infants, the laying on of hands confers full JCC membership upon them.

(a) The Laying on of Hands

The laying on of hands applies to all infants or children because they cannot confess their sins. The JCC holds that it is wrong and unbiblical to baptize children especially those who cannot confess their sins according to Luke 3/3. This rite shows the interest the Church has in the new born baby and also reflects the Church's concern on the anxieties of barren women. A child is usually brought to the Church for thanksgiving and it is presented to the foundress who blesses it by spitting saliva on it⁶⁷. However, not all children are brought to the prophetess as stated above since some are born away from Nairobi. The laying on of hands does not also automatically take place on the eighth day according to Luke 2:21 since it usually depends on Mary Akatsa who officially sets the day. The laying on of hands usually takes place on Sunday. The rite is performed within the Church and not at any other place. It is restricted to registered members and in a case where only one parent is a member, both of them must agree before their child undergoes it. The Bishop or the pastor in this Church presides over this rite. A day of laying on of hands is very significant

because it marks the spiritual birth of children in the JCC conferring upon them the status of registered members who deserve a proper christian burial at their death⁶⁸.

Therefore, all registered JCC members are expected to attend this occasion. It is a joyous moment marked by singing of baptismal choruses, drumming and dancing. It is also a day of thanksgiving to God the Almighty and the Creator for opening or re-opening the womb of the woman⁶⁹. Barren women are expected to share in this happiness so that God may remember them and open their wombs so that they may also give birth. A sum of ten shillings is paid so that a child is issued with a card of laying on of hands by the Church secretary. The singing, dancing and drumming accompanies this rite all through while parents along with their children make a queue towards the pastor or the bishop.

The presiding JCC leader holds the child in his hands and confirms its name from the parent. Let us assume here that the child's name is Senaida. The child is raised a bit higher by the presiding JCC leader who faces the sky as a sign of dedicating the child to God and closes his eyes before uttering the following words:

"Sinaida namuweka katika jina la Baba, la mwana na la roho mtakatifu, Amina" ("Sinaida, I bless you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit Amen).

The parent of the child remains standing with humility closing his or her eyes in devotion to this prayer. The right hand of the presiding leader rests on the head of the child. After this, the child is handed over to the parent. This is what is precisely referred to as the "laying on of hands". Our research findings

revealed that at least more than a half of the children are named either after the foundress or her husband while a few are named after Akatsa's grandmother. The foundress also believes that nobody can bewitch or kill a child named after her, her husband or her grandmother. Parents also believe that their children will follow the personality or the character of the above persons hence will be blessed spiritually and materially. This is an African view of naming⁷⁰. Therefore, the most common names given to children are Franco (Francis) in the case of boys and for girls, Mary, Senaida, Lorna or occasionally, Dorcas.

Selected biblical verses accompany the laying on of hands, Mark 10:13-16 is a biblical justification for the laying on of hands in this Church. Luke 1:46-50 highlights the honour bestowed upon a woman by God. At the end of all these, the presiding JCC leader or the foundress prays for all these children and their parents. The laying on of hands in the JCC is presided over by the Senior pastor, Lukas Oteyo and the Bishop, Shem Sirima.

(b) Adult Baptism

Baptism in the JCC is by immersion and like the laying on of hands, it is restricted to registered members only. This rite is predominantly confined to adult members in this Church although children above twelve years may also undergo it. The reason behind this is that one who is to be baptized must be in a position to comprehend his faith and to confess or repent his sins as it is written in the Bible⁷¹. The Church insists that baptism should be by immersion because that is the way Jesus was baptized according

to Matthew 3:13-17. Like the laying on of hands, the baptismal date is set by the foundress and there may be no baptism for a whole year. However, some registered members become active Church members and do not feel that their position is irregular without the baptism of this Church. However all JCC leaders have been baptized by immersion. There is no rebaptism by immersion. Those who were immersed in other Christian denominations are issued with baptismal certificates bearing the names and stamp of the JCC.

Before acceptance for baptism, candidates must be tested by the presiding JCC leaders who are usually the Senior pastor and the JCC bishop who come to perform it, and not all may be accepted. Candidates are supposed to memorize certain selected biblical pericopes and the ten commandments for a whole year. Sunday school teachers assist these candidates so that they may pass the baptismal test. The content of this one year teaching will be provided in appendix c.

At the branch level, baptism by immersion takes place from the nearby streams at vantage points where water is deep enough. At the JCC headquarters, one of the rental rooms which was first occupied by Mary Akatsa when she moved into this compound in 1985 has been converted into a baptismal hall. A four by eight feet rectangular hole has been properly dug and cemented and it is always filled with water on the baptismal day. The water is drawn from the nearby taps and 'blessed by the foundress' before any immersion. The baptismal hall has two doors on either sides which makes it possible for those who have been immersed to get out of the baptismal hall through the next door. The area around this

baptismal hall is considered holy by JCC members. Infact, most JCC members either run across the sacred path or confess their sins outside the baptismal hall before proceeding to where they are supposed to sit.

All baptismal candidates are supposed to cut their hair short⁷². They are also expected to pay twenty shillings for the baptismal card. They must repent all their sins lest they get drowned or choked during the immersion however little the water may look like. This water is referred to as 'the Jordan' thus a reference to the biblical Jordan where Jesus was baptized. Like the laying on of hands, baptism is also accompanied by singing of baptismal choruses, dancing and drumming. Any christian or western name may be accepted. Baptismal candidates must renounce the devil and his works and instead believe in God the Almighty and the creator, His son Jesus Christ the saviour and in the Holy spirit. They are requested to adhere to the rules and regulations of the JCC and to trust in God alone in all times of difficulties and temptations. Both men and women are baptized in the same pool of water but men are given precedence over women. If the prophetess is present, those who are likely to backslide soon are removed from the baptismal queue through her powers of revelations. The presiding JCC leader moves into the water and he is joined by the baptismal candidate according to the order on the list. After confirming the 'christian' name of the candidate, he says the following words.

"... nakubatiza katika jina la Baba na la mwana na la roho mtakatifu, Amina" (".... I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the son and of the Holy spirit, Amen").

Immediately after saying these words, he bends the candidate backwards until the whole of his or her body is 'immersed' into the deep water before raising him or her. He puts a piece of cloth along his or her face to prevent water from penetrating into the nostrils of the candidate. A candidate who has not fully repented his or her sins is supposed to be choked by water, to drown, or to slip and fall in the water. The immersion is done once and it is interpreted as sharing in the dying and rising of Jesus Christ⁷³ and it is also believed that it leads to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the candidate. Above all, it confirms that one has now become a full member in the JCC. Immersion is also believed to drive away sickness, sin and pollution since it is done in efficacious water blessed by the prophetess. All those baptized are then prayed for so that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit to have a true rebirth into newness of life.

(c) The Lord's Supper

The Lord's supper is only restricted to those who have been baptized hence it is taken once in a life time. It has not yet found a central and significant place in the life and thought of the JCC. It is celebrated haphazardly since there is no particular order that is followed and some JCC members who are not among the baptismal candidates for instance, the presiding JCC leader partakes of it. Reference and justification for partaking it is sought in the Bible but no explanation is given as to why it must accompany baptismal rite and not any other function in the JCC.

The JCC leaders presiding over baptism by immersion,

distribute the Lords supper which is made up of wine and small pieces of locally baked bread, amidst a Roman catholic chorus which has been modified rhythmically. This is after the reading of the Bible concerning Jesus' last supper with the disciples⁷⁴. A piece of bread is put in one's mouth and a little wine is given to them. The baptizees remain on their knees during this time. A prayer is usually said before and after the Lord's supper and the remaining wine and bread is surrendered to the Church.

(d) Marriage in the JCC

Marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate⁷⁵. This also applies to the JCC although widows, widowers, single parents, bachelors and generally the unmarried are not prohibited from registering as members. The monogamous type of marriage is emphasized and those who break this rule are immediately excommunicated. The same punishment applies to polygamous members who may take an additional wife. Biblical justification is used to support this rule⁷⁶.

Marriage between JCC members is strictly prohibited since they view each other as brothers and sisters with one 'Mummy' (Mother). Young men seeking to marry are supposed to look for a wife from their rural homes and they are expected to carry Mary Akatsa's portrait in belief that it will make things easier for them. On the contrary, women are encouraged to marry any man of their own choice.

JCC members are supposed to consult their Mummy concerning

the background of their marriage partner to be, or convince one to appear before her for revelations. This is to ensure that her members do not get married to AIDS victims. If a marriage partner refuses to appear before the prophetess, his or her photograph is presented to her for revelation. Mary Akatsa can call off a marriage if one of the partners is either suffering from AIDS or is married somewhere else⁷⁷. However, any other revelations such as a woman having aborted before or witchcraft at the home of one partner are considered trivial matters and the decision to marry depends on the couple. It is believed that the foundress is capable of exorcising an evil spirit in a person and that is why she does not mind her members marrying one with it, for instance a witch or a magician.

After revelations, a couple may proceed to get married depending on what has been revealed about them. A Christian marriage⁷⁸ is always preferable and this refers to the modern western weddings that take place in the churches today. We should note here that Mary Akatsa went through such a wedding in 1989, which was performed by the Bishop of the COBEA at the Friends Church headquarters in Nairobi. Having known that the common man in her Church cannot sponsor such a wedding, she has resorted to marriage unions in her Church which are often referred to as 'weddings'. She presides over these marriage unions which she finds quite alright for her children although she told the researcher that they are not weddings in the actual sense of the word⁷⁹.

A couple does not require any special cloths or to invite relatives during such unions or 'weddings'. It is 'a wedding' free

from any expenses of any nature and witnessed by thousands of JCC members. A 'wedding certificate' is a prayer by the foundress to cement the marriage. During this 'wedding', a couple marches very slowly along the sacred path as the Church choir leads the congregation in a wedding chorus. They are urged by Mummy to hold closely to each other and to kiss at intervals as the resident photographer takes snapshots. These 'weddings' are characterized by singing, ululations, dancing and drumming. JCC members cheer and rejoice as the couple kisses whenever the foundress commands them to do so. A photograph of the couple is also taken together with the prophetess before she blesses their marriage by praying for them. During this prayer, the right hand of the foundress with a Bible in it rests on both heads of the couple to bless them. After this, the couple is excused to leave the congregation and they must hold each other closely until when they reach their bedroom however far away it may be. This is meant to mysteriously hold their marriage together.

This 'wedding' is not only meant for young couples. Any JCC member who requests for this 'wedding' may undergo it even if he had married long ago. Whenever the prophetess reveals that a certain JCC couple is experiencing some misunderstanding, they are usually requested by her to undergo this kind of 'wedding' in order to improve and cement their marriage. Before a couple departs from the congregation after their 'wedding', they are advised to be attending JCC services regularly, and the woman is urged to make efforts of attending Friday Women assemblies so that she can know how to take care of her husband. These 'weddings' can take place

on any service day at the JCC headquarters and are always presided over by Mary Akatsa. Since the JCC has never had any Wedding in the western sense of the word, we shall take these marriage unions described above as recognized Christian marriages in this Church. To a young couple never married before, the 'wedding' confers a marriage status upon them witnessed and recognized by the entire congregation. Photographs remind them of this memorable occasion which is actually a wedding as to those majority who may never afford a Christian wedding in the western sense of the word. Western elements in the JCC 'weddings' such as kissing and holding tightly to one another were borrowed from the western Christian weddings by Mary Akatsa who underwent one as mentioned earlier in this chapter. According to the foundress, this is a wedding by the Holy spirit who does not require wedding formalities or certificates⁸⁰.

(e) A funeral rite in the JCC

Death is something that concerns everybody, partly because sooner or later everyone personally faces it and partly because it brings loss and sorrows to every family and community. In the JCC, a funeral rite is performed for only registered members and the manner in which it is done depends on either the age or the religious commitment of the deceased. In this context, we shall be mainly concerned with a funeral ceremony for an adult committed member of the JCC. When death occurs, the Church is supposed to be informed so that it can prepare for the funeral expenses and arrangements. If the home of the deceased is not far away from the

church, JCC members are requested to gather at the house of the deceased to spend the night in vigil with the bereaved family. Usually, the wake lasts with the singing the whole night or longer. They are expected to carry their own food.

On the burial day, male members arrive in the home of the deceased early enough in order to dig the grave. Other members prepare the home of the deceased by clearing the bush and making shelters for mourners. Selected women light the fire to prepare the food for mourners which is bought by the Church. The Church also provides cooking utensils, fuel and 'a jiko' for cooking. The home of the deceased is converted into some kind of a JCC like Church with women sitting separately from men whether members or non members. The Church provides sound communication systems on this occasion which must be attended by all registered members who use their own means. The secretary of the Church and her assistants ensure that she has taken the roll call of those present. Before the arrival of the deceased from the mortuary, JCC soloists lead others in singing funeral choruses. Some choruses are sung in the local dialect in order to make local residents to feel at home among the JCC members. Some choruses suggest that death is not natural, like the following:

S: Aliyeuwa Ndugu huyu... (The one who killed this brother...)

A: Hataingia mbinguni.. (Will never go to heaven...)

S: Aliyefanya kitendo hiki... (The one who committed this act...)

A: Amelaaniwa milele (Has been cursed forever...)

These choruses are accompanied by some dancing and drumming which is obviously less vigorous due to the mournful atmosphere around. However, the note of joy predominates even when the death has been 'a bad one'⁸¹. All registered JCC members are supposed to wear their worship robes and non-registered members are encouraged to attend this ceremony.

The body of a JCC member is supposed to remain in the mortuary until the burial day so that it is taken in a funeral procession direct to the home of the deceased. It is collected from the mortuary by the foundress, JCC leaders and the Church choir. The Church hires the transport for this group of less than fifty people and also buys the coffin. There are elderly JCC members among this group who have been selected by Mary Akatsa for the purpose of bathing and dressing the body of the deceased depending on one's sex. Women therefore bathe and dress a female member and vice versa. Women also carry the coffin of a female member to the graveside and are only assisted by men from this stage. Men carry the coffin of a male member.

The vehicle carrying the deceased stops outside the home compound and it is mobbed by JCC members from the compound of the deceased who look mournful but at the same time singing with joy. A funeral procession is then organized to escort the deceased into the home. The whole compound is supposed to keep calm as a show of the last respect to the deceased. This funeral procession is referred to as the 'final wedding'. It is led by the 'flag bearer', JCC leaders, coffin bearers and then JCC choir closely followed by other JCC members. The procession is accompanied by a funeral

hymn sung in Kiswahili.

In the home of the deceased, a prayer by the prophetess marks the beginning of the funeral ceremony. The coffin is placed outside among mourners and viewing the deceased depends on the condition of the body. The foundress begins by announcing to the mourners that her Church will take control of everything since it is 'the wedding' of one of her children. She warns everybody against wailing since such 'a wedding' is for everyone. Infact, those who mourn aloud are humbly kept away or escorted some distance away by JCC members. Mourners are informed by Mummy that the JCC meets all funeral expenses for their members and that it is a Church with a national outlook. To prove this, members from different ethnic groups are called upon to sing any chorus for their departed 'brother' or 'sister'. She will also add that the JCC has attracted members from different races in the world who would have attended the funeral in thousands if they were informed in time. She would emphatically insist that there is no tribalism or racism in her Church and that she is "Mummy of all the people"⁸². After speaking very well of herself, her Church and the benefits of being a member of her Church, she would welcome a member of the family to give the deceased's life history. Other family members are allowed to give a brief eulogy of the deceased and finally, any government agent is given a chance to address mourners.

The Bible is then read by a JCC leader and interpreted by the foundress. The most common book read is that of the Ecclesiastes which encourages people to be attending funerals⁸³. This is followed by a hymn or any funeral chorus from hymn books used in older

churches especially the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK). The foundress then says a prayer before the commencing of the final procession to the graveside. JCC leaders are led by a flag bearer and behind them are coffin bearers, the bereaved members and the Church choir. The procession gets out of the compound and then turns back towards the grave. The slow marching procession and the singing stops at intervals when a JCC leader reads from a prayer book similar to that used in the CPK Church. One reading goes like this:

Mungu aliipea... (The Lord gave...)

Tena Mungu ametoa... (And the Lord has taken...)

Note that the burial is not presided over by Mary Akatsa. However, she does not just leave everything for the pastor or bishop after preaching. At the graveyard for instance, she has the tendency of 'addressing the deceased' before the coffin is lowered into the grave. An elderly male member who had requested her to bury him before he passed away was addressed as follows:

Enda salama mzee... (Depart in peace old man...)

Usirudi kusumbua watoto (Never come back to
disturb your children..)

au kutuletea kisirani... (or to bring us misfortunes)

Utuombee baraka ili (Wish for us blessings so
nizike na wengine that I may also bury others)

Nimekuja kama vile (I have come as you had
ulivyotaka... so wished...)

After this informal address, the coffin is lowered into the grave by JCC members. The JCC leader reads from the book of

Ecclesiastes⁸⁴ as he sprinkles the soil onto the coffin. Family members follow suit. He then says a final prayer before JCC members embark on filling soil into the grave. The rest of the members are led by the choir or the foundress in singing popular funeral hymns in Kiswahili as others participate in the burial. The singing is characterized by dancing and drumming and continues even after filling the grave with soil. The foundress jumps on the grave and dances on top of it. All these come to an end after a few minutes and family members are presented with flowers by the church to lay on the grave. The prophetess says the last prayer to mark the end of this occasion. Bereaved members are led to the house in a procession escorted by the Church choir where they are again prayed for. Selected JCC members may be left behind to console the bereaved especially a widow or a widower if the deceased was an elderly man or woman with a family. JCC members are not supposed to share the food meant for mourners. The foregoing therefore is an ideal funeral rite in the JCC. The funeral of an adult may take almost the whole day while that of a child may go upto 1 p.m. Most funeral services in the JCC begin at 11.00 a.m. The JCC takes control of everything. Mourners and the bereaved are simply observers and they are not supposed to intervene. This agreement is reached before the Church decides to bury a member.

The foundress does not attend a funeral of a non-committed member, thus one who does not come to the Church regularly and who also absconds attending funerals of other members. The records of the secretary reveals a committed and a non-committed member. Bereaved members of a non-committed JCC member may be

given a vehicle and a coffin and be denied food. The foundress may sometimes give out everything but stop all her members from attending a funeral of a non-committed member as a punishment.

Post humous ceremonies such as cementing of the grave and laying of the cross are observed in the JCC⁸⁵. However, slaughtering of animals as a sacrifice or pouring of a libation is prohibited.

A funeral rite in the JCC is both traditional and Christian. A note of joy predominates the mournful atmosphere to highlight the church's belief in life after death. JCC members participate in the burial voluntarily, dig the grave and even bathe and dress the deceased regardless of the fact that they may not be related to the deceased by blood. All these are Christian in context because in traditional African society, one who is not a blood relative of the deceased cannot bathe him or her or even dig the grave. This can cause a state of ritual uncleanliness that requires specific cleansing⁸⁶.

Keeping vigil over the dead at night is African and it is particularly meant to look out for the witch or sorcerer who might come to see the result of his or her wicked doings⁸⁷. This also underlines the belief among members of the JCC that death is not natural, it is caused. Addressing the deceased is also African and was also practiced among the Banyore subtribe of the Luhya ethnic group⁸⁸. Mary Akatsa comes from this community. The dead person is seen as having more powers than the living and he or she is implored during this ceremonial speech addressed to the deceased not to bear any grudge against the living. That is why the

prophetess ensured that she buried her member who had requested so before he passed away⁸⁹. The dead is also implored to wish the living well and he is treated with a lot of respect as evident in the funeral procession and post humous ceremonies. This is African in worldview because Africans believe that upon death, the living-dead enter into a higher 'dynamic' hierarchy than that of the living⁹⁰.

However, although the foundress implores the dead not to bear any grudge against the living, she dances on top of the grave immediately after burial to show that she does not personally fear the dead. This may imply that she has spiritual powers or some mystical powers within herself that make her not to fear the dead. This may be the powers that enables her to bring about healings in her Church and to reveal or prophesy.

3.3 Footnotes

- 1 Oxford English Dictionary Vol. Vi (London, OUP, 1988). p. 143.
- 2 See Appendix C for further information.
- 3 Ibid;
- 4 Ibid;
- 5 Ibid;
- 6 Ibid;
- 7 The pastor was a one time member of Parliament for Makadara Constituency in Nairobi. On 12/7/92, Mary Akatsa revealed that he was allegedly transporting JCC members from the meeting to register as voters in his constituency.
- 8 MK 16:16-18
- 9 More than 50 informants, mostly JCC members were interviewed.
- 10 See operational definitions.
- 11 I Cor 12:9-10
- 12 This is what we found in our field research.
- 13 See chapter two under 'The foundress: Historical background'.
- 14 The foundress repeatedly quotes Mk 12:17 to explain her loyalty to God and to the Kenyan government.
- 15 Interview with Renison Muyekho Burudi on 3/1/92. More than 90% of JCC's registered members concur with the interviewee.
- 16 Interview with the chairman of the church committee at the headquarters on 8/11/92. He produced a list of committee members which included the names of the 'founders' of JCC. Both 'Mummy' and 'Daddy' are listed as JCC founders.
- 17 Ibid;

- 18 See operational definitions.
- 19 On 26/7/92, the prophetess revealed to the congregation that three male registered JCC leaders namely David Osotsi who assisted the secretary, George Opeywa, a Sunday school teacher and Aggrey Otieno, a treasurer had allegedly swindled the JCC of 4 million Kenya shillings.
- 20 Sundkler B.G.M., op. cit. p. 143.
- 21 Interview with Peter Ateli, John Akhonya, Otiali Odinga and Anna Amutabi at Ebusiralo, Vihiga District.
- 22 The researcher witnessed two fundraisings in this Church presided over by the current MP for Dagoretti, Chris Kamuyu.
- 23 Those who have benefitted from the prayers of the foundress make donations in support of this church or her members either materially or in cash.
- 24 This information was derived from church records through the assistance of the historian of the JCC. This healing allegedly took place in June 1988.
- 25 During Friday Women Assemblies, the mother assembly also plays the role of a preacher and imitates the foundress monotonously.
- 26 See footnote 19.
- 27 This is a person who carries the denominational flag during a procession in the Church or along the road either on Sunday or during any other Church function.
- 28 It is believed in the JCC that God knows a denomination by its flag. Therefore, 'a flag bearer' must be a committed member of that particular denomination so that he may not defile the

Church and energetic enough to lead the procession to its destination of the day. In most denominations, women are not flag bearers because they are considered unclean due to their menstrual cycle and weak due to their sex.

29 She quotes 2 Kgs 22:14-20, Jgs 4:4-5, Lk 2:36-39, Lk 10:38-42, Lk 8:1-3 and Jn 19:25.

30 Interview with the foundress on 5/7/92.

31 The foundress gave birth to a baby boy from Aga Khan hospital in Nairobi on 13/6/92. In 1990, she had a miscarriage of twins. In 1982, her first born baby was allegedly strangled by her enemies.

32 This was on 21/6/92 when she first brought her baby to the Church after seven days (Lk 2:21). In the dream, she was allegedly shown 600 bottles which were filled up, the first bottle being hers. She was also shown an additional 100 bottles which were empty. That the dream revealed that 599 barren women in her Church will give birth because of their faith and another 100 will remain barren due to lack of faith.

33 See Gen 21:1-4, Isam 1:1-20, Lk 1:1-80. In these verses Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth who were of an advanced age and barren gave birth to Isaac, Samuel and John respectively. In Luke, the case of Mary the mother of Jesus is also cited.

34 This was her interpretation of Lk 1:1-80 when she first brought her son David to the JCC headquarters. The interpretation elevated her son to the status of a mystery baby.

35 This act of supporting a husband to the bedroom is mistakenly

referred to as 'carrying him to the bedroom' and two women admitted that they literally carry their husbands to their bedrooms.

- 36 More than 50 informants, mostly JCC members were interviewed.
- 37 Ibid;
- 38 Interview with a widow, Dorina Alwanga Wamboye on 13/11/92.
- 39 Interviews with Adija Wanjiku, Florence Kanyalo, Joyce Shadume, Monica Otieno, Florence Kwamboka Nyangweso and Beatrice Kavochi Ndafwera on 13/11/92.
- 40 Interview with Senior Mother assembly, Mary Wamboi on 13/11/92.
- 41 More than 10 JCC women members were interviewed. Their names have been included in appendix B.
- 42 Ibid;
- 43 Sermon by Mary Akatsa on Sunday 11/10/92 at the JCC headquarters.
- 44 The foundress speaks here as an authority because she allegedly died and went to heaven as narrated in her historical background.
- 45 Sheng is a blend of two or more languages especially English and Kiswahili. Sheng originated around Kaloleni estate in Nairobi and spread to the eastlands first. It also includes words which are neither English nor Kiswahili. It is a language meant for special groups due to the need of belonging to a group with which one identifies herself or himself with. This is according to Nyauncho K.O. in his B.A.

dissertation, 1986 pages 6-8.

- 46 The researcher had a Kikuyu research assistant who proved this.
- 47 A common popular kind of food made from bacon.
- 48 This refers to a man's sexual organs.
- 49 'Ndarama' refers to a drum which is a kind of musical instrument made from an animal skin. It is usually warmed on the fire or on the sun to enable it produce a good musical sound especially during singing of hymns. A proper sexual erection is therefore compared to a drum which has been warmed hence capable of producing good musical sound (sexual satisfaction).
- 50 'Kupiga stati' literally means 'to start a car' which in this context is compared to a sexual erection.
- 51 For further information concerning personal idiosyncrasy, see Jay Kitsao, Stylistic approach adopted for the study of written Swahili Prose (M.A. unpublished thesis, Department of Linguistics and African Studies, University of Nairobi, 1975) P.4.
- 52 These are words used by worshipers meant to scare away the devil. JCC members believe that when these words are uttered at an individual, he is most likely to fall into danger or tragedy. The use of these words and their synonyms such as "Toka shetani" (Get out the devil), "Riswa" (Depart) is ritualistic and the words are used by worshippers who believe in exorcism. They are always employed where believers hold the devil responsible either directly or through his agents for

certain actions or afflictions. In this context, the devil is held responsible through certain church leaders for attempting to disrupt the Sunday service of the JCC.

53 A specific revelation concerns an individual. This issue of weddings shall be discussed under 'marriage rites in the JCC'.

54 The path is sacred because all those wanting to heal are supposed to run along it. It is also claimed that "Jesus" walked along this path when he allegedly visited the JCC on June 11th 1988 and declared it sacred. Therefore, JCC members run along the 'sacred path' before taking their seats.

55 Ibid;

56 See footnote 52

57 Members of JCC believe that the personality of the foundress or her mere presence are enough to alarm the evil spirit and to put an end to the mischief. See also Mk 16:17 on how the Personality of Jesus alarmed evil spirits.

58 This implies that she has superb powers from the Holy Spirit to perform many miracles.

59 Interview with Mary Akatsa on 5/7/92.

60 It is believed that pleading for exemption from revelations or being reluctant to confirm the revelation is tantamount to annoying the Holy Spirit that allegedly works through the foundress.

61 This took place on 17/10/92 at the JCC headquarters.

62 Interview with Amos Malongo and Charles Oenga, Sunday school teachers on 15/11/92 at the JCC headquarters.

63 There is a rumour among leaders of other denominations that

the spiritual powers of Mary Akatsa are waning. Those who have left the JCC to join other churches allege that she is no longer powerful spiritually to heal one.

- 64 A dictionary of liturgy and worship, op. cit. p. 235.
- 65 See Matthew 3:13.
- 66 See Mk 10;16.
- 67 The spitting of saliva on a baby has its basis in the traditional Luhya society. Mary Akatsa claimed on 22/11/92 that the saliva of an old person in the ancient days was meant to either bless or curse the younger ones depending on the circumstances. In this case, the saliva was meant to bless the younger ones and to protect them against the mystical powers of witchcraft according to Mary Akatsa.
- 68 Interview with the JCC Bishop on 22/11/92.
- 69 Sermon by Mary Akatsa on 22/11/92.
- 70 Mbiti J.S., African religions and philosophy, Heinemann, Nairobi, 1969, p. 118.
- 71 This is found in Luke 3:3.
- 72 According to Pastor Lukas Oteyo, one is supposed to be clean before immersion, hence shaving is necessary. Baptism is therefore like 'ritual cleanliness'.
- 73 This is according to Collosians 2:12 which is read before immersion.
- 74 See Matthew 26:20-29.
- 75 Mbiti J.S., op. cit. P. 133.
- 76 See Gen. 2:24.
- 77 Interview with the foundress on 12/1/92

- 78 A Christian wedding like those performed in older churches has never occurred in this Church since it was registered in 1990.
- 79 Interview with the prophetess on 5/7/92.
- 80 Ibid;
- 81 When the prophetess has generally indicated in her revelation that someone deliberately caused the death of her member.
- 82 In this manner, a funeral ceremony turns out to be a place for winning proselytes to her Church.
- 83 See Ecclesiastes 7:2-4.
- 84 See Ecclesiastes 3:20.
- 85 See 'The Standard' of 16/4/90.
- 86 Mbiti J.S., op. cit. P. 153.
- 87 Ibid;
- 88 Wagner G., op. cit. P. 473.
- 89 This was the burial of the late Mzee Kahu Gitangu of Komothai location, Githunguri division in Kiambu District - on 30/6/92.
- 90 Mbiti J.S., op. cit. P. 199.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOME THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN THE JCC

4.0 The Use of the Bible in the JCC

The term 'Bible' refers to the sacred writings of the Christian church¹. It is a collection of writings believed to possess special religious sanctity and authority. According to Mary Akatsa, the Bible is verbally inerrant and it is an invariable word of God². She believes that it is only God who guides her how to use the Bible through the power of the Holy Spirit. This brings us back to our concept of 'Revelation'. God reveals to her which verse to read for the day and when to conduct the 'Bible ceremony'³. She also uses the Bible for healing.

The prophetess always carries the Bible with her wherever she goes and in all her services. During marriage unions and 'weddings', her Bible is often placed above the heads of a couple to bless them. While praying for her members, the Bible is always held in one of her hands. The Bible is also used for exorcism of evil spirits especially from a patient who is mentally ill. On such an occasion, the patient is hit hard on his head or shoulders to scare away the demons from him. During the 'Bible ceremony', all JCC members are softly hit with the Bible of the foundress on their chest. Areas of ailments are also softly hit with a Bible. Photographs of friends and relatives and personal documents are softly hit with a Bible to bless them. Testimonies from JCC members show that healing by being hit with a Bible has been effective in some cases⁴. This also applies to some patients whose photographs were hit with a Bible. Other testimonies also show that some people

whose personal documents were hit with the Bible of the foundress were employed⁵. JCC members believe in the efficiency of this 'Bible ceremony' in healing various ailments and causing general blessings to them and their relatives. This ceremony enables all JCC members to come into a personal contact with the prophetess where they are blessed by her Bible and assured that all will be alright with them.

The Bible is used in this Church to justify their beliefs. We discovered that the JCC adheres to those food taboos that are stated in the old Testament. Leviticus chapter eleven is resorted to as a reason for not eating pork or carcass. Leviticus 17:10-11 is given as a reason for not eating blood while Jonah chapter one is a reason among others for not eating the Nile perch. It is believed that Jonah was swallowed by the Nile perch and that Nile perches cause diseases because they feed on the flesh of human beings who drown in waters. The story of the flood in Genesis chapter eight and that of the descending of the Holy Spirit on the head of Jesus in the form of a dove in Matthew 3:16 are respectively taken as reasons for not eating a dove or tamed pigeon. 1 Corinthians 3:16 is invariably quoted for preaching against promiscuity, alcohol taking and tobacco smoking. There are many other Biblical references which are normally paraded forward to justify reasons for doing or not doing certain things in this Church.

We have already noted in chapter three that the Bible is used to justify the authenticity of the existing religious rites in the JCC. Romans chapter six provides the significance of adult baptism for instance. Ecclesiastes 7:2 exhorts members of this Church to attend funerals while Mark 10:13-16 provides a reason for laying on of

hands and not baptism for children who cannot confess their sins. Certain scriptural references are also given to support marriage and women. Ephesians 5:25 is constantly quoted when urging men to love their wives while Luke chapter one is oftenly read to show that Jesus loved women so much that, He chose one to be His mother and miraculously preserved her virginity at His conception and His birth.

One outstanding aspect concerning the use of the Bible in this Church is subjectiveness; thus, the whole question of an individual begging the scripture to back oneself. What is involved in this context is that the foundress literally interprets selected scriptural fragments to authenticize her mission to her people and even to the whole world. The idea behind is that she was set aside by God for a divine purpose and that the scripture attests to this.

For instance, while narrating her historical background to her members as she oftenly does, Psalm chapter 129 is quoted as an evidence to this in order to prove that no human efforts can deter her divine mission. She always re-asserts that although she is surrounded by many enemies especially leaders of post-missionary churches who regard her as a threat⁶, she would triumph over them the way God enabled her to triumph over her enemies from the time of her youth. This chapter ceases to refer to Israel and it is understood as referring to the prophetess who has gone through many afflictions from the time of her birth and who will always triumph because she is not of an ordinary destiny.

The book of Revelations 10:9-11 is taken to refer to her divine election to be the messenger of God or as she cryptically puts it, to be the 'photocopy' of the 'original' (God). By this book, she is

elevated or she elevates herself to the status of the old testament prophets who were always called to their mission. It shows that like in the Old Testament, God was at work in raising up a prophetess for Kenya and even the whole world.

Since every messenger of God is given a particular mission to accomplish, the foundress repeatedly claims that her divine mission besides revelations and faithhealing is contained in the book of Titus 2:1-15. This is expected to explain why she emphasizes on good morals among her members. Friday women assemblies in her Church are for instance justified by Titus 2:4. This book is literally interpreted as if it is no longer Paul's letter to Titus, it is like God's letter to Mary Akatsa .

2 Corinthians 6:3-7 is oftenly referred to by the foundress as a prove that like any other messenger of God, she has been persecuted in her attempt to spread the word of God and through her perseverance and prayer, she was able to triumph. Incidences of her sufferings in the hands of the Kenyan authority during the formative periods of this Church are then emotionally narrated to her members⁷.

Isaiah 66:13-16 is literally interpreted. In this context, Jerusalem becomes Kawangware and the term 'mother' is taken to refer to Mummy who is regarded as the mother of all members of the JCC.

While suspending or excommunicating a member from her church, Galatians 3:10 and Titus 1:13 are respectively quoted to justify such an action. In fact, Mary Akatsa always looks for Biblical justification for her actions. In October 1992, she publicly

admonished her father for frequently visiting her and commercializing his relationship with her and yet he had dumped her in the bush when she was just an infant. Her father who was among the members of the JCC on that day⁸ was greatly embarrassed but insisted that he had the right to feed from her. The prophetess then quoted Ephesians 6:4 to explain to her congregation that, her father's frequent visits to her had provoked her anger and that he should immediately discard this habit⁹.

The scripture is also used in accordance with the prevailing situation. For instance, when the foundress gave birth to a baby boy, she compared her month of delivery which was in June to the sixth month when God sent the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary. Because Mummy had no existing child since her marriage in 1977, she compared her situation to that of Elizabeth adding that the Lord had taken away her reproach among men. We should note here that the foundress was a laughing stork because she actually had no living child by then and yet thousands of her members believed that she was a messenger of God. Global catastrophes such as earthquakes, civil wars, famine and mushrooming incurable ailments for instance are interpreted by the foundress to show that the end of the world is nigh, hence the need of turning to Christ now.

Any Kiswahili version of the Bible is read and usually, Mummy would ask anybody with such a Bible to read it for everybody through the public address systems. While looking for a biblical reference to be read for the day, she would hold the Bible in both of her hands and meditate for a few seconds. Then suddenly, she would open the Bible at once with both hands. Normally, it is the

middle pages of the Bible that are exposed. She would then search through the opened pages to find a suitable chapter for reading. In most cases, the reading would come from Proverbs, Psalms, Ecclesiastes or Isaiah since these books are more or less at the middle pages of the Bible¹⁰.

A few observations may be made from the foregoing. The Old Testament provides a basis for most beliefs of the JCC especially beliefs concerning food prohibitions and the divine mission of the foundress which is compared to that of the Old Testament prophets. Quoting Pauline letters to back what she does in her Church is enough evidence to prove that the prophetess has tended to moralize the Bible. Although morals are part of religion, there are other issues in our society other than morals which a religion can also address.

The foundress uses the Bible for healing and blessing much more than reading it. This tendency reduces the Bible to some kind of a fetish object or something magical.

The subjective use of the Bible ignores to treat the Biblical material in its proper historical and cultural context. It is accompanied by literal interpretation of the Bible and concentrates on elevating the foundress as a prophetess instead of preaching the central message of the Gospel. This leads to confusion. That is why there is no clear cut between the foundress and Jesus at JCC branch levels. While quoting the teachings of Jesus, credit usually goes to the prophetess as if she is the one who first taught them.

Mary Akatsa emphatically uses the Bible for evangelization, that is, to call people to God. The Bible should not only call people

away from sin. It should also address the social, political and economic realms; the realms in which sin is rooted.

However, for a person of her education, she should be commended for being able to search for a reading from the Bible for the day and even quoting a Biblical pericope according to the existing situation. She has also highlighted the Holiness of the Bible at the time when it is being criticized by modern scientific intellectualism. Mummy's contribution that there is need to be inspired by the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Bible should be commended.

4.1 Healing in the JCC

The main motive of the ever increasing visits of the people to the JCC headquarters is the curing of the sick. We have already noted that there are two categories of membership at the JCC headquarters¹¹. Most unregistered members who are actually the majority seem to regard this Church as a healing institution¹². Registered JCC members believe that they or their relatives or friends were healed by the foundress of ailments which were otherwise incurable¹³. Healing invariably takes place at the JCC headquarters and they are presided upon by the foundress. There is a special place near the centre of this Church which has been set aside for the sick. The JCC is like a hospital. This is also what Daneel discovered about zionist churches in Rhodesia¹⁴.

During every service at the JCC headquarters, members usually testify to those cases of healing by miracles. Mary Akatsa usually talks about the miracles which Jesus the 'original', performs through her, the 'photocopy'¹⁵. Visitors to this Church are always

highlighted on the healing powers God has empowered upon the foundress. Those doubting this are often led to one of the rented rooms at the headquarters where wheelchairs and crutches of those people whom she has allegedly healed in the past are kept as a living testimony of her 'spiritual harvest'. There is a resident photographer who takes snapshots of people with horrifying deformations or on crutches who come to the JCC headquarters expecting miracles. These photographs are later sold to JCC members. As it so happens, JCC members usually testify to non-members that their Mummy is a faith healer and that such photographs are a living testimony of her healing miracles. There is a JCC member who has been recording healing activities in this Church since 1988 in order to prove that healing in the JCC is a fact and not just mere fiction¹⁶. We should also note here that possession of photographs on healing in the JCC is believed to bring blessings and to protect one against the ailment implicated in the photograph. Healing in the JCC is based on the Bible¹⁷.

In most cases, healing and revelations go together although not all revelations concern the sick. Revelations usually detect and separate those cases that require faithhealing from those that simply need western medical therapy. The later cases are very few giving the impression that most patients brought to this Church suffer from incurable ailments as far as western medical therapy is concerned. Nevertheless, the fact that JCC accommodates western medical therapy where necessary and even assists poor patients to acquire proper medical care in hospitals is noteworthy.

Revelations also detect the cause of one's ailments and the

possibility for a cure. People in wheelchairs for instance seek to know the cause of their physical disability and the possibility of being healed. There are few cases of patients suffering from AIDS, cancer, asthma, mental illness and physical disabilities. Most female patients, suffer from barrenness, sterility and stomach complications. A few male patients suffer from impotency while children have varied deformations, malnutrition and fever to name only a few. The foundress attributes most ailments in this Church to witchcraft. All these are associated with the devil and his agents who are the greatest enemies to the JCC and even to Mary Akatsa who also takes precautions while dealing with her members lest they are used by her enemies to bewitch her.

Different healing techniques are used by Mary Akatsa to bring about healing and some of them are dramatic. For instance, a half naked patient with an over swollen stomach was made to walk around the Church while he was being revealed. Such a display among others is believed to cause healing because those who witness such a sight pray to God on the behalf of the patient and that God cannot let down everybody according to the prophetess.

Mary Akatsa usually conducts a general prayer for all the sick at the end of every service. Patients are normally requested to repent their sins before God in order to pave the way for healing. While conducting the prayer, her right hand is usually raised up in supplication to God and the same applies to patients. Those with photographs of patients carry them up while patients are supposed to touch the ailing spot on their bodies. This prayer is characterized by tremendous volumes of sound as the devil and his

agents that cause ailments are vigorously exorcised while invoking the name of Christ. In the case of an individual prayer, she imposes her hand on the patient's head. The foundress shows a personal interest in the patients through revelations and urgent prayers for those in critical condition. Those who are not in critical condition have to wait for the general prayer at the end of the service. Lucky ones are usually revealed. According to Mary Akatsa, revelation is a technique of healing because one can only heal if the cause of his or her ailment is known¹⁵. We discovered that the Bible ceremony is also believed to cause healing in the JCC¹⁹.

The eagerly awaited arrival of the prophetess at every JCC service and her running along the sacred path is very significant as far as healing in this Church is concerned. It is believed to cause healing of mental problems since evil spirits that cause mental illness depart at this time²⁰. Mental patients who continue shouting after this may be suspended from the congregation by the foundress²¹. Mental patients who are brought later after the arrival of Mummy are often hit hard with a Bible by the foundress either on their shoulders or head²². This act is accompanied by vigorous commands to the evil spirit that causes madness to depart. If a patient calms down, he or she is led to the public address system and made to sing a hymn before the entire congregation. When this is done successfully, one is proclaimed healed by the foundress. However, he or she must continue coming for prayers at the JCC to avoid relapse.

Running along the sacred path is a healing technique in the

JCC. It is believed that 'Jesus' himself authorized this running when he visited the JCC in 1988²³. The foundress usually requests her patients to run along the sacred path while commanding their ailments to depart. An AIDS victim will for instance run along this sacred path while shouting or chanting the words "AIDS depart! AIDS depart! AIDS depart!..." before the prophetess finally prays for him or her. JCC members repeatedly chant the words depart! depart!..." in a chorus whenever a patient is running along the sacred path. It is believed that the ailments or evil spirits might leave the patient and enter a healthy member who may not be shouting or chanting in a chorus when a patient is running along the sacred path.

Since witchcraft is believed to be the cause of most ailments, witchcraft eradication is also a healing technique and Mary Akatsa claims to be in possession of a witchcraft eradication certificate which can enable her to destroy the powers of witchcraft at any given area. It is believed that certain ailments can only properly heal if certain things taken from the patient like the pieces of cloths or hair are recovered from the one who practices witchcraft.

Witchcraft eradication usually takes place with the consent of the person who allegedly practices witchcraft. This follows the revelation by the foundress. Nobody is actually forced to surrender witchcraft. What happens is that a person implicated in the witchcraft during revelation is convinced to surrender witchcraft practice or be cursed by the prophetess. Most people voluntarily surrender their witchcraft regalia fearing the consequences over them if they are cursed by the foundress.

Others simply surrender their witchcraft practice after being converted to this Church. All JCC members are supposed to possess the photographic portrait of the foundress which is believed to make them immune against the mystical powers of witchcraft²⁴. Mary Akatsa has a tendency of spitting saliva especially on spots of patients with physical ailments such as sores or swellings and even on photographs of patients forwarded to her by their relatives. In both cases, this saliva is believed to bring about mysterious healing of the patients in question. She may also spit saliva or touch or simply bless cloths of a patient in order to bring about healing too.

Occasionally, foodstuffs from the farm of 'Mummy' or those donated by JCC members are distributed to JCC members including patients after being blessed by the prophetess. These foodstuffs are believed to have healing powers²⁵. Once in a while, the foundress may also dip her right hand in water taken from one of the rented rooms in this Church compound and then order it to be distributed to all JCC members especially patients. Like foodstuffs, this water is also believed to have healing powers when taken by patients.

There are other healing techniques employed by JCC members without the knowledge of the foundress. During rain seasons, patients open their mouths in order to drink water from the rooftops at the JCC headquarters. Relatives and other JCC members collect water in bottles from the rooftops of the JCC shelter and take it to patients. This water is also believed to have healing powers²⁶. Since Mary Akatsa is associated with the healing powers, patients secretly strive to touch the hem of her dress so that they may be

healed. Other patients write the names of their ailments on a small paper and throw it on the path of the foundress so that she may step on the paper and cause healing upon those who have written them. There are two pieces of cloths hanging at the centre of the JCC headquarters. One piece bears the portrait of Jesus while the other one bears writings about the prophetess and her mission as a faith healer. Whenever the foundress fails to turn up on a service day, patients and their relatives strive to touch these two pieces of cloths as if they have potent powers to cause healing. Photographs of patients are rubbed over them.

The foundress regards as patients all those suffering from various ailments be they social, physical or mental. She also believes that all registered members are immune from the mystical powers of witchcraft, either by virtue of their being bonafide members²⁷ of the JCC or by their possession of the sacred worship robe²⁸. This explains why most patients strive to register in this Church. This also raises the issue of a sacred dress and healing. It is for instance believed that the foundress causes a lot of healing whenever she puts on a flowing ankle length, green gown and a matching head scarf than when she is attired in other cloths. The reason here is that she won a court case in 1988 and performed many miracles the same year because she was wearing the green gown²⁹.

Barren women whom the revelation has shown that they should expect a child in the near future are expected to purchase a kind of a sacred dress from this Church called 'a kitenge' to effect the conception³⁰. This was allegedly revealed to the foundress by God

and that she also wore 'a kitenge' which enabled her to deliver a child in 1992.

Since most ailments are caused by witchcraft, Akatsa usually cautions her children to take certain preventive measures in their day to day lives. Members are expected to be very careful while disposing their hair, nails, old misused cloths and beddings, food remnants, photographs, books, pens and letters. These can be used by the agents of the devil³¹ to cause various ailments. These satanic agents may also work on one's stools, urine, saliva, mucus, sweat and blood to cause ailments. A man's sperms and a woman's monthly period blood or placenta can be bewitched for instance to cause impotency, sterility and barrenness while soils from one's bare foot prints can also be bewitched to cause legs and feet swellings³².

Living upright lives is emphasized. Men members are often encouraged to put up with their wives in order to curb adultery and youths must not indulge themselves in fornication. Generally, a holy living is encouraged and members are challenged to be 'born again' (get saved). Polygamy is constantly preached against since Mary Akatsa regards it as the root of witchcraft. Usually, she teaches that co-wives tend to outdo each other and to win husbands to themselves by using mystical powers to the detriment of the entire family. In fact, the foundress revealed cases of husbands who had been either poisoned or fed on meat kept in their wives organs of generation in an attempt to win their love. These men confirmed these revelations but requested anonymity. Generally, JCC members are warned from eating outside their own houses in order to avoid food poisoning. There are many other preventive measures

which Mummy gives to her children. She believes that witchcraft knows no ethnic or racial boundaries and does not respect one's religious or social background.

Many Asians who seek healing at the JCC believe that the foundress has a special gift from God to heal patients³³. They believe that witchcraft causes ailments and that witchcraft is a universal phenomenon. Many Asians claimed that Mary Akatsa had healed them or their relatives of incurable ailments. A woman believed that her son who had been bewitched by a business rival who used her African servant had healed of mental illness after being prayed for by the foundress³⁴. Most Asians also believed that miraculous healing is in all religions and that there was nothing wrong in seeking it in another religion especially if one's god has failed to heal a person³⁵. While there were a few Asian patients, there was no white patient in the course of our research. The majority of patients were therefore Africans.

Many testimonies were given by former patients and their relatives to prove that Mary Akatsa is a faith healer and that she owes this special healing powers to God. Some testimonies implied that the foundress or the JCC headquarters are associated with some mystical powers within them that cause healing. Patients for instance claimed to have simply healed after touching the dress of the foundress or after running along the sacred path. Testimonies are also the brain child of healing techniques in the JCC. A patient for instance claimed that his abdominal pains had immediately subsided after drinking water from the rooftop at the JCC headquarters in January, 1992³⁶. Subsequently, the tendency of

drinking water from the rooftops became a healing technique for various ailments and was even employed by the foundress herself³⁷.

During our field research, three people on crutches were able to walk without them. One of them relapsed later and had to buy other crutches³⁸. The other two are still walking without crutches albeit with difficulty. AIDS patients confessed that they had been healed by the foundress but all of them were reluctant to give further details. Out of the many mental patients who testified that they had been healed, two were followed by the researcher and they seem to have improved. Barren and sterile women claimed to have had a child through the prayer of the foundress. The greatest difficulty which may arise from all these cases of healing is that nobody actually knows what their exact conditions were before healing or faithhealing.

There are of course failures or relapses. For instance there are barren women and people in wheelchairs even among registered members. Lack of faith is given as the cause of relapses or failures. It is also believed that God is supposed to forgive a patient directly because some sickness are ascribed to God³⁹. It is this same God who is seen as present in power through the Holy Spirit who reveals the Will of God, guides a midst danger and fills the foundress with the powers of prophecy (revelation) prayer and healing. When the prophetess has a revelation that a certain patient may die, she has the habit of disclosing it to the congregation after the patient has been taken back home⁴⁰.

JCC members also believe that Mary Akatsa is capable of causing an ailment or even death to those deserving either of them.

The most common ailment or condition which the foundress allegedly causes as a service to women members in her Church is 'mystery impotence' to an adulterous husband. Mystery impotence makes an amorous husband impotent outside the wedlock but functional within the wedlock. The foundress is believed to cause this kind of impotence by simply hitting her Bible on the pant of an amorous husband which is presented to her in an envelope by his wife⁴¹. This is done without the knowledge of the husband.

This ailment or condition is usually administered to men whose wives are members of the JCC but not themselves. A woman normally begs the foundress through Friday meetings for women to cause this condition to her husband. The foundress through her powers of revelation weighs both sides before finally deciding that a certain amorous husband actually deserves this kind of ailment to save a marriage from collapsing. The mystery impotence is meant to force the husband into confessing his unfaithfulness to his wife who erstwhile, convinces him to come to the JCC for prayers to heal his condition. At the JCC headquarters, one man fell a victim of this condition in the course of our research and he immediately registered in this Church after being prayed for by the prophetess. However, she warned him that he will become permanently impotent if he risked indulging in adultery. She also admitted that she had caused the mystery impotence to this man to show him that God actually uses her⁴². The wife of the victim testified that her husband who was not a JCC member had no faith in the healing powers of Mary Akatsa and that God had answered him. The victim requested anonymity.

Testimonies from JCC members imply that the biggest mistake one can commit in this Church is to offend Mary Akatsa. They believe that to offend the foundress is like offending the Holy Spirit in her which is tantamount to courting the Holy wrath of God upon the offender. Testimonies were given by the foundress and JCC members concerning people who had allegedly died, ran mad or caught in various misfortunes because they had wronged the prophetess or had been hired by her enemies to kill her.

The above victims are usually cursed by the foundress who uses the Bible to justify the cursing⁴³. Although the Bible in this case is quoted out of context, JCC members fanatically believe that Mummy's cursing words have mystical powers which can even cause death to a person. Anybody cursed by the foundress is like a person in a state of 'ritual uncleanness' and is therefore avoided by all JCC members. One can only become 'ritually clean' after asking for forgiveness from the foundress.

Therefore, the mystical powers of Mary Akatsa in relation to human life are both constructive and destructive. They are constructive in the sense that JCC members believe that she heals and protects life; and destructive in the sense that they also believe that she can destroy the life of one who offends her by simply cursing him or her. The foundress in this context is surrounded by an aura of mystery and JCC members take necessary precautions while approaching her so that they may tap the good from her without provoking the 'evil' from her.

The preventive measures which the foundress teaches JCC members in order to avert witchcraft highlights James Frazer's two

categories of magic, these are; contagious and homeopathic magic⁴⁴. In the former magic, a person is believed to be affected if evil magic is used against anything that has come into contact with him or her⁴⁵. One may hereby conclude that this is the kind of magic at work in the condition of 'Mystery Impotence'. The latter magic involves the belief that what happens to an object which looks like another will affect the latter⁴⁶. This may explain why a JCC deserted wife may give Mummy a photograph of her husband so that she may curse it or destroy it under her feet. This is believed to cause misfortunes to the man wherever he is so that he may end up going back to his wife whom he had deserted.

The foregoing illustrations reinforces the foundress' theory that witchcraft is the major cause of ailments and misfortunes as we had noted earlier. In fact she believes that certain evil spirits called Jin-nees⁴⁷ which are usually hired by those who practice witchcraft can be sent to an innocent person causing him to become amorous or to desert his wife. These Jin-nees according to the foundress can suck blood and cause anaemia or cause tragic motor, train and even air accidents so that they may drink blood which is their chief diet⁴⁸.

Therefore, quasi-magical techniques such as the causing of 'mystery impotency' or the destruction of a man's photograph to restore a breaking marriage in both cases are employed by the foundress because mystical causes are held responsible in both cases. This is only an African Worldview concerning healing in the JCC.

To the foundress, it is God who heals through her. She claims

that she is simply a helpless victim of God who through the power of the Holy Spirit uses her as a vehicle of causing healing to those with various ailments. This may explain why the prophetess became perplexed when a patient confessed before the gathering that she had been healed from ulcers after touching her dress⁴⁹. Other healing techniques such as the employment of saliva, praying for cloths of absent patients and touching of garments are Biblical and were even used by Jesus Christ, the greatest physician and his disciples⁵⁰.

Therefore in the christian context, which is also the context in which Mary Akatsa claims to operate, these healings are called miracles. Like her members, she fanatically believes that God literally performs miracles through her just the way He did through His son Jesus Christ. She usually reads the Bible to show that those who believe in Jesus can also perform miracles especially healing miracles⁵¹.

Because it is God who heals and not the foundress as she oftenly claims, she usually reminds those with ailments that it is their faith in the healing powers of God through her that will heal them and not herself. However, not all healing techniques in the JCC are scriptural; for instance running along the sacred path or hitting a patient with a Bible. We may suggest here that this may be the foundress' unique way of healing revealed to her by God since she claims to be a helpless victim of the Holy Spirit. The alleged coming of Jesus to this Church has also had an impact on healing in the JCC.

For instance, the 'Jesus' coming transformed the JCC

headquarters into a Holy ground, a new Jerusalem and a healing ground. This explains why running along the sacred path, touching of the Jesus portrait in this church and drinking of water in the JCC is believed to cause healing. This may also further explain why healings are concentrated at the JCC headquarters and not at the branches.

Healing also has a definite bearing on the leadership question since it is intimately bound up with the personality of Mary Akatsa. It implies that it is only the foundress who can lead this Church because, she has asserted herself as a charismatic leader with charisms of healing and revelations.

Nevertheless, healing promises quick and immediate results and the foundress does not only heal but also offers protection to her members against the mystical powers of witchcraft. She also finds witches, sorcerers and evil spirits and exorcises them. Above all, she teaches preventive measures to her members to reinforce her witchcraft protective portrait.

According to the photographs taken in this Church by the resident photographer, most miraculous healings which allegedly saw cripples in wheelchairs stand and walk took place between 1987 and 1989. Stars were also allegedly spotted above the JCC headquarters during these healings to show the presence of God⁵². During our field research, none of the above took place. Perhaps this may explain the prevailing rumor outside the JCC that the healing powers of the foundress are waning. On the other hand, it also implies that the JCC is growing out of this 'holier than thou' attitude as a Church which was visited by 'Jesus' or the sacred grounds where

stars usually appear.

However, the JCC is not just a healing institute. It is a stable religious society with bonafide JCC members who belong to this Church. Healing in the JCC is in fact used as a recruitment technique for new members because patients are expected to have a life long protection under the JCC to ensure that there is no relapse. This leads to their registration in this Church and subsequently, that of their relatives.

4.2 The concept of Godhead and Eschatology in the JCC

We have already noted in chapter three that the Trinity is mentioned during baptism by immersion⁵³. The doctrine of the Trinity was formulated during the council era between 325 to 787 A.D. The council of Constantinople in A.D. 381 for instance affirmed the Holy Spirit to be a person equal to the Father and the Son and proceeding from the Father through the Son. Our interest here is on how the JCC views the deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

(a) God

First and foremost, the JCC has a pneumatological view of God of the scripture. God is viewed as present in power through the Holy Spirit who reveals His will through the prophetess, guides amidst danger and fills her with new powers of prophesying, prayer and healing. JCC members believe that the foundress is very close to God and owes her powers to Him. Her words and actions are therefore axiomatic since they are the words and actions of God hence His Will. Mary Akatsa usually summarizes her relationship with God in her repeated maxim; "I am only a photocopy, the original

is God or Jesus".

God is viewed as the Father of Jesus and obviously greater than Jesus since a Father is of a higher status than his son⁵⁴. His name is Holy and rarely mentioned even by the prophetess who prefers referring to Him as 'the one in Heaven' or 'the Father'.

God is not old, remote and slow in fulfilling the wishes of His people in prayers or showing His Holy wrath against sin and sinners. God is portrayed as a young man who wears a short and who brings an immediate end to suffering here and now⁵⁵. God also rewards His people on Earth by giving them good health, happiness and wealth⁵⁶.

The church affirms the one universal God, all powerful God of the scriptures who established His people in Israel and has re-established them in Africa⁵⁷. It is the Lord who elected messengers in the Old Testament and has re-elected a messenger for Kenya, Africa and the whole world⁵⁸; the Lord who sent His son to Jerusalem to accomplish a divine mission and has re-sent his son to Kawangware⁵⁹; the Lord who revealed through visions and stars and has shown His presence again through stars at the JCC⁶⁰; the Lord who healed through his Son Jesus Christ and He is doing the same through the prophetess. The conviction that the Church itself is also one and universal with a special Mission to Kenya and the whole world reflects the belief of the JCC about the Lord of the Church.

Subsequently, God is the Lord of history with a dynamic purpose for the whole world. He has raised up the foundress and protected her throughout the mysteries of her childhood for the purpose of spreading His word on earth. In spite of her being a

woman, God has made His will known to man through her⁶¹. JCC members, and everybody all over the world must listen to her. Therefore, God has a bias for the weak and the dispossessed especially the women. Nevertheless, He is righteous, loving and merciful.

Because God is one, the JCC stresses loyalty and trust to this one God and Him alone as it is written in the Bible⁶². JCC members must not turn to religious specialists in traditional African religion or employ witchcraft when they find themselves in problems. They must not bank on their education, science or wealth. They must trust in one God and remain loyal to Him over and against all other gods, goddesses and powers⁶³.

(b) The Holy Spirit

Reference to the Holy Spirit in the JCC is much more than that made to God and even Jesus Christ. The JCC has composed so many hymns concerning the mystery of the Holy Spirit through the foundress and how He brings about healing and revelations. The JCC boasts to be a 'spirit' Church because it is led by the Holy Spirit who comes from God⁶⁴. The usual name for the Holy Spirit in the JCC is "The Spirit of the Lord or the Spirit of Jesus" in reference to John 16:14. Even so, the Holy Spirit in the JCC according to the foundress is the Spirit of God as promised in the scriptures⁶⁵.

The Holy Spirit is the sole authority of the Church. It is the Spirit of the Lord who reveals the will of God through the foundress, guides amidst danger and fills the prophetess with the

powers of revelations, prayer and healing. At times, the foundress behaves as if she knows when she is filled by the power of the Holy Spirit.

For instance, she has a tendency of occasionally declaring to her members that "today, I am filled and I want to do the work of the Lord without disturbance"⁶⁶. On such an occasion, no patient may be prayed for if he or she makes such a request because as she puts it, the Spirit of the Lord is never directed on what to do. In the course of revelations, Mary Akatsa repeatedly claims that the Spirit of the Lord reveals all nothing but plain truth⁶⁷. This statement is usually re-asserted whenever the prophecy of the foundress has been declared fulfilled as it was in the case of the former MP for Makadara, Fred Omido. The foundress had revealed that he would lose his Parliamentary seat in the first multi-party elections in Kenya because he was not committed to the JCC of which he was formerly a pastor. The MP lost his seat and her prophecy was declared fulfilled.

According to Mary Akatsa, JCC leaders are neither trained nor paid because the Holy Spirit is not trained or bribed, He operates in a mysterious but divine manner in accordance with the will of God. The Holy Spirit appoints leaders in this Church and inspires them in discharging of their duties⁶⁸.

The Church shows a careful judgement between the spirit of the Lord and the evil spirits which allegedly impersonates the spirit of the Lord. Through revelation, the foundress detects both evil and good (Holy) spirit amongst the members.

Almost all JCC members and visitors to this Church who

attempted to speak in tongues were dismissed by the foundress who revealed that they were mere pretenders or had been possessed by the evil spirit⁶⁹. Speaking in tongues is very common in neighbouring churches and at least the majority of JCC members believe that it is the most obvious manifestation of the Holy Spirit. However, the foundress does not speak in tongues and equally prohibits her members from this habit, terming it unnecessary since God reveals His will through her.

This is actually inhibition of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord should manifest Himself amongst people freely. However, JCC members believe that it is only the foundress who is being used by the Spirit of the Lord in this Church. Mary Akatsa also teaches her members that the Holy Spirit uses only one person at a time noting that the founders of Legio Maria (LM) and African Israel Church Nineveh (AICN) were once used by the Holy Spirit but misused Him⁷⁰.

The foundress believes that men have constantly misused the powers of the Holy Spirit by either commercializing Him or using Him for selfish materialistic purposes. This, according to Mary Akatsa, explains why some gifted messengers of God have backslided after earning a lot of riches instead of preaching the word of God. God usually withdraws His gift from such 'worldly minded' persons and gives it to those deserving it. She claimed that some gifted male persons had love affairs with their women followers instead of leading them to salvation. This has prompted God to choose her because as a woman, she cannot use Him to harass fellow women or to earn riches by Him⁷¹. In the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is pushed to the third position⁷². JCC members view the Holy Spirit as some

kind of power or force from above⁷³.

(c) Jesus Christ and Eschatology in the JCC

In the JCC, Jesus Christ is understood as the son of God who was crucified and died on the cross because of our sins. They believe that Jesus resurrected from the dead on the third day and ascended to Heaven. They also believe that Jesus Christ came at the JCC headquarters and He will finally come back to judge the world very soon.

The act of immersion during baptism is viewed as dying and resurrecting with Jesus Christ hence triumph over the evil⁷⁴. Like God, Jesus is seen as one who shows a bias for the weak and the dispossessed especially women. Even scriptural reference is given to prove this⁷⁵. In the Trinity, Jesus is ranked second to God and it is his divine nature rather than human or both which is emphasized.

Although the power of God works through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is also viewed as God's power. We have noted earlier that the name of Jesus is always invoked and used especially in healing and in exorcism. Our field research revealed that some registered JCC members at the headquarters believe that they saw Jesus Christ in broad daylight at Kawangware in 1988⁷⁶. Eschatology concerns the end of the world and God's judgement of mankind after death. JCC members believe that 'Jesus' gave them eschatological message when he came to this Church, hence they are living ahead of those who rely on the Bible for eschatological information.

It is believed that 'Jesus' told JCC members to respect the

foundress because she is the representative of the most High⁷⁷. According to the prophetess and other JCC members who believe they saw 'Jesus', the JCC headquarters was transformed into a holy ground; the new Jerusalem and the new earthly base for Jesus⁷⁸.

"Jesus" who appeared tall when he visited the JCC was allegedly dressed in white-blue robes; the colour that was adopted later for JCC worship robes, hence, their sacredness. He walked side by side with the foundress along the sacred path and declared that all patients who will run along it will heal⁷⁹. He also took the hands of the foundress and spat on them⁸⁰. Perhaps this may also help to explain why the foundress spits on patients to bless and heal them. The foundress added that those who witnessed the presence of 'Jesus' were blessed with wealth and good health. This attempts to rationalize why the foundress who was by then still living in abject poverty within this Church compound is now wealthy. She has a personal plot and a house at Ruai estate in Nairobi, owns two minibuses, two cars and farms in upcountry. All JCC members who allegedly saw Jesus convinced the researcher that they have been blessed with good jobs, property, education, a good wife and a good family.

It was claimed that when 'Jesus' came to this Church, he reminded JCC members that the end of the world was nigh and that Mary Akatsa had a universal mission to accomplish; thus to spread his word on earth before Jesus' final coming which would be accompanied with blessings to all his believers especially the children of Mummy. This claim was as if whereas nobody comes to the Father but by the son, nobody comes to the son but by the

foundress! This has actually created 'a holier than thou' attitude amongst JCC members.

'Jesus' allegedly addressed stunned JCC members in flawless Kiswahili hence appealed to Kenyans from different social backgrounds and that he was bare footed. Kiswahili is a national language in Kenya hence 'Jesus' here stood for unity and identified himself with the poor residents of Kawangware who cannot afford to dress or wear decently. 'Jesus' recognized women leadership in the Church by attending a congregation presided over by Mary Akatsa and not that one presided over by a renown German evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke⁸¹.

Therefore, as far as the JCC is concerned, the Parousia is imminent and this calls for everybody to depart from his or her bad ways in order to serve the Lord. In the JCC, this departure from sins is technically referred to as 'getting saved'. The foundress believes that on that final day which is only known to God, the good will triumph over the evil. She also believes that God through the Holy Spirit is already triumphing over the evil in her Church as exemplified through her healing and revelations⁸².

The foundress also views her spirited campaign against the evil such as witchcraft, diseases, immorality, poverty and evil spirits amongst others as part and parcel of her divine mission to be accomplished before the Parousia. She also views her mission as a dangerous one because like Israel, she is surrounded by so many enemies especially leaders of post missionary churches in Kenya who are allegedly jealousy of her winning of thousands of people to her Church.

However, eschatology in the JCC is also secularized to an extent that wealth and education are regarded as blessings from God which must be used to assist the less fortunate. Alleviating existential problems is in line with eschatological programme of the good triumphing over the evil. That is why the foundress seeks jobs or gainful employment for her members and also strives for marriage stability⁸³.

There is need however to note that the whole issue of eschatology and the Parousia must be seen within the Biblical context. Although the 1988 claim by the JCC that 'Jesus' actually came to Kawangware was allegedly witnessed by many outsiders including journalists⁸⁴, it would be rather important to look for scriptural reference concerning the Parousia.

The scripture for instance warns that many will impersonate Jesus in order to lead many astray⁸⁵. It also adds that false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders so as to lead astray even the elected⁸⁶. Perhaps this may explain why this mysterious visitor to the JCC dubbed 'Jesus' was referred to as 'christ the maitreya' and not Jesus Christ⁸⁷. Although the prophetess avoids talking about this 'Jesus' nowadays following many criticism against her claims, the fact remains that his alleged coming to this Church has influenced their understanding of the eschatology. Another fact which also remains is that thousands of her followers believe that they saw 'Jesus Christ' in broad daylight and that he promised to come again.

From the foregoing, we may note a few things in this chapter. The Bible in the JCC is regarded as the supernaturally inspired

word of God and that it is verbally in errant. However, although this Holy book is used to provide the basis for this church's beliefs and practices, the foundress treats it like some kind of a fetish object used for healing and blessing.

Faith healing in the JCC is a recruitment technique for new members while revelations provide answers to their problems. Both the former and the latter provide the backbone of this Church. Healing is attributed to God and His son, Jesus who through the Holy Spirit use the foundress as a tool or vehicle of bringing about the healing. This is reminiscent of the Pittsburg's faith healer, Kathryn Kuhlman who in her book entitled, 'I believe in Miracles' notes that:

"... Many are the times when His (Holy Spirit's) very presence healed sick bodies before my eyes; my mind is so surrendered to the spirit, that I know the exact body being healed; the sickness the affliction and in some instances the very sin in their lives. And yet I could not pretend to tell you why or how!"⁸⁸

Therefore, the claims of the foundress that she is only a 'photocopy' of the 'original' (thus God and Jesus) who deserve the credit for healing through the Holy Spirit is not unique to her alone. God works through a mysterious way as we have noted of her Pittsburg counterpart, Kathryn Kuhlman.

The concept of Godhead and eschatology in the JCC may raise a lot of theological eyebrows. God the father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit are not seen as one but as two distinctive deities; thus God and His son Jesus Christ who work together through the power of the Holy Spirit. As a father, God is obviously greater than Jesus who in turn is greater than the Holy Spirit. God and His son

Jesus Christ are 'Persons' while the Holy Spirit is like some kind of dynamic divine power or force. The divine nature of Jesus is highlighted over and against his human nature. Eschatological understanding of the JCC is based on the alleged coming of 'Jesus' at the JCC headquarters rather than on the Bible.

The shortcomings in this Church concerning the concept of Godhead and eschatology may be due to a number of factors. At least two factors are noteworthy. The theology of this Church is lived and sung and not formulated as it has been the case of the Church in the western world. This is also what Martin discovered about Kimbanguism in central Africa⁸⁹. The JCC is also a young Church which is still developing her theology. Academically, the foundress is disadvantaged to understand the Councillar era's formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Since the foundress and her Church are both young, it is hoped that they will mature in the near future and grasp the modern trend's theological understanding of the concept of Godhead and eschatology.

4.3 Footnotes

1. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 4th edition, New York, 1989, P. 104.
2. Sermon by Mary Akatsa on 5/7/92.
3. This is occasional blessing of all JCC members using the Bible. The actual act involves the foundress softly hitting her members with her Bible on their chest and other spots with ailments. Photographs or any other documents put forward to her are also hit by the Bible to bless them.
4. More than 50 JCC members were interviewed in the course of our field research.
5. I bid;
6. Mary Akatsa occasionally boasts that most post-missionary churches in Nairobi are empty on Sundays since they have lost their faithful to the JCC because of her gift in faith healing and revelations.
7. Some of these incidences are contained in Kenya Times of 8/7/88, Standard, 25/6/88 and Daily Nation 25/6/88.
8. This took place on 11/10/92
9. Ironically, the same chapter also commands children to respect their parents (see Ephesians 6/1).
10. Examples are Isaiah 8/3, 55/12, 65/17, 66/13; Ecclesiastes 4/9, 7/2, 9/10, 12/1; Psalms 1, 7, 18, 23, 29, 94, 100 and Proverbs 5, 10, 22 and 31.
11. See chapter two on 'membership'
12. Ibid;

13. Ibid;
14. Daneel M.L., op. cit pp 26-29.
15. This is her way of explaining that she is simply a messenger of God who through the Holy Spirit works through her to effect the healing.
16. John Francis Okeno, referred to in chapter II is the JCC historian.
17. The prophetess usually makes a reference to Mark 16:15-18.
18. Interview with the foundress on 5/7/92.
19. This has already been discussed under the sub-title "The use of the Bible in the JCC".
20. This was revealed by the foundress on 25/11/92.
21. The foundress will no longer regard such patients as mental patients in the actual sense of the word. She sometimes brands them as drug addicts sent by her enemies to disrupt her work or her congregation. Four such cases were witnessed in the course of our research.
22. The prophetess believes that demons that cause madness tend to inhabit the shoulders and the head of a patient.
23. See Daily Nation 27/6/88, Kenya Times of 4/7/88 and 22/6/88 and Weekly Review 1/7/88.
24. The term 'witchcraft' is employed here to designate the harmful employment of mystical powers in all its different manifestations.
25. Testimony by Douglas Kiplagat on 24/10/92. The patient claimed that he had been healed from persistent abdominal pains which had defied conventional treatment after eating an

Irish potato from Mummy's farm.

26. This practice begun in the JCC on 1/1/92. It was prompted by a confession made by a JCC member on 28/12/91 that he had been cured of diabetes after drinking water from the rooftop at the JCC headquarters. He requested anonymity.
27. As registered members, they are subjected to constant revelation which informs them in advance of any danger ahead.
28. Blessed by the foundress, the worship robe is believed to have powers which can immunize registered JCC members against any mystical powers of witchcraft. In South Africa, Sundkler discovered that worship robes were effective against witchcraft and misfortunes and guaranteed health and ritual purity. See Sundkler, op. cit. p. 63.
29. Concerning her court case, see Daily Nation 14/7/88.
30. This is a kind of a free dress which is either green-brown, red-brown or blue-yellow in colour.
31. These are sorcerers, magicians and those who practice witchcraft.
32. This is mostly explained as the usual cause of barrenness, delay in conception, sterility and impotency, leg and feet swelling.
33. Interview with Surinder Jeet Kaur, Jaswinder Kaur Chagger and Mehboob Sheriff on 3/9/92.
34. Interview with Mary Thimudo and her son Gregory Thimudo on 26/7/92.
35. Interview with Mehboob Sheriff on 8/8/92.

36. This was on 12/1/92 when Janepher Omusula testified that water from the JCC rooftop at Kawangware had healed her of abdominal pains.
37. In October 1992, water from houses of JCC members who had been residentially expelled from the Church was blessed by the prophetess, who then ordered it to be given to patients and JCC members to bless them and heal them.
38. Crutches are usually retained whenever one is proclaimed healed so that they may serve as a living testimony of God's healing powers through Mary Akatsa.
39. Psalm 38 is given as evidence to this.
40. Two patients died from their homes during our field research. Mary Akatsa had expressed doubt over their possible survival. They were both AIDS victims.
41. Interview with Beatrice Kavochi Ndafwera on 4/11/92 and Joyce Kadogo Shadume on 27/11/92.
42. Sermon by Mary Akatsa on 24/10/92 at Kawangware.
43. Galatians 3:10.
44. Mbiti J.S. op. cit. p. 200.
45. Ibid;
46. Ibid;
47. According to the muslim mythology, a jin-nee is a spirit with supernatural power and which is able to appear in animal or human form. It is believed that most jin-nees are found or exist in coastal towns like Mombasa and adjacent areas. Jin-nees can be hired or even bought by those who practice witchcraft while others use them for divination. Nowadays, it

is commonly believed that jin-nees are not only at the coast but are also in the interior parts of Kenya owned by certain persons for harmful, gainful, protective or commercial purposes. See Kenya Times 19/6/87.

48. Revelation by Mary Akatsa on 2/12/92.
49. This was on 2/12/92. The patient, Agnes Catherine Opondo was later interviewed by the researcher.
50. See John 9:6-7, Matthew 9:20-22 and Acts 19:11-12.
51. This is found in Mark 16:15-18.
52. JCC members who registered in this Church before 1992 claimed that they had witnessed bright stars above the JCC headquarters on service days at least every month. They dispelled the rumour outside this Church that these stars are confusedly weather balloons released by the meteorological department on Ngong Road almost at the same time these stars were spotted in this Church.
53. See chapter three on 'Baptism in the JCC'.
54. Interview with Mary Akatsa on 5/7/92.
55. According to the prophetess, God took long to fulfill promises as was the case of Abraham in the book of Genesis. Therefore, she compares this 'ancient' God to an old man who takes long to act. The 'contemporary God' is compared to a young man (it is mostly young men who wear shorts) because He is fast in fulfilling promises. For instance, God 'the young man' heals through her whenever she intercedes for a patient through a prayer.
56. Ibid;

57. Here, the foundress usually speaks like a Patriarchess comparing her members to Israelites and Kawangware to Jerusalem.
58. See chapter two on 'Historical background of the foundress'.
59. JCC members claimed that they saw 'Jesus Christ' in broad daylight when he visited their headquarters on 11/6/88. This incidence is also contained in Kenya Times of 22/6/88.
60. Most JCC members at the headquarters since 1988 claimed that they have witnessed stars in the sky above the JCC headquarters in the course of revelations and healing. That these stars signified the presence of God.
61. Sermon by Mary Akatsa on 24/10/92.
62. Exodus 20:1-7.
63. Interview with Mary Akatsa on 13/1/92.
64. Ibid;
65. Sermon by Mary Akatsa on 15/1/92 where she made a reference to Acts 1:8.
66. She usually avoids mentioning the words Holy Spirit hence only alludes to it by declaring that "I am filled".
67. This is always reverted to whenever one may seem to be doubting her revelations.
68. Interview with Mary Akatsa on 17/10/92.
69. This happened severally in the course of our field research.
70. The foundress recognizes the founders of LM and AICN as those who like her were chosen by God for a divine mission. However, she quickly adds that being men, they did not live upright lives. That they took 'advantage' of their women

believers, thus had love affairs with them. That is why God has chosen a woman for a change.

71. Sermon by Mary Akatsa on 24/10/92.
72. Interview with Mary Akatsa on 17/10/92.
73. Therefore, unlike God the Father and God the Son, the Holy Spirit is not viewed as a person.
74. See chapter three on 'Adult Baptism'.
75. See Luke 8:1-3, 10:38-42 and John 19:25.
76. More than 50 JCC members were interviewed in the course of our field research.
77. Ibid;
78. Interview with Mary Akatsa on 13/1/92.
79. Ibid;
80. Ibid;
81. Mr. Job Mutungi claimed that the German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke had prophesied that Kenyans would experience the presence of Jesus on 11/6/88. Despite the fact that Bonnke was at Uhuru Park on that day preaching and praying for the sick, his prophecy was fulfilled somewhere else; that is, at the vice and crime infested slums of Kawangware. See Mutungi's article in the Kenya Times of 22/6/88.
82. Sermon by Mary Akatsa on 24/10/92.
83. Ibid;
84. Interview with the managing editor of Kenya Leo, Job Mutungi on 15/3/93.
85. See Matthew 24.
86. Ibid;

87. Interview between Job Mutungi of Kenya Leo and Benjamin Creme of "The New Age Movement" in London, October 1988. Christ the Maitreya is Christ for all religions, creeds and denominations and not merely the Jesus Christ of Christianity. That his appearance (Maitreya) at Kawangware signified the imminent end of the world. That 'Lord Maitreya' will appear in many other places on the world before his imminent final coming and the end of the world according to Benjamin Creme.
88. Kuhlman Kathryn: I believe in Miracles (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc. Publishers, 1962) p. 215.
89. Martin M.L., op. cit. pp. 139-140.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Summary

As indicated in chapter one, this study had four objectives and the findings can be summarized before stating the concrete conclusions. The JCC fits within the context of religious independence in Africa. These independent movements have striking similarities. Their development as shown in the literature review was a result of a combination of factors: economic, political, social, religious and theological. However, as indicated in chapter two, theological factors were dominant in the emergence of the JCC.

The JCC was not a breakaway Church. Its emergence as described in chapter two was derived more from the influence of an individual prophetess than from a group secession. This was because of her charismatic gift of healing and prophecy that attracted people to her. The emergence of the JCC and other similar churches implied a manifest weakness in both missionary and post missionary churches. The JCC offered members a new, if limited, spiritual vitality that had escaped them in the churches of their former allegiance.

In the independent Church typology, this study has demonstrated that the JCC is a prophet-healing independent Church (chapters three and four). Prophecy (revelations) and healing are the dominant concerns which also form the basic beliefs and practices of this Church.

The JCC has striking similarities with Zionist independent churches in South Africa and the 'a ladura' churches in West Africa

which both emphasize prophecy and healing. The above churches are also known by the designation, 'spirit' churches in Kenya. As shown in our operational definitions, this study chose the term 'prophet-healing' Church for the JCC because the above designations are all either local in use or uncertain and limited in meaning. The term 'prophet-healing' takes account of both basic beliefs, the revelatory and therapeutic and also expresses the dominant concern of the JCC in a simple and concrete manner. Therefore, our hypothesis that prophecy and healing are the major attractions in this Church was confirmed to be true.

The historical background of the JCC revealed that this Church was founded by Mary Akatsa, a young woman who got married at the age of thirteen years. This was not unusual. Barrett observes that some of these independent movements were founded by young women, some of whom had early marriages [Barnett D.B. Op cit. (1986) Pp. 147-149].

We had hypothesized that the JCC appeals to people with low education standards. Our findings proved this hypothesis to be wrong. As indicated in chapter two, this study revealed that people of low education standards, the marginal in the Kenyan society are the majority in the JCC. However, this Church also appeals to professionals, intellectuals, businessmen and even politicians. A government minister was a pastor in this Church, for instance. This study also revealed that the expansion of the JCC was able to cut across various ethnic groups although the Luhya were dominant. This Church also attracted people from other races of Asian and European origin.

As it was observed in chapters two and three, the JCC provided members with a sense of stability, cohesion and 'a place to feel at home'. This was true of the traditional African society within the institutions of family, clan and other organizations. However, it is to be noted that both missionary and post-missionary churches coupled with urbanization have undermined social structures and religious foundations of the society. Many victims of social disintegration can be found all over Kenyan major towns creating a void this Church has attempted to fill. By joining the JCC, one became a member of this small community (Church) that, through social and religious activities integrated one into a newly found family and therefore home with a common mother (Mummy) and father (Daddy).

The JCC was also relevant to the kind of people who became members. Virtues of honesty, kindness, love and concern for others were emphasized. These features have made the Church attractive to members and non-members. Non-members from other churches were allowed to attend services as unregistered members and enjoyed the healing and revelation services from this Church. Therefore, the JCC encouraged ecumenism at the local level which is the basis for the wider ecumenism.

The JCC accommodated certain traditional practices and beliefs relevant to the people who became members. There was some kind of 'selective indigenization' whereby, some traditional practices were rejected especially those that contradicted revelations and faith healing since the JCC is a prophet-healing Church. Examples of those rejected practices were indicated in chapter two.

There were indigenous aspects in the worship such as drumming, dancing, exclamations, ululations, symbols and rites. During burial, a dead member was sometimes addressed as it was the case of a traditional Luhya burial ceremony (Chapter three). The Church was relevant because it respected values which were traditionally treasured like polygamy. Polygamists and members from such families were allowed to register in the JCC. In fact, a polygamist was a member of the Church committee at the headquarters. However, upon registration, a member was not expected to take an additional wife since polygamy was strictly forbidden. The JCC believed in traditional causation of ailments and misfortunes which is still part and parcel of the African worldview.

From the African point of view, Mary Akatsa also offered divinational services to her members through revelations by detecting causes of their suffering or misfortunes. She also provided answers to their problems through faith healing and other preventive measures as discussed in chapter four. Dreams and visions were valued while communality was emphasized especially during crisis points of life like death. Africanization has certainly occurred in this aspect of the Church. Therefore, our study also confirmed that the religious beliefs and practices of the JCC were influenced by the African traditional beliefs and practices as hypothesized.

The JCC also ministered to women in this Church, who were the majority, in a special manner. Through Friday meetings and prayers as described in chapter three, they underwent a psychological treatment that gave them emotional relief. These

meetings gave women an opportunity of entering into a sympathetic relationship with women under similar stresses and conscientized them over their rights and dignity. The Friday meetings also addressed tensions and anxieties of the modern family hence relieving women of the nervous breakdown or mental disturbance.

The JCC made a significant contribution to the economic development on account of its acceptance of education, hospitals and attempts at alleviating poverty amongst its members. As shown in chapters two and three, JCC members were encouraged to accept any job as exemplified by their Mummy accepting to work as a house maid. The well to do members were encouraged to assist the poor and the destitutes.

During Friday meetings, women were taught self-reliant skills and how to form women groups for faster development. This way, the JCC assisted the government of Kenya in discouraging the white collar job mentality among most Kenyans at this time of growing unemployment. Social offenders such as thieves who repented and joined the JCC were offered gainful employment. Therefore, the JCC was not only concerned with the spiritual matters as we had hypothesized. The Church provided for the existential needs of its members who were disoriented by the confusing trends of a society undergoing rapid changes.

As discussed in chapter two, the JCC was created out of an amalgamation of Judeo-Christian and traditional beliefs and practices. However, this Church is not just an isolated event; it is a phenomenon. As a phenomenon, it implied both renewal and relevance.

As a movement of renewal, the Church demanded a new and a great commitment. Members displayed a strong and a perplexing desire in participating in the new communal activities especially at the crisis points of life. They attended funerals in large numbers, supplied labour at the home of the bereaved and generously donated into the Church account meant for meeting funeral expenses and other Church projects.

JCC members were very enthusiastic in the effort to preach to the whole world about their Mummy and how she was used by the spirit of the Lord to bring about healing and revelations. It was noted in chapter two that even African workers registered in this Church managed to convince their Indian employers to come to the JCC so that they could be prayed for.

Systems of laws, rituals and prohibitions including food taboos as was observed from chapters two, three and four respectively were meant to help new converts to live in the newness of life. Members were taught certain preventive measures to enable them to live in an environment threatened by witchcraft. The world of evil was renounced while living upright lives was encouraged. Through Friday meetings and marriage unions, a harmonious relationship was cultivated between husbands and wives.

Some revelations were both contemporary and educative. AIDS patients were for instance, revealed, and this created awareness of this dreaded disease and the need amongst JCC members to live upright lives. Members in the JCC joined a new religious community with a definite code of conduct where they were tied together by a common faith and adopted themselves to this outlook.

Rejecting certain traditional practices referred to here as 'selective indigenization' was in essence, a renewal aspect of this Church since it demonstrated some kind of a break with the past. In breaking with the past, JCC members were given a chance to decide whether to register in this Church or not especially at the headquarters level. They had to experience conversion ('to be born again') and to declare publicly their reasons for joining this Church as indicated in chapter two. Belief in the Holy Spirit that was not emphasized in mission churches was greatly emphasized in the JCC.

Reference has been made to some aspects in this Church that were relevant to the kind of people who become members. All the same, it is worth mentioning the worship language. As discussed in chapter three, the worship language was relevant to JCC members because the language was communicated in Kiswahili, a national language in Kenya that was understood by the majority.

The use of 'sheng' made the youths comfortable in the Church while euphemistic expressions enriched communication without embarrassing children. The worship language was not plain and strictly Biblical; neither was it conveyed in a particular dialect of a particular ethnic group as is characteristic of some missionary and post missionary churches. The language was lively, sensational and full of humour. This language was relevant to the urban metropolitan environment and it was also influenced by this environment. Foreigners to this Church were given interpreters.

As seen in chapter three, hymns were part and parcel of worship in the JCC. Some hymns were composed in this Church while others were borrowed from other churches and rhythmically

modified to suit the JCC. These hymns were sung to the African tunes and melodies and were also relevant to the kind of situations being experienced by the majority of JCC members hence, they relieved them of the daily tensions of human life.

The holiness of the Bible was emphasized because it was regarded as verbally inerrant. Although it was sometimes quoted out of context to back the religious beliefs and practices of this Church as was shown in chapter four, it was made more relevant to the kind of situations faced by JCC members whereby, it was used as some kind of a fetish object to heal the sick and to bless the unfortunate.

Besides the 'selective indigenization' of Christianity to make it more relevant to the kind of people who became JCC members, this Church also highlighted the role of women in the Church. It was observed from chapter three that men leaders in the JCC performed ceremonial duties such as baptism and burial. Others were either ushers, Church committee members or volunteers for certain jobs like keeping Church records as was the case of the Church historian and assistants to the secretary. Even so, they had no veto power.

Although some men leaders appeared above women as shown on the official leadership hierarchical line in the JCC, this was only theoretical since women were high above them according to the role they played in this Church. In brief, the foundress was the top executive of the JCC and next to her were women. The finance of this Church was controlled by women under the direct supervision of the prophetess.

As a leader, Mary Akatsa was careful not to keep friends

among her followers for long because she always reckoned the Biblical fact that Jesus was betrayed by His closest disciple, Judas Iscariot. Many of her close associates kept falling out of favour with her since they fall victims of her revelation. For this reason, she was not only respected but also feared. As indicated in chapter two, she was feared because her revelations sometimes caused a lot of embarrassment as was the case of the COBEA Bishop and yet respected because her members believed that she always revealed the truth. Therefore, because of her faith healing and prophetic charisma, she was in the JCC, the human absolute leader, a despot and an arbitrator.

Besides appointing women to various leadership positions in this Church, Mary Akatsa also recognized and enhanced the role they played in the JCC which finally saw them high above men on the leadership hierarchical line. In this context, she recovered the dignity, respect and status of women not only in the Church but also in the society.

Therefore, this proved to the missionary and other post-missionary churches that ecclesiastical oppression of women was a creation of man to suit his chauvinistic interests hence a thing of the past. Barret notes that women are the majority in independent churches (Chapter three). This study also discovered that women were the majority in the JCC. This implies that by appointing women to positions of responsibility and empowering them through ecclesiastical duties such as preaching, the JCC was made more relevant to them.

Nevertheless, women were not made leaders on the basis of the

foundress being the superintendent of this Church. Biblical evidence was given to highlight the fact that women were not discriminated by God or Jesus because God the Father and God the Son identified themselves with the oppressed in society especially the women. The Church also noted that women held prophetic positions in both the O.T. and the N.T. and above all, they excelled where men failed especially in financial matters of the Church. Therefore, the JCC was relevant to the contemporary society where women are fighting for equal rights with men in both secular and religious spheres of life.

As far as Godhead and eschatology in the JCC was concerned, this study discovered that God of the scriptures was pneumatologically viewed as present in power through the Holy Spirit who revealed His will, guided amidst dangers and filled the prophetess with the powers of revelations, prayer and healing.

The JCC regarded itself as 'a spirit' Church because as members believed, it was the channel of God's spiritual power for the help of persons in their past and present fears and problems. Members in turn were to reject traditional magic and medicine and use spiritual methods in their acknowledgement of the divine deliverance. However, as observed from chapter four, the JCC accommodated the idea of visiting hospitals hence indirectly accepting the limitation of faith healing in certain cases especially those not controlled by the mind.

It was indicated in chapter four that whereas God and Jesus were viewed as persons in the JCC, the Holy Spirit was viewed as some kind of a force or power albeit divine. Before the claimed visit

of 'Jesus' to the JCC, Jesus Christ was seen as the son of God who was sent to redeem mankind from sin. The acknowledged coming of 'Jesus' to the JCC headquarters distorted this Church's view of Jesus of the scriptures. The eschatology in the JCC was secularized and was based on the message given by this 'Jesus' rather than on the Bible.

However, this study discovered that the JCC is very quiet over this claim of 'Jesus' visit to their Church. Other Church members deride JCC members branding them, 'the ones who saw Jesus'. In fact, the JCC is very much embarrassed following a lot of criticism levelled against it over this claim. Photographs and negatives of 'Jesus' taken when he visited this Church have been withdrawn from the resident photographer for sell. Those who bought them earlier were requested to strictly keep them to themselves if they want blessings. The foundress never referred to this incidence at all throughout our field research especially during her presiding over this Church.

The foregoing suggests that the JCC is not an isolated entity. There is room for growth. That is why this Church does not want to isolate itself by holding to views which are obviously antithesis to the universal Church and the scripture.

5.1 Conclusions

Conclusions of this study should take note of a number of factors that come out explicitly in the last four chapters. The JCC emerged as a response to a charismatic leader, Mary Akatsa, who is respected, not worshipped because of her charisma in prophecy and

healing. The JCC never broke away from any mother Church and it accommodated a lot from other churches such as the PAG and the COBEA in as far as beliefs, practices and terminologies are concerned. The Church cooperates with the government and allows members to visit hospitals. The JCC tolerates members from other churches and membership is both voluntary and in-born. Liturgy and Church traditions are not rejected.

The Bible is read and interpreted. The central message of the JCC is to preach the Gospel to the whole world which was also the acknowledged mission of the foundress during her Trinitarian vocation. Jesus Christ is at the centre of preaching and healing in this Church. The alleged coming of Jesus to the JCC headquarters is gradually dying and the JCC has bought a field for constructing a big Church. JCC members own property in spite of their belief in the imminence of the Parousia. Therefore, our first conclusion in respect to the foregoing is that the JCC is a Christian denomination and not a sect or a cult.

The JCC is also a young Church which is making theology as it goes on. Therefore, the beliefs and practices of this Church are subject to growth. This can be demonstrated by Mary Akatsa and her followers apathy towards discussing the 'Jesus visit' not only in her Church but also to the outside world. Mary Akatsa is a young woman who is also still maturing. It is likely that she will mature with her Church. It is also likely that the Bible will not be used as a fetish object for healing and blessing at the demise of the prophetess. JCC leaders at the branch and headquarters level do not use the Bible as a fetish. In this connection, this study has

concluded that since the foundress and her Church are both young and are making theology as they go along, there is room for growth in this Church.

As observed from chapter two and three, the foundress who is also the superintendent of the JCC is a young woman who is actually illiterate as far as her education level is concerned. Nevertheless, her congregation is made up of people who are older, more educated and of course men. Humanly speaking, tensions arise as how to reconcile her leadership in the JCC to her youth, her lack of education and her being a woman. In fact, part of her despotic leadership is a kind of mechanism to enable her to handle a section of her members who may otherwise make her suffer from inferiority. The most important of Mary Akatsa's personality is her charisma of healing and prophecy in respect to her leadership position. This study has made a third conclusion that Mary Akatsa's charisma well compensates her lack of education, her relative youth and her being a woman.

Fourthly, the JCC in its two-fold aspects: traditional and Judeo-Christian is relevant, to the kind of people who become members. Due to its relevance, the JCC has attracted many people in a short time and managed to reform and win the acceptance of those who become members.

The Church has tried to make the Gospel message understandable to members by integrating it into their culture. The JCC has made a contribution to Christianity by showing a way to indigenization through their beliefs and practices.

Today the Church universal is faced with the problem of how

to relate to the traditional culture. The current efforts at indigenization show that the Church has accepted its obligation to minister to the people in their present state and be meaningful and relevant to them.

Therefore, the JCC has made a substantial theological contribution to Christianity in Africa by presenting a theology relevant to its members. This study leads to the conclusion that in order for the Church to be relevant to the people, it must have meaning for them in their given situations, needs and aspirations. If the Church universal is to retain its dynamism, it has to relinquish outdated forms and incorporate new trends safeguarding the essentials and the unity of the Church itself. New approaches will have to be in step with a developing and changing society.

Finally, this study has concluded that it is the local level that should determine the pastoral approach and method. Probably, a woman led independent Church like the JCC should stir, as a contribution, the mission and other post mission started churches to re-examine their methods in the light of African needs and aspirations. It is likely that independent churches will continue to rise in response to conditions that are unbearable because they will be attempts at giving hope in the midst of despair.

The JCC has therefore given followers a satisfying form of Christianity. Thus, it has so far given its members a certain measure of security that has enabled them to adjust to their environment. To this extent, this Church fulfills a definite function to a section of Kenyan population which other missionary and post-missionary churches would perhaps, not have achieved.

Starting from this kind of a base, the members have been able to integrate themselves gradually into the wider society and to face the challenges and realities of the modern world. They have become cooperative and responsible agents in the development of the country.

5.2 Recommendations

The Future of the JCC

The JCC has experienced successes and spectacular attractions to its members and even non-members. As a reality and a phenomena, it has a significance that exceeds by far its local implications. It has an importance and relevance not only for Kenya but for the whole continent and perhaps beyond. Thus it should be viewed in the larger setting of African initiative in religion.

However, there is lack of dynamic and enlightened leadership that might significantly promote its further expansion. The JCC leadership is both charismatic and theocratic as was discussed in chapter two and three. The same leadership revolves around the personality of Mary Akatsa who is not only the mother of the JCC members but also the human absolute leader, arbitrator and a despot.

Mary Akatsa's charisma of healing and prophecy is the major attraction of people to this Church. Therefore, as hypothesized earlier, the future of the JCC will depend on the foundress. This is because, a charismatic and theocratic leader according to the O.T. and chapters two and three of this study can only be chosen by God. If God will not make another choice of a leader to succeed the

prophetess at her demise, it is likely that the JCC will have to experience schisms as is characteristic of other similar churches.

If Mary Akatsa died now, there would be a leadership wrangle between the senior mother assembly and the JCC Bishop as shown in chapter three and illustrated on the diagram. Some JCC members would prefer a woman leader to compensate the mother figure of the foundress while others would want a male leader for a change. Of course ethnic factors will also come into consideration. Therefore, the foundress needs to make careful plans to streamline leadership in this Church so as to create room for her successor. This will inhibit possible uncertainty and schisms over who should take over the succession after her demise as was the case of the Nomiya Luo Church. (Opwapo A.M, M.A thesis, 1981, Pp. 110-112)

All the same, the fact that the JCC branches run their affairs for long periods of time without the foundress visiting them may imply that the JCC has a possible alternative to the demise although it would not be the JCC as we know it today. It is to be noted that some churches have survived in spite of the death of their charismatic leaders. The Legio Maria is surviving despite the death of their 'messiah', Melkio Ondetto and the same also applies to the AICN, 'a spirit' Church like the JCC (Welbourn F.B op.cit Pp. 146-148).

Therefore, this study suggests that the Bishop should be allowed to exercise the charismatic gifts of healing and preaching which he manifested earlier (chapter 3). This way, he may assist the foundress in her mission due to the ever increasing number of followers of this Church. The foundress should not discourage JCC

members to speak in tongues. JCC members should be allowed to manifest their possible various charismatic gifts for the benefit of this Church. The role of the Bishop and the senior mother assembly at the JCC headquarters should be clearly defined to avoid conflicts between them at the demise of Mary Akatsa.

In view of the fact that a Church minister is not just to minister to his own Church members, but also to those with no Church connection or connection with other churches, the ministers in the JCC should be well trained and those recruited for the positions should be carefully assessed. The national and even international bodies of the universal Church should assist this and other similar churches in training their ministers. These bodies should also open dialogue with founders of this and other similar churches in Africa as part of their ecumenical programme. This should assist such churches in their theological growth.

Since the Jerusalem Church of Christ caters for both existential and spiritual needs of its members, the government and even non-governmental bodies should assist this Church in training counsellors or self-reliant instructors. The current leaders of this Church lack proper counselling and self-reliant skills to disseminate to women members of this Church during Friday assemblies.

The JCC should also open up branches in other parts of Kenya in order to keep in line with the Church's concern for a national outlook. Perhaps one could also argue that the JCC has taken the trend taken by all churches in Kenya be they missionary or post-missionary churches. Most missionary started churches like the Presbyterian, methodists and Friends churches have almost been

limited to certain ethnic groups.

The JCC has also been an object of contempt and sometimes ridicule as a Church led by a woman who is worshipped by even men. This is a misconception and characteristic of male chauvinism. There is a difference between worshipping or paying homage to a person and showing respect. Women Church leaders like their male counterparts deserve respect and not ridicule especially if what they have achieved speaks for itself. Ecclesiastical marginalization of women should come to an end now. The Church universal should encourage women leadership in its rank and file in order to pave way for greater gender equalities in the secular spheres of our lives.

However, all the beliefs and practices of the JCC could not be covered here because they were beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, ample study and research should be carried out in areas of the concepts of sin, salvation, prophecy, discipleship and the concept of the 'Church' according to the JCC. Such indepth studies should contribute towards a fuller assessment of this Church, and other prophet-healing movements.

In spite of the loopholes, the JCC still has an extra ordinary and impressive cohesion among its leaders and followers. Unwilling to relapse to the traditional religion and yet not willing to join the missionary and other post-missionary started churches, the JCC members have found in this Church a type of Christianity that is relevant to their needs, situations and aspirations.

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File of North Nyanza DC/NN/3/1.

File of North Nyanza DC/NN/3/2/13.



Mary Akatsa and her grandmother, Lorna Sangolo at the JCC Headquarters in 1989.



Mary Akatsa in one of Nairobi's hospitals where she delivered a baby boy. In spite of her acknowledged faith healing powers, she is an ordinary human being who goes to hospitals and who takes conventional medicine.



This Asian is suffering from obesity because he ate and fed on what he acquired unjustly ('haramu') according to Akatsa. In order to heal, he had to run along the sacred path shouting 'haramu iende ...' (the unjust depart ...') as Akatsa ran behind him to and fro. This also demonstrates Mary Akatsa's sense of humour.



An Asian couple during a marriage union at the JCC headquarters. Such unions improve husband-wife relationships according to Mummy.



Mary Akatsa conducting a witchcraft eradication in Western Province. Usually, the 'witch' is supposed to burn his or her own witchcraft paraphernalia to show that he or she has totally renounced the practice.



JCC members queueing to drink 'the healing water'
while others patiently wait for their turn to come.



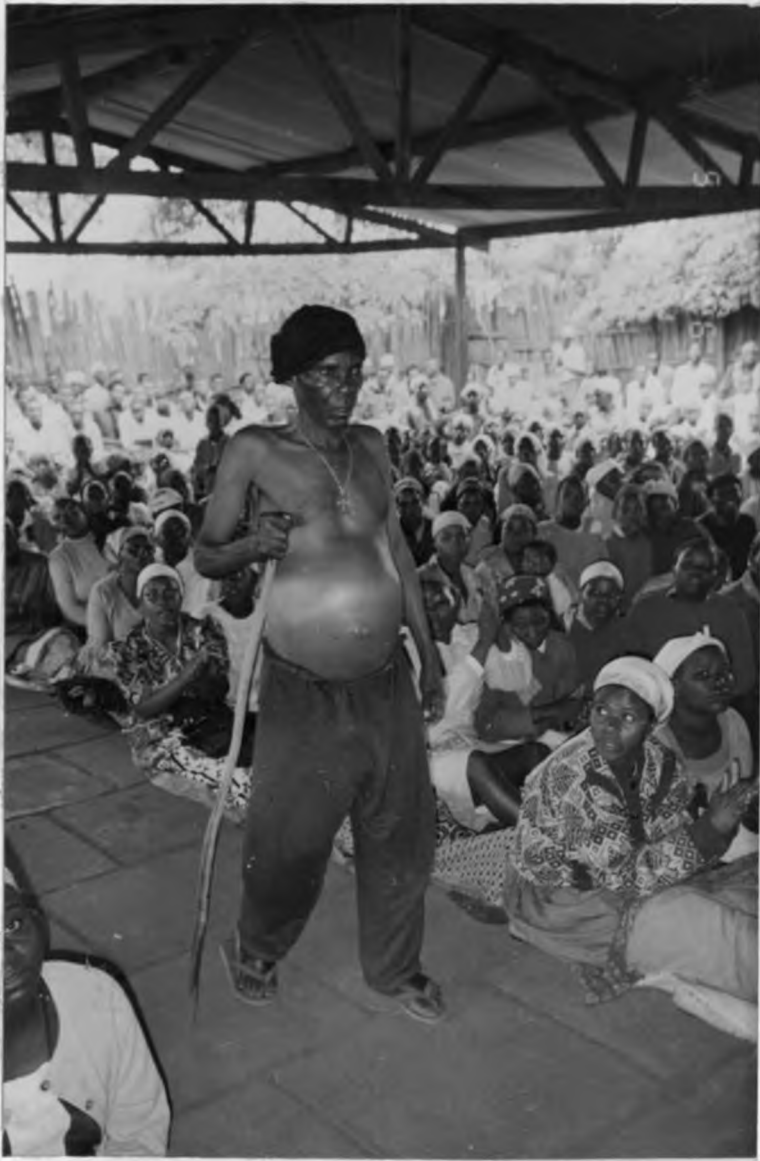
JCC members touching the 'healing portrait of Jesus' at the JCC headquarters especially when the foundress has missed to attend the service.



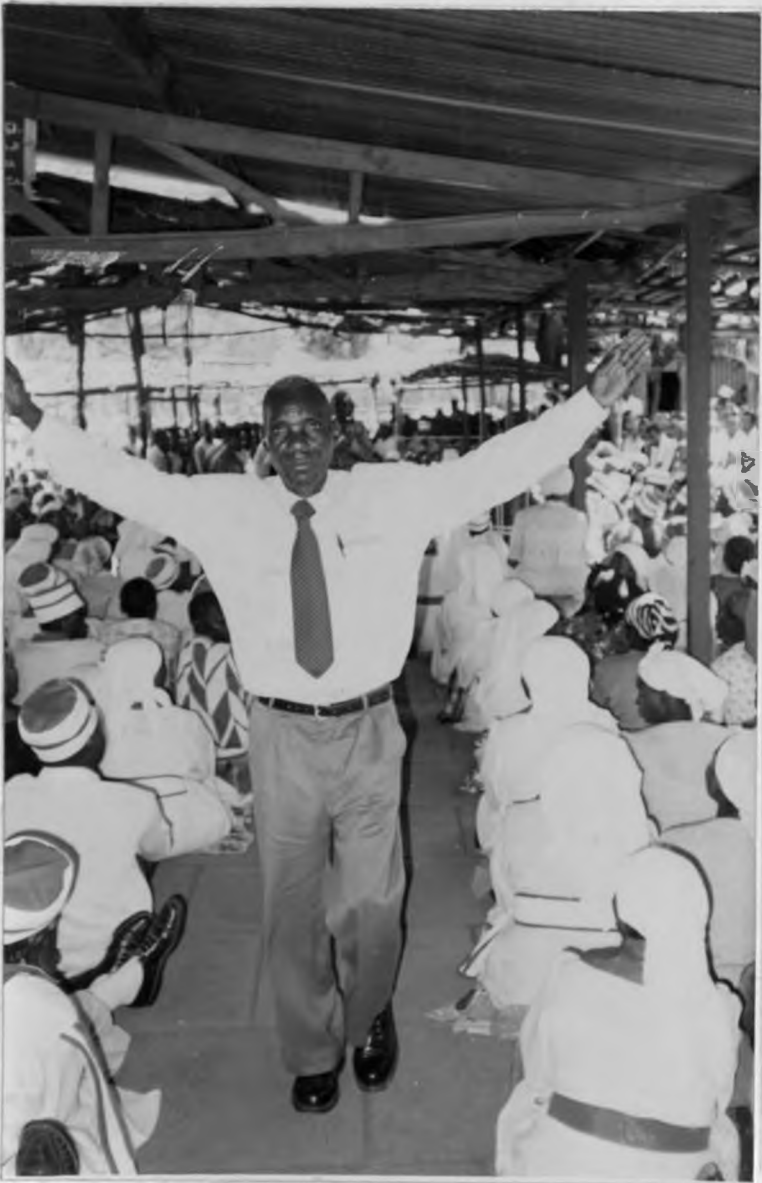
Mary Akatsa praying for a baby allegedly bewitched by a ^{stepmother} according to Akatsa. The baby healed although it was taken to the hospital. Parents believe that the baby was healed by the foundress.



Mary Akatsa during one of her greatest healing sessions at the JCC headquarters.



Mr. John Makanga at the JCC headquarters after being fed on a frog (love portion) by his wife. He was prayed for by Mary Akatsa.



Mr. John Makanga two months later celebrates his healing along the sacred path at the JCC headquarters. He testified that he healed a day later after being prayed for by Akatsa.

APPENDIX B

	NAME	AGE	ETHNIC GROUP	RESIDENCE	STATUS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	DENOMINATION	REASON FOR INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
1.	Anne Kamau	40	Kikuyu	Gigiri Divisional Police HQs	Married	Form Four	Police Chief Inspector	PAG	A born again christian, knows Mary Akatsa, has dissenting views about her	13/10/92 Gigiri Nairobi
2.	Joseph Munji	42	Embu	Pangani Police Station	Married	Form Four	Police Chief Inspector	CPK	Incharge of Kabete Police Station where Kawangware falls administratively	13/10/92 Kabete Nairobi
3.	Eliud Werunga Nyongesa	32	Luhya	Kabete Police Station	Married	Form Four	Police Constable	JCC	All family members belong to the JCC	13/10/92 Kabete Nairobi
4.	Moses Okeno Wambove	27	Luhya	Khwisero	Married	University level	Un-employed	JCC	Picture of Mary Akatsa enabled him to marry. He is also a JCC member	19/12/92 Fahrandu Kakamega
5.	Zebediah Mukhone	25	Luhya	Ruwai Nairobi	Single	Form one	Domestic worker	JCC	Works for Mary Akatsa at Ruwai home, Nairobi	24/10/92 Kawangware Nairobi
6.	Agnes Wanjiru Muu	37	Kikuyu	Ngong Road	Married	Form Four	Police Chief Inspector	Catholic	A close associate of Mary Akatsa	27/10/92 Ngong Road Nairobi
7.	Hezron Omuva	47	Gusii	Kilimani Police Station	Married	Standard Eight	Police Constable	JCC	All family members belong to the JCC	23/10/92 Kilimani Nairobi
8.	Harrison Anyoso Otieno	53	Luhya	Ebusiralo	Married	Standard Three	JCC Reverend Ebusiralo	JCC	JCC leader, Ebusiralo branch, Vihiga District	13/12/92

NAME	AGE	ETHNIC GROUP	RESIDENCE	STATUS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	DENOMINATION	REASON FOR INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
9. Regina Kamau	30	Kikuyu	Riruta Satellite	Married	Form Four	Telephone Operator New Stanley Hotel	PAG	A dissenter	14/10/92 Nairobi
10. Florence Kwamboka Nyangweso	32	Gusii	Riruta Satellite	Married	Form Four	Civil Servant	JCC	All family members belong to the JCC	17/11/92 Re-Insurance Plaza, Nairobi
11. Geoffrey Mwangi	45	Kikuyu	Kahawa Barracks	Married	Form Four	Soldier, Major in the Army	JCC	Chairman of the Church Committee, JCC Headquarters	8/11/92 Kawangware Nairobi
12. John Francis Okeno	21	Luhya	Kawangware	Married	Standard Eight	Artist	JCC	Historian of the JCC and registered member since 1988	28th and 29th October 1992 at Kawangware and Westlands in Nairobi respectively
13. Peter Changalwa	35	Luhya	Highrise	Married	Form six Diploma holder	Police Inspector	JCC	Revealed and registered in the course of our field research.	27/10/02 Utumishi House, Nairobi
14. Sibusiso Amoi	51	Luhya	Katina	Married	Form Four	Senior Pastor, COBEA	COBEA	COBEA founder member	3/1/93
15. Jones Jamwoba	37	Teso	Mlimani	Married	Form Four	JCC Branch Secretary Mlimani	JCC	Women leader, Mlimani branch	6/12/92 Mlimani branch, Kakamega

NAME	AGE	ETHNIC GROUP	RESIDENCE	STATUS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	DENOMINATION	REASON FOR INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
16. Eugene Nzuki	29	Kamba	Kahawa Barracks	Married	Form Four	Soldier Kenya Army	JCC	JCC registered member since 1988	21/10/92 Hurlingham Nairobi
17. Job Mutungi	45	Kamba	Buru Buru	Married	University Level	Journalist, Managing Editor, Kenya Leo, Newspaper	JCC	Witnessed the 'Jesus' appearance at Kawangware	15/3/93 Kingsway House Nairobi
18. Stanley Jogoo Nyawate Otiali	70	Luhya	Ebusiralo Vihiga District	Married	Standard Three	Farmer	JCC	Father of Mary Akatsa	11/10/92 Kawangware Nairobi
19. Amos Onami Endata	33	Luhya	Ebutongoi Vihiga District	Married	Form Two	Clerk Post Office	JCC	Paternal uncle of Mary Akatsa	11/10/92 Kawangware Nairobi
20. Christine Awinja Mukolwe	34	Luhya	Kongo next to Kawangware	Married	Form One	Fish Monger	ADC cum PAG	Knows Mary Akatsa, attended JCC services for a year	14/10/92 Kongo Nairobi
21. Francis Mwangi	20	Kikuyu	Bahati	Single	Standard Six	Business	Presbyterian	Revealed in the course of our field research	14/10/92 Kawangware Nairobi
22. Augustine Nyongesa	29	Luhya	Makongeni	Single	Standard Seven	un-employed	Catholic	An AIDS victim	14/10/92 Kawangware Nairobi
23. Agnes Ochieng	19	Luo	Langata	Married	Standard Eight	Housewife	Legio Maria	Her son healed from epilepsy	14/10/92 Kawangware

NAME	AGE	ETHNIC GROUP	RESIDENCE	STATUS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	DENOMINATION	REASON FOR INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
24. Joshua Mogire	36	Gusii	BuruBuru	Married	Form Six	Insurer	Seventh Day Adventist	Given a job by Mary Akatsa	11/10/92 Jeevanjee Garden Nairobi
25. Martin Ngarama	33	Embu	Kawangware	Married	Form Two	Office messenger	JCC	An usher at the JCC headquarter	2/11/92 Ufungamano House Nairobi
26. Susan Ngarama	22	Embu	Kawangware	Married	Standard Eight	Shopkeeper	JCC	Healed from allegedly, incurable stomach ailments by Mary Akatsa	2/11/92 Ufungamano House, Nairobi
27. Renison Munyekho	32	Luhya	Harambee Police Depot	Married	Form Four	Traffic Police Constable	JCC	JCC member since 1988, saw 'Jesus' at Kawangware	3/11/92 Harambee, Nairobi
28. Elizabeth Naliaka Munyekho	30	Luhya	Harambee Police Depot	Married	Form Four	Housewife	JCC	Regular attendant of Friday assemblies and JCC member since 1988	3/11/92 Harambee Nairobi
29. Mary Sinalda Dorcas Akatsa	28	Luhya	Ruwai Estate	Married	Standard Three	Prophetess, preacher and faith healer	JCC	Foundress of the JCC	12/1/92 and 17/10/92 at Kawangware 5/10/92 at Ruwai, Nairobi
30. Surinder Jeet Kaur Chagger	28	Indian	Parklands	Single	High School	Travel Manager	Sikhism	Relative healed from an ailment that required surgery	3/9/92 Parklands, Nairobi

NAME	AGE	ETHNIC GROUP	RESIDENCE	STATUS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	DENOMINATION	REASON FOR INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
31. Jaswinder Kaur Chagger	51	Indian	Parklands	Married	Primary Level	Housewife	Sikhism	Healed by Mary Akatsa of an ailment that required surgery	3/9/92 Parklands, Nairobi
32. Mehboob Sheriff	24	Indian	Parklands	Single	High School	Student Kenya Polytechnic	Muslim	Research assistant among Indian informants	8/8/92, 25/8/92 and 29/9/92 at Westlands and Parklands in Nairobi respectively
33. Claudio Tomatis	35	Italian	Italy	Married	Doctor of Philosophy in Physics	Lecturer cum Freelance Tour agent	Catholic	Brings Catholic tourists to visit the JCC among others	8/8/92 Kawangware Nairobi
34. Alice Onyango	23	Luo	Umoja II	Single	University Level	Student	PAG	Left crutches and walked after Mary Akatsa prayed for her	8/8/92 Kawangware Nairobi
35. Anne Wangari	19	Kikuyu	Uplands	Single	Form Four	Student	Presbyterian	Healed from mental ailment by Mary Akatsa	30/8/92 Kawangware, Nairobi
36. Mary Thimudo	53	Indian	Pangani	Married	Primary	Business	Hindu cum Catholic Christian	Son healed from mental ailment by Mary Akatsa	26/7/92 Kawangware, Nairobi

	NAME	AGE	ETHNIC GROUP	RESIDENCE
37.	Beatrice Kavochi Ndafwera	23	Luhya	Kilimani
38.	Charles Selubiri	27	Ugandan	Ngara
39.	Thomas Adaga	16	Gusii	Rungiri Kikuyu
40.	Zachariah Omuya	13	Gusii	Kilimani
41.	David Macharia	41	Luhya	Loresho
42.	Gaudencius Mwikuli	13	Kamba	Riruta Satellite
43.	Amoy Malongo	40	Luhya	Kawangware

STATUS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	DENOMINATION	REASON FOR INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
Single	Form Six	Pharmacist	JCC	JCC member since 1988 and research assistant among women assemblies	4/11/92, 6/11/92, 13/11/92 Westlands, Nairobi
Single	Form Six	Student Kenya Technical Teachers Training College	JCC	Ugandan registered member	15/11/92 Kwangware Nairobi
Single	Standard Seven	Student	JCC	Baptismal candidate and Sunday School member of the JCC	15/11/92 Kwangware Nairobi
Single	Standard Seven	Student	JCC	Sunday School member of the JCC	15/11/92 Kilimani, Nairobi
Married	Form Four	Business	COBEA	A dissenter	18/11/92 Westlands, Nairobi
Single	Standard Seven	Student	JCC	Sunday School member of the JCC	15/11/92 Kwangware Nairobi
Married	Form Two	Watchman	JCC	Sunday School teacher at the JCC headquarters	15/11/92 Kwangware Nairobi

NAME	AGE	ETHNIC GROUP	RESIDENCE	STATUS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	DENOMINATION	REASON FOR INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
44. Rose Akello Oluoch	30	Luo	Kibera	Married	Standard Seven	Fish Monger	JCC	JCC registered member since 1987, Gave birth after 7 years delay in conception, regular attendant, Friday assemblies.	20/11/92 Kawangware Nairobi
45. Monica Auma Otieno	26	Luo	Kawangware	Married	Standard Six	Housewife	JCC	Healed from stomach-ache, headache and barrenness	20/11/92 Kawangware Nairobi
46. Otropia Roisa Mwanyolo	22	Taita	Pangani	Married	Standard Eight	Business	JCC	JCC member since 1987 and a regular attendant of Friday assemblies.	20/11/92 Kawangware Nairobi.
47. Joyce Kadogo Shadume	30	Luhya	Kangemi	Married	Form Three	Housewife	JCC	Mummy's faithful since 1985. Healed from six year old barrenness and gave birth to twins	27/11/92 Kawangware Nairobi
48. Florence Kanyalo	29	Luhya	Kariobangi	Married	Standard Six	Housewife	JCC	Reconcilled to her husband who divorced her because she was barren.	27/11/92 Kawangware Nairobi

NAME	AGE	ETHNIC GROUP	RESIDENCE	STATUS	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	DENOMINATION	REASON FOR INTERVIEW	DATE OF INTERVIEW
49. Adija Wanjiku	30	Kikuyu	Muslim Village, Kawangware	Married	Standard Seven	Housewife	JCC	Mummy's faithful since 1987, healed from a six year old barrenness, regular attendant, Friday assemblies.	30/10/92 Kawangware Nairobi
50. Bomboko Rousseau	47	Zairean	Kibera	Married	Form Three	Artist	JCC	Healed from impotence, Mummy's faithful since 1985 and JCC choir member	15/11/92 Kawangware Nairobi
51. Paresh Patel	28	Indian	Westlands	Single	University Level	Business	Hindu	Revealed in the course of our field research	27/10/92 Parklands, Nairobi
52. Margaret Nvambura	62	Kikuyu	Gachie	Married	Primary Level	Housewife	CPK	Daughter abused Mary Akatsa and became blind subsequently	31/10/92 Kawangware Nairobi
53. Fanuel Amboye Wamusala	49	Luhya	Lavington	Married	Form Four	Architect	PAC, Kawangware branch since 1983	A dissenter	25/11/92 Lavington Nairobi
54. Protus Murang'a	32	Luhya	Mumias, Kakamega District	Married	Form Four	Primary Teacher	Catholic	Lost job, recovered it after Mary Akatsa's prayers	11/11/92 Kawangware Nairobi.
55. Teli Akong'a	38	Luhya	Ebusikhale Vihiga District	Married	Form Four	Primary Teacher	JCC	JCC member, Ebusiralo branch since 1990	11/12/92 Ebusikhale Vihiga District

MAFUNDISHO YA UBATISHO

1. Usiwe na Miungu Mingine ila mimi.
2. Usijifanyie Sanamu ya Kuchonga.
3. Usilitaje bure jina la Bwana Mungu.
4. Ikumbuke siku ya sabato uitakase.
5. Wahesimu Baba na Mama yako.
6. Usiue.
7. Usizini.
8. Usiibe.
9. Usimshuhudie jirani yako uongo.
10. Usiitamani Nyumba ya jirani yako.

MATHAYO 3:16

Naye Yesu alipokwisha kubatizwa-mara akapanda kutoka majini, natazama mbingu zikamfunikia, akamwona roho wa Mungu akishuka kama hua, akija juu yake.

YOHANA 10:9-12

Mimi ndimi mlango, mtu akiingia kwa mimi, ataokoka, ataingia na kutoka naye atapata malisho. Mwivi haji ila aibe na kuchinja na kuiharibu. Mimi nilikuja ili wawe na uzima, kisha wawe naotele. Mimi ndimi mchunganji mwema, mchungaji mwema huutoa uhai wake kwa ajili ya kondoo, mtu wa mshahara, wala si mchungaji, ambaye kondoo si mali yake humwona mbwa-mwitu anakuja, akawaacha na kukimbia, na mbwa-mwitu huwakamata na kuwatawanya.

YOHANA 14:1

Msifadhaike mioyoni mwenu, mnamwamini Mungu, niaminini na mimi.

MATENDO YA MITUME 3:19-20

Tubuni basi mrejee, ilidhambi zenu zifutwe, zipate kuja nyakati za kuburudishwa kwa kuwako bwana, apate kumtuma Kristo Yesu mliyewekewa tangu zamani.

ZABURI 89:49

Dwana zi wapi kadhiili zako za kwanza ulizomwapa Daudi kwa uaminifu wake?

Published by
Jerusalem Church of Christ
P.O. BOX 40060
MUTHIORA ROAD
NAIROBI

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE SOCIETIES RULES
(Rule 2)

APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OR EXEMPTION FROM
REGISTRATION OF A SOCIETY

THE REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES,
P.O. BOX 30031, NAIROBI.

We the undersigned officers hereby apply for *registration/exemption from registration
under the Societies Act.

The following are particulars of the society:

(a) The name of the society JERUSALEM CHURCH OF CHRIST

(b) The objects of the society AS PER CONSTITUTION

(c) The name of each organization or group of a political nature established outside
Kenya, if any, of which the society is a branch or is affiliated to or connected with:
NONE

(d) The class or classes of persons to whom membership of the society is open
ALL PERSONS WHO ARE RESIDENT IN KENYA AND WHO ACCEPT OUR
OBJECTS AND RULES

(e) The present number of members 5,000

(f) The titles of the officers of the society (1) PATRON, (2) CHAIRMAN,
(3) VICE CHAIRMAN, (4) SENIOR PASTOR, (5) SECRETARY, (6) ASST. SECRET-
ARY, (7) TREASURER, (8) ASST. TREASURER, (9) CHURCH WARDEN, (10) P.S.
OFFICER, (11) DEPUTY, (12) YOUTH LEADER

(g) The titles, full names, not initials, occupations and addresses of the present or
proposed officers

As per attached list

(h) The land and premises (if any) owned by the society and the manner in which such
property is held or vested

NONE

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

FORM B

THE SOCIETIES RULES

(Cap. 108, Sub. Leg. (rules 2(e) (ii) and 12))


NOTIFICATION OF REGISTERED OFFICE OR POSTAL ADDRESS OF A SOCIETY

TO THE REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES,
P.O. Box 30031, NAIROBI.

NOTICE is hereby given, in accordance with the provisions of subsections (1) and (3) of the Societies Act, that the JERUSALEM CHURCH OF CHRIST

will have its registered office at ~~has changed its registered office at~~ PLOT NO. LR 1255, MUTHIORA ROAD, MUSLIM VILLAGE, KAWANGWARE, NAIROBI

and will have its postal address at ~~has changed its postal address to~~ P.O. BOX 74228, NAIROBI


(Signed) HON. F. E. MIDO, MP
PASTOR

Date 14th September, 1990

NOTES:

- (a) It is essential that a specified place, for example, plot number, house number, or name of street, is shown for the registered office. If the society has no office then the specific place of residence of one of the office bearers must be shown.
- (b) When this form is used by a registered society to show change of address it must be accompanied by a filing fee of Sh. 20.

*Delete whichever is not applicable.

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE SOCIETIES RULES, 1968

(Rule 4)

NO. 14702

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

JOSEPH NGUTHIKU KING'ARUI

I, Registrar of Societies, hereby

JERUSALEM CHURCH OF CHRIST

certify that I have this day registered the

.....
under section 10 of the Societies Act.

1968

10th

OCTOBER

19

Dated at this day of 19.....

J. N. KING'ARUI

.....
Registrar of Societies

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE SOCIETIES RULES
(Cap. 103, Sub. Leg.)

NOTIFICATION OF REFUSAL TO REGISTER A SOCIETY

To the Secretary,
Jerusalem Church of Christ,
Box 7426,
NAIROBI.

I,OLGA JACKSON NGUGI (MRS.) ASST.

Registrar of Societies, hereby give you notice that, in accordance with section 11 of the Societies Act, I have this day refused to register you as a society under the said Act on the following grounds:

It appears to the Registrar that the interests of peace, welfare or good order in Kenya would be likely to suffer prejudice by reason of your registration as a society.

Dated at:NAIROBI this3rd day ofOCTOBER....., 19.....90

.....
Asst. Registrar of Societies

T H E C O N S T I T U T I O N O F

1. NAME: JERUSALEM CHURCH OF CHRIST

2. OBJECTIVES

- (a) To promote the Kingdom of God as christians and to foster cooperation and mutual understanding among its members, the Government and other Christian organisation.
- (b) To abide by the Rules of the church
- (c) To join with other churches in promoting the word of God.
- (d) To form branches throughout the country.
- (e) The church shall have no political objectives
- (f) To assist the needy.
- (g) To conduct and perform wedding and burial ceremonies.
- (h) To Baptise.
- (i) To remove and destroy witchcraft after prophesying.
- (j) To pray for peace in our country and the world at large.
- (k) To counsel members with domestic and social problems.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- (a) One becomes a member after accepting Christ as his/her Saviour and upon acceptance one lives and leads a Christian life.
- (b) Membership of the society is open to all who accept to conform to the rules and objectives of the said society.
- (c) Any person who departs from the objectives of the said society or is expelled for misconduct ceases to be a member immediately.
- (d) Any person so removed or expelled shall not be entitled to any refund of any subscription contributed by him or her to the said society.

- (e) Any member who infringes the rules and or objectives of the society shall be expelled from the society by the leader of the said society, such expulsion shall be exercised where if the leader feels that such member should be expelled on the grounds that the member's conduct has adversely affected the reputation.
- (f) Every member shall pay an annual subscription of such sum of money as may from time to time be determined by the patrons Committee in consultation with the Assembly Committees.

4. OFFICE BEARERS

The following shall be the office bearers of the church

- (a) The Patron
- (b) The Chairman and Vice Chairman
- (c) The Secretary and Assistant Secretary
- (d) The Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer
- (e) The Senior Pastor and Pastors
- (d) The Senior Mama Assembly
- (g) The Mama Assembly
- (h) The Youth Leader
- (i) The Choir Master

5. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(A) PATRON:

- (i) The patron shall be the overall and executive head and leader of the church she/he shall have the power to veto any decision reached by any committee.

She/he has absolute power and right to appoint and remove any member or office bearer. She/he will attend all meetings of the patrons committee.

- (ii) She/he is responsible for ensuring the compliance of the society's Rules and objects amongst members and officers of the church.

(B) CHAIRMAN

- (i) To ensure that all officers are performing their duties well.
- (ii) To ensure the smooth running of the general administration of the society and shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him/her by the patron.
- (iii) He/she report to the patron the happenings that have taken place during the patron's absence .
- (iv) He shall attend and chair meeting of the patrons committee in the absence of the patron.

(C) VICE CHAIRMAN

Will assist the Chairman and act for him/her in his/her absence.

(D) SECRETARY

He shall attend meetings for the patrons committee and record its proceedings. He shall ensure that all records are properly maintained and shall carry out such other duties as may be assigned to him by the patron or the patrons committee.

(E) ASSITANT SECRETARY

Will assist the Secretary and act for him/her in his/her absence.

(F) TREASURER

- (i) Shall ensure that all finance records are properly kept and ensure that all money received has been banked and only disbursed under direction of the committee.
- (ii) Shall ensure that proper books of Accounts are maintained. The Treasurer must be literate.
- (iii) Shall submit an account of income and expenditure regularly.

(G) ASSISTANT TREASURER

He/she assist the Treasurer and act for him/her in his/her absence.

(H) PASTORS

- (a) There shall be a Senior Pastor in charge of other Pastors. The Patron shall have the sole right to appoint and to dismiss Pastors for misconduct including Senior Pastor. He will perform marriages, Baptism and Burials.
- (b) The Pastors will be responsible for teaching Bible lessons and conducting Baptism classes. They will also Baptise. They will perform Wedding ceremonies and burials in the absence of the Senior Pastor.

(I) ASSEMBLIES

- (a) There shall be established mothers assemblies.
- (b) Each assembly shall have a Mama Assembly appointed by the Patron. There shall be a Senior Mama Assembly who will be incharge of other Mamas of Assemblies.

- (c) The mamas of Assemblies will equally be appointed by the Patron. Both the Senior Mama Assembly and the other Mamas assemblies will have Secretaries and Treasurers.

(J) THE DUTIES OF THESE MAMA ASSEMBLIES

They will ensure that the women members of the society maintain a christian character and they will also act as Counsellors to those mamas with domestic or other social problems.

6. YOUTH

- (i) There shall be established a youth section to counsel the youth and to bring them to salvation.

To this end the section shall organise youth crusades. There shall be a youth leader who will be in charge of the youth section. He shall be appointed by the Patron.

- (ii) Youth leader is to co-ordinate youth activities within objectives of the society.

7. CHOIR

- (i) There shall be a choir master who will be responsible for organizing choirs in the said society. All songs and hymns sang by this choir must confirm to christianity.

- ii) The Choir Master will report any misconduct of a choir member to the Patron or Senior Pastor.

COMMITTEES

1. There shall be the Patrons Committee to advise and assist the Patron on all matters concerning the Promotion of the society's objects and the General running of the society. This Committee shall be composed of the following:-
 - (a) The Patron
 - (b) The Chairman
 - (c) The Secretary
 - (d) The Treasurer
 - (e) The Senior Pastor
 - (f) The Senior Mama Assembly

Any other persons the Patron may consider fit to co-opt to the Committee
2. There shall be established a General Committee at the Headquarters and in the branches to co-ordinate the activities of the said society under the guidance of the respective Pastors. The Committee shall be composed of
 - (i)
 - (a) The Pastor
 - (b) Mama Assembly
 - (c) Youth Leader
 - (d) Choir Master
 - (e) Two (2) representatives of Women in the said society
 - (d) Two (2) representatives of men in the said society
 - (f) Two (2) representative of youth in the said society
 - (ii) This committee shall have powers to amend the constitution of the church.

9. DENOMINATIONAL FLAG

The denominational flag of the society shall be Blue, Red and White with a blue cross on the white background with the print "(MKUTANO WA KUKESHA JERUSALEM CHURCH)". Written on the white background in red

The worship robe is white long dress with sky blue scuff, sky blue round colour and sky blue belt for women. For men long white robe with front opening. Sky blue standing color and sky blue scuff and sky blue belt. Women wear white head scarfs and for men white, blue white and top blue caps. On expulsion or ceasing to be a member the uniform of the expelled member is returned to the society.

10. TRUSTEES

- (a) All land, building and other immovable properties and all investment and securities which shall be acquired by the church shall be vested in names of not less than three trustees who shall be members of the church and shall be appointed at the Patron's Committee meeting for a period of five years. All vacancies occurring by removal, resignation, or death, shall be filled at next Patron's Committee meeting.
- (b) The trustees shall pay all incomes received from the property vested in the trustees to the treasurer. Expenditures shall be reported by trustees to the committee. The trustees shall include the Patron, the Chairman, the Treasurer, and the Secretary General.

11. AUDITOR

One Auditor shall be appointed for the following year by the Patron's Committee.

All the Church accounts, records, documents shall be open to the inspection to the auditor at any time. Branches will have their own auditor who shall be responsible to the headquarters auditor. The treasurer shall produce all accounts of receipts and payments and statements of assets and liabilities made upto a date which shall not be less than six weeks and not more than three months before the date of the annual representative meeting. The auditor shall certify all documents, accounts and statements and report to the church in what respect they are found to be incorrect, unvouchered or not in accordance with the law.

12. FUNDS

- (a) Funds should be used in furtherance of the objects as laid down in the rules. Salaries, honorarium may only be paid or resolved by the Patrons Committee which meeting shall also fix the amounts to be paid.
- (b) All money shall be received and paid to the treasurer in any bank approved by the church. Branches shall submit all funds received by them to the treasurer of the headquarters who in turn deposit it to the account of the church. No money shall be used until it has reached the headquarters and entered into books.
- (c) No payment shall be made out to the banks without a resolution of the Patrons Committee authorizing such payments.
- (d) The branches will receive such percentage of the revenue collected by them or may be determined by the Patrons Committee from time to time.

13. ADDRESS

THE ADDRESS OF THE SAID SOCIETY IS

KWAWANGWARE MUSLIM VILLAGE PLOT NO. LR. 1255
MUTHIONA ROAD
P.O. BOX 74228
NAIROBI

14. QUORUM

50% of those entitled to attend any Committee Meetings shall form a quorum.

1. Patron - Mary Sinaida Akatsa - Preacher, Faith healer, prophet, P.O.Box 74228, NAIROBI
2. Chairman - Mr. Hannington Chitwi a business man c/o P.O.Box 74228, NAIROBI
3. Vice Chairman (Vacant)
4. Secretary - Mr. Simon Shinyanga - Clerk, P.O. Box 52711, NAIROBI Business-man
5. Asst. Secretary (Vacant)
6. Senior Pastor - Mr. Aggrey Otieno-Tailor - P.O. Box 74228, NAIROBI.
7. Pastor - Hon Fredrick Esao Omido, MP. P.O. Box 30040, NAIROBI
8. Treasurer - Mrs Priscilla Kakai, House wife, P.O.Box 74228, NAIROBI
9. Asst. Treasurer (Vacant)
10. Senior Mama Assembly
11. Youth Leader - Ole Nisa, Medical Doctor, P.O. Box 74228, NAIROBI.

APPENDIX D

THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FIELD RESEARCH AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THE
JERUSALEM CHURCH OF CHRIST

PERSONAL DATA

1. Name:
2. Sex:
3. Date of birth:
4. Place of birth:
5. Tribe:
6. Marital Status
7. Educational Level:
8. Occupation:
9. Current residence:
10. Membership category (tick where applicable)
 - (a) Registered
 - (b) Unregistered
11. Date you became a member of this Church and why? (Optional)
 - (i)
 - (ii)
12. How does a person become a member of this Church? (Optional)
 - (i)
 - (ii)

13. What are the main rituals a member of this Church has to undergo?
(optional)
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
14. For how long have you been a member of this Church?
Did you belong to another church before? If so, name the church
or the religious group (optional)
- (i)
 - (ii)
15. What is your current denomination or religion? (Optional)
- (i)
16. What is expected of the members of this Church? (Optional)
- (i)

LEADERSHIP (Optional)

17. Name of your office/position
18. When, how and why you became a leader
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
19. What are your responsibilities as a leader?
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

20. Have you ever been a leader in any similar organization? Name the organization, position held, the period and why you left it (optional).

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

21. What are your terms of service?

(i)

(ii)

22. Do you like your position? If yes give reasons.

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

23. What are your views of past leaders in this Church?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

24. What are your views of leaders in other churches?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

25. Have you ever been trained anywhere on your duties? If yes, then by whom, when and how did you quality? (Optional)

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

26. What problems or challenges have you faced as a leader and how have you solved them? (Optional)

Problems (i)

(ii)

Solutions (i)

(ii)

WOMEN (Optional)

27. Date you joined Friday meetings?

28. How often do you attend these meetings and why?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

29. What topics have appealed most to you and why?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

30. What changes would you propose for these meetings?
- (i)
 - (ii)
31. What are your suggestions to those who don't attend these meetings?
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)

GENERAL

32. How many members of your family belong to this Church and why?
- (i)
 - (ii)
33. What are your views of 'Mummy' (foundress)?
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
34. What did you witness when 'Jesus' visited your Church? (Optional).
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
35. Have you ever witnessed any other miracle from above? Like stars etc.? When and how many times? (Optional).
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)

36. What are the causes of people's suffering and sickness and how can they be solved?
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
 - (iv)
37. What does God require of a man?
- (i)
 - (ii)
38. How does a person experience the presence of the Holy Spirit?
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
39. What is your understanding of salvation?
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
40. What is your understanding of the Kingdom of God?
- (i)
 - (ii)
41. Who are eligible to enter the Kingdom of God?
- (i)
 - (ii)
42. Can material wealth hinder a person from entering the Kingdom of God? Yes/No. If yes, give reasons?
- (i)
 - (ii)

43. What is the relationship between the dead and the living?
- (i)
 - (ii)
44. Where do people go after death?
- (i)
 - (ii)
45. What is your understanding of the Bible?
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
46. How do you use your bible?
- (i)
 - (ii)
47. Which references in the bible do you use to justify your lifestyle?
- (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
 - (iv)
48. In what ways does the Holy Spirit help you in your daily life?
- (i)
 - (ii)
49. Are you allowed by your Church to mix freely with non-members?
- If No, give reasons.
- (i)
 - (ii)
50. Are there certain foods members of this Church are not supposed to eat or certain jobs they are not supposed to do? If Yes, give

examples and reasons for not doing those jobs or eating certain foods?

JOB

FOODS

REASONS

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

51. Can a member of this Church marry a non-member? If not, give reasons.

(i)

(ii)

52. What do you think about earthly riches?

(i)

(ii)

53. Are there ceremonies and activities members of this Church are not allowed to attend? If Yes, give examples and reasons?

Activities/Ceremonies

Reasons

(i)

(ii)

54. Do members of this Church share the Holy Communion? If not, give reasons?

(i)

(ii)

55. When do you think the end of the world will come?

(i)

56. Do you practice family planning? If yes, what methods should members of this church use?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

57. What rules are members of this Church expected to observe?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(iv)

(v)

(vi)

58. What are your views about education and wealth?

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

59. Who is Jesus Christ?

(i)

60. What is the relationship between Jesus and the world?

(i)

(ii)

61. Who is the Holy Spirit?

(i)

(ii)

62. What is the relationship between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

(i)

(ii)

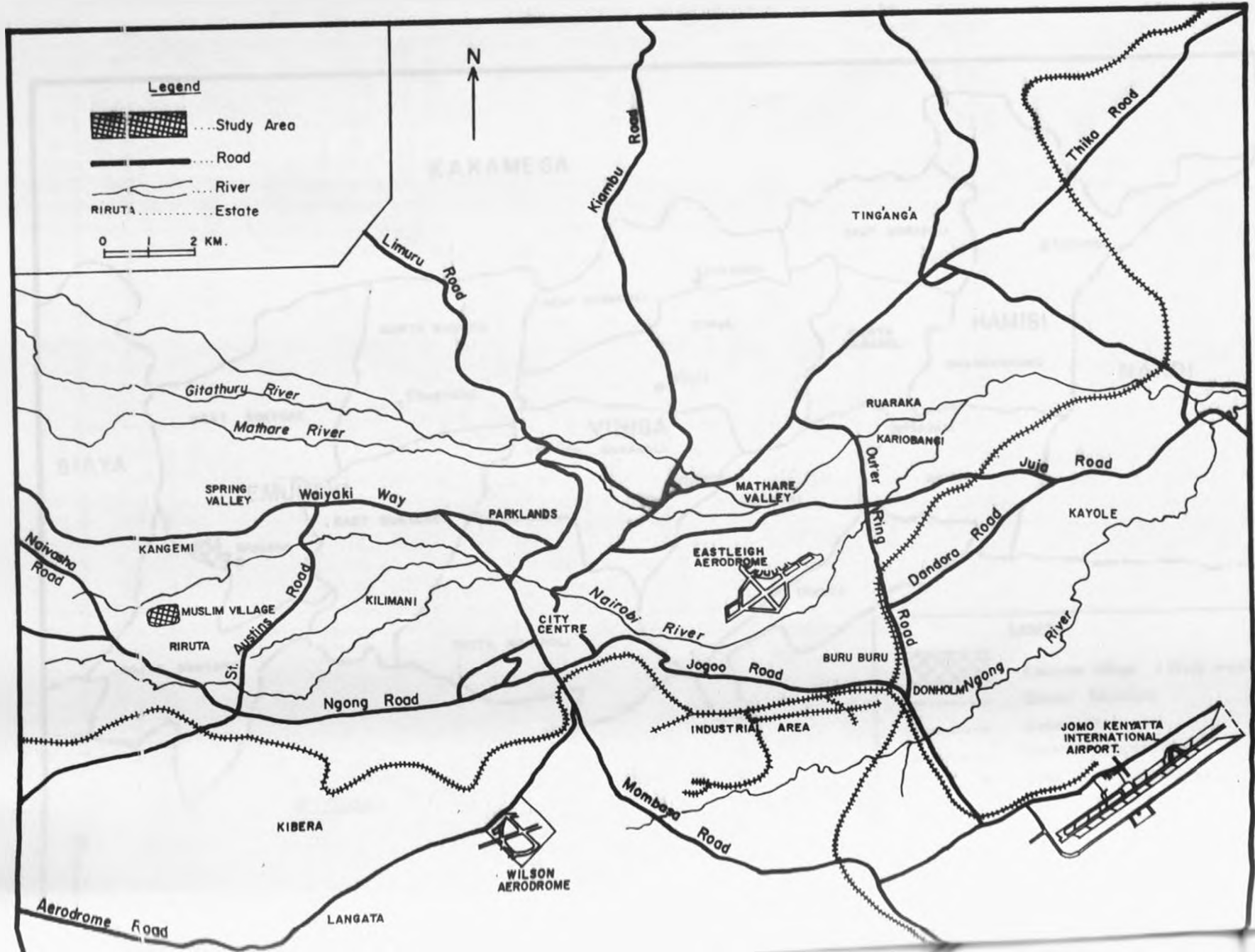
(iii)

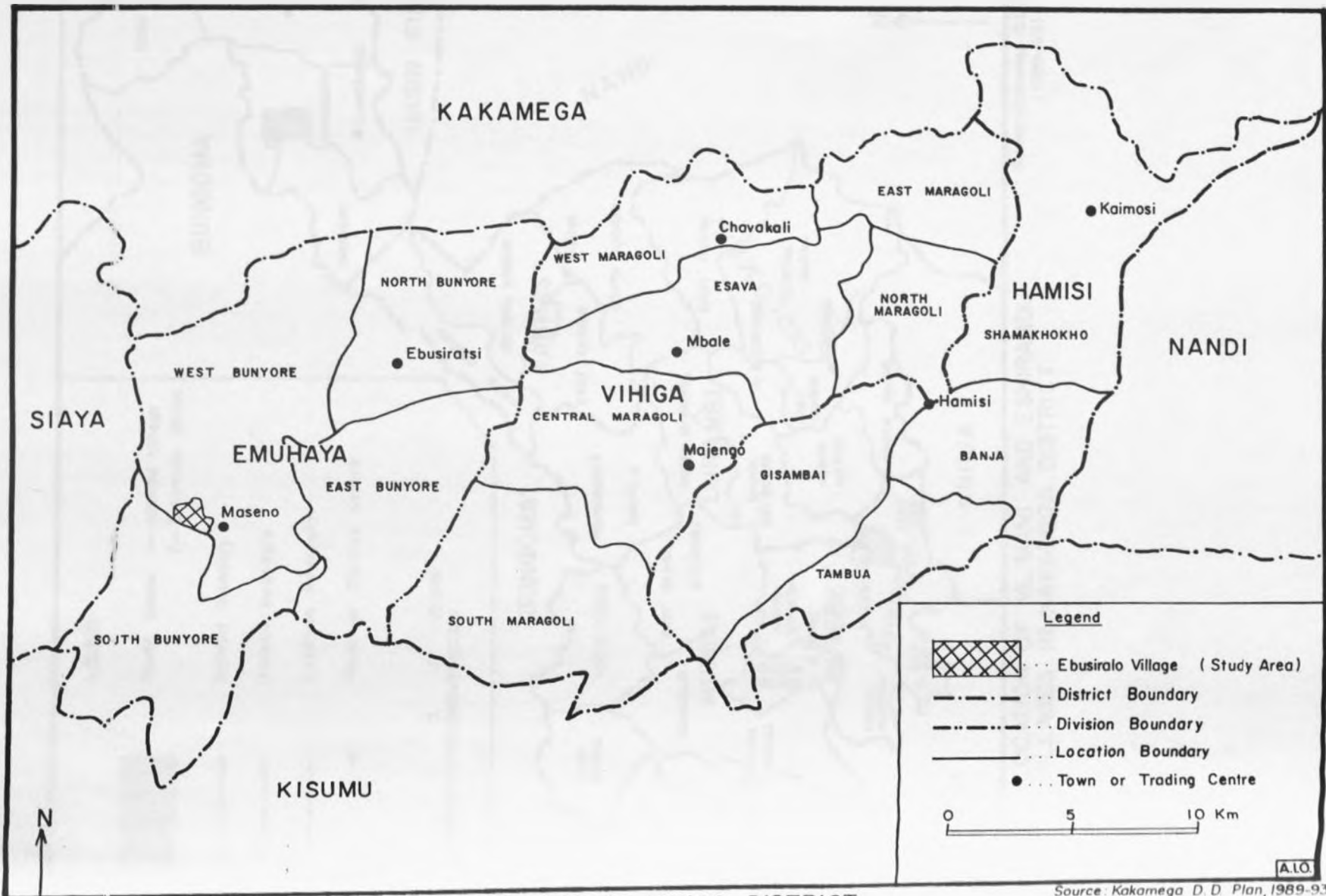


Ayuyo I.O

1 LOCATION OF NAIROBI AND WESTERN PROVINCES IN KENYA.

Source: Survey of Kenya 1991





LOCATION OF EBUSIRALO VILLAGE IN VIHIGA DISTRICT.

Source: Kakamega D. D. Plan, 1989-93



FIG. 4: LOCATION OF MLIMANI AND ESHIRANDU VILLAGES IN KAKAMEGA DISTRICT.

Source: Kakamega D. D. Plan (1989-93)