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The struggles of new religious movements in the Kenyan religious space : the case of Repentance and Holiness Movement

Mildred Ndeda

Introduction

It was stated prophetically towards the end of the 20th century that by the year 2000 religion would no longer be a key factor in the lives of people. However, the last 20 years have seen the resurgence of religion internationally and particularly in Africa. This expansion has manifested itself in the emergence and development of what is currently popularly referred as the New Religious Movements (NRM). This term has been almost unanimously adopted as a neutral alternative to the word “cult” commonly used by scholars of sociology of religion. Alternatives to the term are used by some scholar such as alternative religious movements (Miller), emergent religions (Ellwood), and marginal religious movements (Harper and Le Beau), new religions, fringe religions, free religious movements, or (particularly in English-speaking areas) cults. They continue to try to reach agreement on definitions and boundaries. NRMs do not share a set of particular attributes, but have been “assigned to the fringe of the dominant religious culture”, and “exist in a relatively contested space within society as a whole”. The use of the term requires that the group be of recent origin and different from existing religions.

For them, “difference” applies to a faith that, although it may be seen as part of an existing religion, meets with rejection from that religion for not sharing the same basic creed or declares itself either separate from the existing religion or even “the only right” faith. Other scholars expand their measurement of difference, considering religious movements new when, taken from their traditional cultural context, they appear in new places, perhaps in modified forms.

NRMs vary in terms of leadership; authority; concepts of the individual, family, and gender; teachings; organizational structures; beliefs; practices; and societal acceptance and offer innovative religious responses to the conditions of the modern world. They also vary in origin, size, and means of recruitment, behaviour pattern, and attitude towards the Church, other religious groups, and society making it difficult to formulate a comprehensive and clear set of criteria for classifying NRMs. NRMs are also characterized by a number of shared traits. Perhaps these are the factors that lead to lack of a generally accepted name for

them. However, currently this term is used to refer to religious movements because it is more neutral than sects.¹ Their diversity has seen the emergence of different groups in Africa and their rise had more to do with post-colonial political, cultural, and social crisis, enculturation and the desire for healing and help to face life's problems.

An NRM may be one of a wide range of movements ranging from those with novel approaches to spirituality or religion to communitarian enterprises that demand a considerable amount of group conformity and a social identity that separates their adherents from mainstream society. The use of the term is not universally accepted among the groups to which it is applied.

They are considered new not only because they emerged in their present form after the Second World War, but also because they present themselves as alternatives to the institutional official religions and the prevailing culture. They are called religious because they profess to offer a vision of the religious or sacred world, or means to reach other objectives such as transcendental knowledge, spiritual illumination, or self-realization, or because they offer to their adherents answers to fundamental questions. They offer innovative religious responses to the conditions of the modern world.

Four types of NRMs can be distinguished. There are those that relate with and are derived from Christianity and are Bible-based movements. A second group of NRMs are those derived from other religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism or traditional religions. A third group shows signs of a decomposition of the genuine idea of religion and of a return of paganism. A fourth set of them gathers Gnostic.

Generally, the number of people affiliated to NRMs worldwide is small when compared to major world religions. However, the diversity of NRMs has seen the emergence of different groups in Africa, Japan, and Melanesia. Africa is characterized by a great variety of sects and religious movements of diverse origin: [Christian-based groups] coming mostly from North America; Western, non-Christian philosophies of life; new religious movements with their origin in the East some of which entered the world scene because they have first been implanted in North America; movements of Islamic inspiration. The thousands of African independent churches, mainly offshoot of missionary churches and bearing certain aspects of African traditional religion, represent a confused picture. There are also modern-day churches that have emerged locally but with claims from founders that God instructed them to do so. There are also offshoots from such churches which have moved away because of various disagreements. Africa is now home to all of the "New Religions" known in Europe and North America. Among them are also new Christian movements.

¹ Sects refer more directly to small groups that broke away from a major religious group, generally Christian, and that hold deviating beliefs or practices. The word sect is not used in the same sense everywhere.

The rapidly expanding Charismatic movement is producing a fresh set of as yet unexamined phenomena from interesting theological divergences and the merging of Pentecostalism with indigenous religious practices. In Africa the rise of the NRMs has more to do with the post-colonial political, cultural, and social crisis, and with questions of enculturation and the African desire for healing and help to face life's problems.

During the last ten to fifteen years, there has been a bewildering explosion of new religious movements in Africa: open-air rallies, crusades, revival gatherings, miracle centres, healing ministries and so on. Kenya, a country that had already experienced a proliferation of sects and independent churches, has been a propitious ground for these new religious movements. More and more, this is the form that Christianity is taking, outside the confines of the mainline churches. Many observers are wondering about this phenomenon. Why is it happening? What does it mean? What is its impact on the mainline denominations? (Shorter & Njiru 2010).

It is not just a question of defining the point in the history of a religion where it evolved to something new, corrupting what was old, but to focus on what is new in relation to the previous religious systems. That is, there is always some past religious dogma in the base of a 'new' one. Trying to recollect the history of these "unexpected movements" (as Georges Balandier would say) one sees its origins in an explosive moment when its leader had (usually) a dream where he found god or another entity and from them he receives a new message: the 'new' doctrine of the 'new' church. These new dogmas elaborated by a charismatic individual are thus transmitted to a new community of believers.

Kenya like all Africa has her share of NRMs expanding by the day. A most recent one is Repentance and Holiness Movement led by Prophet Dr. David Owuor which fits the categorization of Balandier (1976). This NRM is Christian with its basis as the Holy Scriptures. Under the auspices of this movement emerged churches clustered under the rubric of Kings Outreach Ministry which were a consequence of the rejection of the followers of Prophet David Owuor Holiness and Repentance Movement by other churches and particularly mainline churches. The rejection by mainline churches and other Pentecostal churches led to the decision to establish churches to cater for followers who were no longer welcome in their former churches. Churches opposed to Owuor's activities did not want a return of tainted members to their congregations. They accused the movement of all sorts of ills including sheep stealing, lack of respect, teaching and practicing wrong doctrine. They emphasized their ire for his messages that were directed at the evils practiced by the church and its leadership and his practical application of sections of the bible such as adorning sack clothes as an indication of sincere repentance. In the same vein Owuor also had no kind words for them.

David Owuor made his debut in Kenya in 2004 as a prophet calling both the Kenyan nation and the church to repent or else face God's impending

judgement. This paper deals with six issues on this NRM: how its “newness” is located in the wider context of ongoing religious innovation and change, their worldview and vision, its challenges to the world view of the mainline churches, its mission and methods of mission, how and to what extent their rights are protected, how and why it developed in Kenya and its impact on the diverse religious terrain.

His early life, calling and the prophetic messages

Prophet Owuor, born in May 1966, is the second born in a family of six girls, three boys. He was born to Hezekiah and Margaret Ochieng’ Owuor of Goma, Yimbo, Bondo District, Siaya county. His background was humble. His mother, an ardent Christian, prayed the family into the Kingdom of God and made any family requirement a prayer item. Young Owuor started going to church at an early age and was committed to serving in the Anglican Church. His rededication to God in adulthood disconnected him “from feelings and things of familiarity”, but occasionally he gets in touch with them.

He has not raised a family of his own and does not contemplate having any. Before his heavenly calling he was married and had a son in Israel with a Jewess of orthodox leaning who rarely marry outside of their sect. This arrangement was encouraged by the rabbi father of his wife whose intention was that they settle in Israel and he be converted to Judaism. However when he decided to leave Israel he forfeited both his wife and child given the parents refusal to authorized them to leave.

His early education began at Wambasa Primary School in Yimbo. Later he transferred to Tororo Uganda where his father worked as a labour migrant. He later joined Mbale Secondary School in Uganda. He then proceeded to St. Peter’s College, Tororo, then briefly joined Makerere University until when his father retired and they came back to Kenya. He transferred to University of Nairobi because of his father’s retirement and the unrest in Uganda. It was in the process of this transfer in 1988, that he received Christ. Earlier in 1987, he had to cross over to Uganda to get his papers and transfer his credits while the fighting was intense. He prayed for safety and vowed to dedicate his life to God if he had safe passage. His request was accomplished and he obtained help from the Ugandan soldiers were unusually helpful to him. This culminated in his offering a short prayer of commitment to God. He did divulge this commitment to anyone and there was no indication of change in his spirituality for he soon forgot this prayer and vow and maintained his previous lifestyle.

When he completed his Bachelor of Science degree at Kabete Campus as the top student he earned a German and an Israeli scholarship and he opted for Israel. While in Israel he changed his educational pursuit from plant genetics to biochemical genetics. On completion he returned to Kenya but was soon (1994) back in Israel for his doctorate in biochemical genetics at Haifa University, where he specialized in DNA sequencing and learnt about enzymes and genes. On completion of his doctorate he proceeded to the University of Chicago’s Centre

of Pharmaceutical Biotechnology in the US where he was engaged in drug design and discovery for cancer. Still in Chicago, he taught pharmacy and drug design in what is called signal transduction; a study directed towards understanding the pathway of drugs (which is the study of the effects of medicine in the human body). His research area was significant for the future of medicine as it would help design drugs with minimal side effects on human beings.

After this he moved to the State University of New Jersey in the Pharmaceutical Faculty which laid emphasis on drug metabolism. He then joined the Cancer Institute of New Jersey where he was hired as a Research Teaching Specialist. He was attached to the Cancer institute as a specialist and he began to focus more on researching tumour genesis and growth. Between 1999 and 2003 he pursued his career ambitions but had to abandon this to obey the call of God on his life.

His move to New Jersey was an effort to flee from God's call and this was indicated by the fact that he became repulsive to church as well. After moving to New Jersey he engaged in what he considers immorality for he cohabited with a lady who was not religious and who failed to recognize the call on his life and was also not officially a wife. Their cohabitation did not yield any progeny perhaps as he concludes God must have closed her womb. God made it clear to him that "You cannot run from me". It possible this lady failed to understand how a man with great potential and massive opportunities could make claims of 'hearing divine voices' for she witnessed how God vocally beckoned Owuor to see the conditions of the sick and with clear instructions to "Go and pray for these people." When such incidences occurred he did not believe that one could quit a job with favourable remuneration to follow voices of unseen personalities.

He had been clear for a long time that God was calling him to some mission but he had evaded through a lot of compromise, coupled with ignorance and lack of mentorship. It all started in Israel, where he reminisces that fellow professors would look through the glass partitioning of his office and remark; "Remember Moses!" He initially ignored this but when the same phrase was repeated later, and by others, he became concerned. This happened even along corridors but he brushed it off for he did not understand it, saying "they were humorous people and of a different culture."

After moving to Chicago, one day as he walked home and someone honked at him, then pulled aside and told him, "Sir, I do not know if you see this, but there was so much light around you that it blocked the whole road I could not see. That is why I pulled over here and I felt it was inappropriate to pass without talking to you". But this was not all. The clincher was when the man went on to tell him, "Remember Moses?" This was a reminder of the incidences in Israel. His perception was that perhaps the man "was (...) seeing the glory of Jesus in me, because of the salvation I had received from Him."

It is at this point that he recalled the Haifa incidents and decided to speak to God concerning the source of the brilliant light and regarding the referent to Moses. God responded to him by appearing to him that night in his apartment. He was frightened and tried to flee and God sent him the Holy Spirit who started talking to him in visions and dreams about his mission. The Holy Spirit began to divulge to him vital information about different churches in the world and all the things that would happen to them and he witnessed those occurrences.

That night he experienced not only God's visitation but he was left with a vivid cloud around him and he also saw the right cloak that runs from God's left shoulder. He states "I trembled and cried saying 'Lord am sorry, I did not mean that I wanted to see you.'" By this time he had been transformed and sought to live by biblical standards. He began attending the Living Word Christian Centre in Illinois. He also understood that God was communicating to him. The following morning he went to see a Christian lady called Patricia who surprised him by telling him the exact occurrences in his house the previous night. He later fled Chicago for New Jersey because he thought it was something that this experience was a Chicago thing. These visitations were coming at a time when his concerns were, marriage and his future wellbeing.

He was at the peak of his career when his call came in a visitation of the Holy Spirit on the July 3, 2003. In that visitation, The LORD GOD (*Jehovah*) appeared to him, and wrote Isaiah chapter 43 verses 11 and 1 (in this specific order) on a wall, and physically touched his mouth, lifted him up, took him into another room within his house and then left him to walk back to his bedroom. In October 2003, *Jehovah* appeared to him again, this time with Prophets Moses and Elijah on one side of the Ark of the New Covenant in heaven, while Daniel was on the other side of the Ark of the New Covenant. This was followed by another Visitation, in the same month at 3:26am in the morning when *Jehovah* presented to Owuor the Rod of Moses (Rod of GOD). Furthermore, on April 2, 2004 between 2pm-4pm, The Lord appeared to him and presented John The Baptist on his right hand side and The Holy Spirit spoke to Owuor by voice instructing him to go warn the four corners of the earth to repent and prepare the way for the Second Coming of Christ. This was God's commissioning statement to him and this statement turned his life around and sent him on the ministry of repentance.

These Visitations were followed by yet another one, in which The Lord lifted him aloft and took him into His Throne room in heaven in which He spoke with Owuor again and showed him the Holy Bible that is inside the Ark of the New Covenant in God's Throne room. Then lightening hit the Holy Bible three times and caused a quake of the Ark of the New Covenant. The Archangel then asked Owuor to pray and immediately he said: "Father, I come to you with a lot of praise and thanksgiving in the Mighty Name of Christ Jesus..." Then the Glory of *Jehovah* came through the golden walkway and sat on the Mercy Seat on the Ark of the New Covenant. The place is most holy causing the two Cherubim of Glory to bow behind the Throne room at which place Owuor saw the River

of Life flowing into the main street of the New Jerusalem and the Tree of Life on both sides. He saw a lot more that is beyond our scope.

Despite these visitations he found it extremely difficult to accept his call. He adamantly rejected it until he was involved in a series of events that made him to make his decisions. He fled because he had not yet conceived the gravity of his call even after receiving the heavenly manifestations. Moreover as a young Kenyan abroad he had ambitions to pursue for instance maximize his achievement levels in academia, improve the economic status of himself and his family back home and make wealth, build houses, send remittances home, buy big cars. He was on demand in various universities and research institutions. It was rather difficult for him, seemingly at the height of success, to just let God call him into the unknown.

The first happening was a serious accident he was involved in that made him recognizing the gravity of God's call on his life. His car flipped over and his collarbone was broken; blood oozed from his eyes, an indication of possible brain damage but his doctors were surprised that this was not the case. That night the Lord visited him and made it explicit that he could not hoodwink God. Moreover, his wife put him in a situation where he had to choose between her and God and he choose God. Handing over the case of his wife and marriage to God was a struggle. He had a dream in which god demanded that he hands over "the flower in his hands" in reference to his wife. Owuor struggled the whole night with the Lord. "I refused because I knew if I passed the flower over my marriage would be over". At 5:30am in the morning, however, he passed it over and woke up to find his wife packing to leave.

When he accepted God's call he tried to get closer to some famous American Christian leaders to mentor him but to no avail. He visited one pastor and shared his spiritual encounters and the new direction he believed God was leading him to; but the pastor was of no help. No spiritual leader was willing to mentor him. He discovered that he had to just learn on the mill with the Lord Himself so without an earthly mentor, God became his ultimate mentor in the despair, doubts, questions and even pain as he tried to find his bearing in ministry. A while later it became clear to him that God wanted him to return and serve in and from Kenya.

The attractions

The rise and spread of the new religious movements is a marked phenomenon in the religious history of our times. They operate with considerable vitality. Some of them are of an esoteric nature. Others originate from their own interpretation of the Bible. And many have roots in Asian or African religions, or they combine in a syncretistic way elements from these religions and Christianity. NRMs, in all their diversity, represent various responses to the challenges of modernity: religious and cultural pluralism, the

influence of science and technology, and the secularization of much of modern life. They are also attempts to find new spiritual alternatives to the mainstream religious traditions. While some NRMs have led their adherents to tragic ends and others faded away as quickly as they had arisen, many have provided religious solace to those who feel they cannot obtain it elsewhere, and some show signs of enduring and becoming institutionalized. Some of them will undoubtedly become, over time, part of tomorrow's "mainstream religions."

The reasons for their emergence are as complex as their attractions (John Seliba). The reasons why they have been successful are not obvious. The teachings they propound are frequently not only obscure and confusing but also challenging. Their practices do not always conform to the ethical standards of the mainline churches, traditions and legal norms of societal culture. Their life style diverges radically from what the majority of the people are accustomed to. Because the NRMs are non-traditional and marginal the groups can easily appear as a threatening force that lies beyond their comprehension.

Africa's real and deep crises in every sphere have resulted in the proliferation of many such NRMs. The consequences of the deep crisis are the widespread vulnerability of the people manifested culturally, socially, morally, spiritually and financially. Culturally the effects are most serious and the most important because culture influences life in totality. Currently due to the sophisticated means of transport and the mass media (radio, television, and newspapers) most cultures have met and some are at the crossroads. Those with the most efficient means to communicate their civilizations impose their own concepts of life upon the weakest, which bring a new form of slavery. The consequences are revolt, rejection and protection mechanisms.

Socially the current society is lacerated and in crisis. Its very basic structures such as the family have been unsettled for quite a while. A few years' back the lineage or clan were forces to reckon with, and marriage as an institution was protected by laws and rules. The custodians of the laws and the conduct prescribed for social harmony were the elders, the old. Currently the order and harmony of the village are turned upside down. Certain moral and spiritual criteria that regulate life in society and the relations between people are disintegrating, because of the introduction of new religions and new moral code whose demands are not the same. Some religious movements would seem to be a protest in face of this disturbance and social harmony.

Due to financial crisis the NRMs, offering a place where solidarity is truly practiced, become for the abandoned and the frustrated a protest against present day society that condemns some to poverty or undeserved suffering. Hence the emergence of NRMs is an indication that people need spiritual satisfaction which the existing churches are not satisfying. They offer alternative religious and spiritual beliefs, goals and practices to the established once. It could also be an indicator of spiritual hunger which causes many people to flock the new worshipping places. Many have a thirst for righteousness which remains unfulfilled (Tinkasiimire 2004: 121).

Why do they spread? There are several reasons for this. Existence of Spiritual Needs is a factor. The NRMs indicate that there are spiritual needs which have not been identified, or which the Church and other religious institutions have either not perceived or not succeeded in meeting. The NRMs can arise or attract because people are searching for meaning when they are feeling lost in a period of cultural change. Many Christians join the NRMs because they feel that in them there is an answer to their thirst for Scripture reading, singing, dancing, emotional satisfaction, and concrete and clear answers. There are those who, for example in Africa, seek in religion an answer to, and a protection against, witchcraft, failure, suffering, sickness, and death. The NRMs seem to them to confront these existential problems openly and to promise instant remedies, especially physical and psychological healing. There are some weak points in the pastoral ministry and the life of Christian communities which the NRMs exploit. The churches also explain the rise and spread of the NRMs, as the action of the Devil, even if this action is unknown to the people involved. According to them the devil is the biblical enemy who sows tares among the wheat when the people are asleep. For Africa, NRMs have arisen due to the post-colonial political, cultural, and social crisis, as well as the question of enculturation and the African desire for healing and help to face life's problems. Ogot and Welbourn would conclude that the desire for a place to feel at home may be the key factor in the initiation of such movements (Ogot & Welbourn 1966).

All of these issues can be summed by one of the earliest and quite enduring hypotheses concerning the emergence and *raison d'être* of the NRMs, the deprivation theory. In its rudimentary form the theory tried to explain the emergence of the new sects and new denominations in western Christianity. The theory was first articulated by Niebhur. Essentially the deprivation theory and its variants postulate a correlation between the rise of the new religious movements and a status condition of deprivation. New religious movements, it is asserted, recruit their members from among the deprived. From this observation it was concluded that new religious movements constitute not only dissent but also social protest in view of the said deprivation, hence social protest is seen as an integral part of the new movements (Wilson 1970: 7).

After Niebhur other sociologists refined the theory to make it more inclusive because they felt that Niebhur's focus on economic deprivation was too narrow. Glock, for example isolated four other forms of deprivation which could also lead to the protest idiom of these religious groups. These are social, organic, ethical and psychic deprivation. For Glock even these are not usually exclusive the types are analytically distinguishable.

The deprivation theory gives different reasons, different kinds of needs and different sorts of deprivation that lead individuals to different types of sects. Aggressive movements utilize power to change the world through an individual leader. Leaders seek to convert people to a new way of life as a response to their

economic needs thus religion answers to the powerlessness and apathy of extreme poverty. Religion offers hope in misery. Social organization, ethical and psychic deprivation leads to protest. NRM dissolves what would have been a very serious protest which would have harboured political overtones but ends up gaining religious response.

Variations of this deprivation theory originally used to explain the rise of such churches in the west have been applied by some Africanist scholars in an attempt to explain the rise of such churches. Of particular relevance as many writers have pointed out, are the colonial factor and the resultant social-economic deprivation not to mention the sense of alienation engendered in the minds of the colonised.² Although King's outreach did not emerge out of a colonial situation this theory of deprivation is applicable and therefore suffices. It suffices because the followers of the prophet felt some form of deprivation which the prophet's arrival seemed to ameliorate. Their felt needs led them to the prophet who seemed to have responses for them. From their testimonies they had social, organic, ethical, psychic and social protest. I believe that although the emphasis of the prophet is in his calling it is such followers that make the prophet.

This paper also links deprivation with the notion of 'charisma' which was advanced by Marx Weber. Max Weber adopted and popularized the concepts of *charisma* and *charismatische Herrschaft* in socio-scientific discourse by giving it a conspicuous status in his sociology of religion and his political sociology (Weber 1947). In accepting and adopting this construct of *charisma* as a divine gift, he placed emphasis also on the "free gifts of grace" (Ibid: 360)³, attainable without ordination, and acceptable outside the established church. His gaze was mainly on the belief by the followers of such a religious leader and by the leader himself of such hold or possession. He (Weber) noted that charisma could be applied to a quality in an individual personality which marked him out as extraordinary (or set apart from ordinary men) and endowed with supernatural, super-human, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. The source of such is regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. In some societies this peculiar quality "is thought of as resting on magical powers, whether of prophets, persons with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, leaders in the hunt, or heroes in war ..." What is important is how the person with charisma is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his "followers" or "disciples" (Ibid: 358-9).

In relations to the Repentance and Holiness movement all the factors that cause discomfort to people leading to their search for religious reprieve apply as already mentioned. Whereas these general issues may apply to almost all NRMs there are several reasons why the Holiness and Repentance movement has attracted an immense following. From the claims and testimonies of Owuor's followers and some non-followers to the nature of his work and his personality,

² This is outlined in detail in the brief review of literature on independency in this section.

³ Weber's original term *Gottesgnadentum* was translated as a "gift of grace".

Owuor clearly fits Weber's *idealtypisch* depiction of the charismatic leader, endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least exceptional powers and qualities (Ibid: 241).

The interaction and re-enforcement between the self-confidence of the leader (in this case Owuor) on the one hand and the devotion of his followers is a prerequisite for the validity of charisma. Weber underscored the role of recognition and deeds as the two indispensable criteria for charisma as he stated, "If those to whom he feels sent do not recognize him, his claim collapses; if they recognize him, he is their master as long as he proves himself" (Ibid: 1113). There is no gain saying the fact that it is obligatory for a charismatic leader to incessantly evince his charismatic potentialities. What people said about Owuor appears to show the above assertion as a truism for him. This is in line with the popular belief of most social scientific observers of new religions or charismatic movements that such testimonies are decisive to the charismatic leader in so far as it impresses on him his follower's conviction and belief in his charismatic capabilities and authority.

His charismatic status could also be seen in the title he is identified with namely Prophet an indicator that he is the bearer of charisma. All Kenyan communities recognize charisma and it was captured in their languages but before Christianity this power was known to manifest in renowned witch doctors and medicine men. This movement has also almost combined the charismatic authority and bureaucratic priesthood side-by-side evidence by the emergence of churches all over Kenya that are in most instances full of adherents and although led by pastors and Bishops still recognize the Prophet as the overall voice.

The entire structural and organizational make-up revolves around the person of the Prophet. This to a great extent helps to elicit and rekindle in his followers' feelings of obedience, loyal submission. His authority is largely seen to be unquestionable and sacrosanct. However, "this plethora of unchallengeable authority" or charism of the Prophet may perhaps pay off, but may not be capable of standing the test of time in the subsequent processes of routinization and democratization.

Clearly the real innovator of any movement is not the advocate or the founder but the acceptor (Tippet 1967: 241). The achievement of the advocate is, in this case, the effective communication of his ideas that ensure acceptance by the people. To accomplish this, he himself had to undergo a change from a low status nominal church agent to a prophet with direct revelation. Without this, he could not act in defiance of church or state authority. He also had to understand the local situation, its needs and dissatisfactions and offer constructive programme for its alleviation. The programme had to be communicated to the people he wanted to win and accepted by them. It was the people's acceptance that created the prophet. Hence the forms of expression and religious experience had to be largely inspired by means of direct communication with the supernatural world and knowledge of people's experiences. When Owuor

appeared in Kenya, he became popularly known as Nabi (Prophet) and his special revelation became the article of faith, in spite of the fact that nobody could ascertain truth or falsity of his trips to heaven or visions. He has offered a redemption given by special revelation, him being the intermediary between God/Jesus and the people who become the new holy people (Perrin Jassy 1973: 80). But in spite of this his organization is still inspired by the make up of some churches. Moreover one quality that cannot be ignored about Owuor is his academic achievement which has enabled him to pass on his message articulately with a clear biblical basis. To him possibly the Bible is a higher authority than the other churches and he could turn his back on them and obey the Bible.

Owuor's personality also played a significant part in the formation, development and the nature of the message of the movement. The movement was a product of a revelation received by him directly by divine will. His doctrine emanated from the heavens. Through the account given of the supernatural world, the character of the mission and the message can be perceived. The important element was the role of the prophet in relation to the movement of which he was the founder. He was chosen by God to be the interpreter of God's will for men and their guide on their way to salvation. This message was to be communicated to the rest of the humanity, but the call of the prophet and the promise of salvation had to be also addressed to the Kenyans, the particular group of which he is a member. He was to be the intermediary between God and his people.

Although the movement is clear that Owuor is not a divine personality what has mattered is the divine character of the message and the revelation, which has continued throughout his career as a prophet. In other words, a direct communication with God is the source of the movement's dynamism and without it the movement would have diminished or simply stagnated. The charisma in Owuor could also be associated closely with the divine revelation, made one to claim and gain obedience and the respect of his fellows in the community. The pattern of fasting, visions and returning with power is a feature of many stories of how a 'Jabilo', (medicine men) among the Luo, gained his power. The charismatic person was usually the arbiter in society, he had the energy and personality to unite people and to turn the society in the direction of his ambition and to bring order where there were problems. The personality of Owuor, particularly after the heavenly experience, was such that it commanded obedience and respect, especially when he could be considered a charismatic person. His charisma was recognised by friends, and foes and adherents. A charismatic person usually appeared in the hour of need, so Owuor showed a masterly judgement in the selection of his moment. Owuor himself is a role model to the young people and especially the young professionals due to his credentials. The accuracy of his prophecies has added value to his office as a prophet. Mass healings and just the operation on the miraculous have drawn crowds of the needy to his crusades and the churches. The charisma that he exudes attracts many people.

Owuor's prophetic message and Kenyan churches' responses

Owuor was called at the time of his great academic achievement to preach to the nations of the world he was given the full picture of the defiled state of the church and he was commissioned to preach repentance from all sins (Isaiah 40: 3-5) for God to restore his altar. Owuor's calling was clearly not local but was expected to serve as an international prophet telling the four corners of the earth to turn away from sin and prepare the way for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Since his call he has travelled in most parts of the world preaching the message he was given by God. He has to date trekked the globe to warn the nations concerning the challenges they would face for their failure to repent and obey God's command.

He has given various major prophecies which have been fulfilled and changed the course of events on this planet earth. They include the 2004 Asian Tsunami, Earthquakes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia and Iran; America's Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Wilma and Alberto; floods in Eastern Europe, Mombasa, Australia among others. He prophesied the two Afghanistan earthquakes on Saturday October 21, 2005 at Machakos a small Eastern town in Kenya, and these earthquakes happened in 24 hours on the October 23, 2006. He also prophesied the asteroid that came close to the earth on the September 29, 2004 with sharp precision to the date, and also the eclipse of the moon and the sun that took place in October 2005 among others. He also prophesied about the massive 2006 historic Eastern European floods and the upcoming nuclear war of Iran.⁴ According to him such events are critical signs of the end of the age (Matthew 24). Moreover according to him the fulfilment of this scripture should be a signal to the church on the need to get ready for the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

Since his call he has repeatedly received messages from God. He has been spoken to and shown the Rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ and how they will take place. He has been commanded to preach Repentance and Holiness and a complete return to God in order to prepare the way for the Second Coming Jesus Christ. In meetings at which Dr. Owuor preaches, many signs and wonders are displayed by God including the appearance of unique rainbows, the massive outpouring of the Holy Spirit that slays many people bringing healing and deliverance, the healing of the lame and crippled, cancers disappear and many other miracles. This seems to be God's demonstration of the Power of Repentance and Holiness in Christ Jesus. Owuor has been involved in the massive National Repentance and Revival going on in Kenya and internationally.

⁴ *Mazurzi* 1(2), 2006.

On 5th June 2005, Dr. Owuor shocked a gathering of thousands at Kakamega Bukhungu Stadium, Kenya when on a sunny day, he stopped preaching and started saying "I see rain falling here and it is a Holy Spirit rain" and suddenly he pointed at heaven and said "Listen to me heaven, listen to me the earth, I speak the release of the four white horses here, right now." The shocker was that in less than one minute heaven obeyed, opened and instant heavy rain poured only around the stadium. A similar occurrence was noted in Njoro, Kenya when there was drought in Kenya and after prayer rain was released all over the country, in 2006.

His messages come in the form of visions of the night, text messages in the sky, and an audible voice (presumably God's voice) speaking to the prophet from the sky. The voice is usually heard in connection with the visions. It is a two-fold message. The first part states that God the Father has shown him, by specific visions under the open night sky, that the Lord Jesus Christ is about to return. The second part calls the congregation, the nation, and the world to repent of their sins and transgressions, given the small window of time before Jesus returns to judge unrepentant sinners... and (this is the exciting part) to celebrate the greatest wedding feast in the history of the earth, the most important upcoming event on the God's calendar. He proclaims the second coming of Christ and for him this is an urgent issue to be considered seriously.

Most of his hearers believe that Owuor is a true prophet of God with utterance that are intriguing and should command attention. He passes his message with great and impassioned urgency, "The Lord has spoken to me, and time is over. At any moment He will take the church. Those who are wise, let them prepare." There those who have rejected his message categorically even refuting his prophetic call.

God directed him to start Repentance and Holiness Ministry. He began to visit nations as God communed with him. In the same way God had to send him to Kenya because Kenyan religious and political leaders had polluted both God's altars and the nation and God was angry. In October 19th 2004 he was shown the state of the church in Kenya and he had to come to tell the leaders to repent and a national day of prayer was held.

In spite of this, the Kenyan pastors and bishops continued to preach the gospel of prosperity, trap people by calling for healing crusades only to collect offerings to enrich themselves. Their engagement in material gospel culminated in sexual sin and some abandon their call and engage in politic. He wanted church leaders to repent but some dismissed him given that he had no church. His scathing attack on church leaders put him at loggerheads and has had to have security because there were several attempts on his life. Initially he did not a church to go to but moved from one town to another and various countries but

today he is part and parcel of King's outreach ministries which emerged under the auspices of the holiness and repentance movement.⁵

His messages to the Christian churches have not been favourable and have caused him sufficient trouble. He has not only called the churches to repentance but has also been vocal about the sins for which they ought to repent. For example in December 31st 2009 he accused the churches of corruption, failure to give Kenyans direction on national issues like the constitution making process. The church had failed the nation on issues of national importance. Instead the Church and clergy were driven by the urge for money and preached the gospel of falsehoods. As he addressed the Press at a Kisumu hotel after presiding over a healing crusade at Moi Stadium he declared: "The Church in Kenya has decayed. We saw them being partisan in the run up to the last General Election and during the post-election violence." He accused bishops and pastors of corruption, saying some lied to their adherents that they had healing virtues in their pursuit for money. He called on both the leaders and ordinary Kenyans to repent for the country to move forward because God alone could bring healing to the nation and institutions.⁶

There has been a dispute in many church circles concerning the attitude to adopt towards Owuor and his message. While individuals from other churches have been impacted by his messages others have been sceptical. Among these, some have said that he cannot be a prophet because he is denunciatory. Others have thought that he is guilty of eisegesis that is, reading his visions into the Scriptures, and stating that he knows that certain scriptures have fulfilled with no other evidence than that he himself (Dr. Owuor) has seen them in his visions. They ask: "How do we know that the first three seals have been opened? Do we merely rely on the fact that Dr. Owuor saw visions of these seals? Is not likely that God could merely be drawing attention to these seals because they are soon to be opened, rather than because they have been opened?"

It the fact that the mainline churches would not receive him that he was forced to start churches for which he is not directly responsible. His habit was to hold large revivals which were often very well attended by individuals who were belonged to other churches. Such churches began to warn member against following an individual whose credibility was in doubt. They began to warn members who consistently attended. Later some of them threw the members out of churches and Owuor and his team had to form altar for worship. Within a short space of times there are many such alters operating under the auspices of Kings Outreach ministry. Whereas he has a lot of power over the churches they are run by some who chose to follow him.

⁵ Interview with Prof. Onitiri (No doctor is a healer!). This website (www.asakpa.com) is a new extension of www.notjustnotes.ws created on 19th December 2006.

⁶ *The Standard* 02/01/2010.

Owuor was clear about God's message to the church leadership and expressly said that the Kenyan Church leaders were stubborn, oppressed the poor, defiled the altar (church) and the nation, God's patience was waning and His judgement would soon fall on Kenya. He outlined several failures of both church and state. The outline was clearly captured by the *Kenyan Analyst*⁷ as follows: the writer states that when God sent Owuor to Kenya, He specifically sent him to address the ills in the Church. The sins in the church included the immense sexual immorality in the Church, involving bishops, pastors, worship leaders and members of the congregations as well as the love for money and wealth leading to an increase in the *panda mbegu* (sow a seed) gospel. The church had also accepted the trappings of this world by immersing themselves into the country's politics in other words the church had detoured from the will of God. Although the Church was expected to be the light of the world, but it has brought darkness to Kenya consequently it had lost its moral authority to lead; in fact it had become completely irrelevant. The church had also entertained false prophets. Pastors and bishops are busy building their own empires, not God's Kingdom.

Because of the failure in the leadership of the church the nation was also affected. The Church in Kenya was at the forefront in fighting the message of repentance in the initial two years of Owuor's debut. However Kenya had also had her own sins such as prostitution and murder which deserved judgement and Kenya's judgement was to come in the form of a massive earthquake which would destroy particularly the city of Nairobi.⁸ God had preserved Kenya and made it great. Refugees from all over Africa flocked in Kenya. Kenya was an island of peace in a sea of turbulence. According to him Kenya abused the protection and custodianship God had bestowed upon it. Consequently the Kenyan economy would be destroyed and the public health sector would also be affected too. In fact Kenya had the smell of death of both animals and people and this would be meant to gain her attention to what God was saying. The only recourse to Kenya would be repentance led by the Kenyan churches.

This response from the church captures the mood of the church towards him. On January 4th 2012 Members of the Nyanza Council of Church Leaders responded to the utterances made in a section of the press by Dr. David Owuor by condemning him for levelling Church Leaders in Kenya as corrupt and untrustworthy. According to them the prophet needed to be rebuffed for his smear campaign against the church all over the world. His actions in fact bordered on blasphemy since Biblical doctrines are clear that a prophet does not fight the other and yet Owuor persistently waged a propaganda war against

⁷ *Kenyan Analyst*, 22/02/2007 at 2:54 pm.

⁸ A prophecy that he spoke on February 10th, 2007, saying very clearly that there is going to be a massive earthquake in Nairobi.

Church leaders in Kenya and the world over. His main reason for this was that Church Leaders in Kenya received from the flock.⁹

They stated that it was biblical for church adherents give tithes and offerings to God (Mark 12: 14, Malachi 3: 10–12, I Corinthians 9: 6–7) and so any Cleric or Church Minister who fought against giving was fighting God would face consequences such as captured in Revelation 22: 18–19. They further stated that the Bible was clear that a divided house cannot stand on its own. They cited some evangelist and prophets who had ministered for years without insulting or chastising fellow worker for instance Nicholas Bengo of South Africa who started preaching in the 1950s. Others such as TL Osborn, Reinhard Bonnke, and Benson Idahosa, and Morris Cerulo, Oral Roberts and re known evangelist Benny Hinn have larger crowd than “self proclaimed Prophet David Edward Owuor.” They did not chastise fellow Evangelists.

They asserted that they were aware that Owuor received money secretly since he cannot single-handedly sponsor crusades of the magnitudes he does alone. As members of the Interdenominational Churches representing over 270 Bishops they were asserting that Owuor had been sent by Powerful Evil forces to bring the church down and they were reminding him that Jesus Christ said He will build His Church and the gate of hell shall not prevail against it.

They were imploring Owuor to apologize to the entire church all over the world and particularly in Kenya where he unleashed his tirade against the clergy. They stated that in Owuor’s crusades many people had died mysteriously which was unusual because other evangelists who had held crusades in many parts of the country where millions attended did not have this kind of experience.

They further accused Owuor of being a liar because he had established churches when at the start of his ministry he stated that he would not do so. According to them Owuor was not using sincere means to win members to his church rather than engaging in blackmail and speaking ill of Bishops who have worked hard to get people who are now attending his meetings. Instead of accusing church leaders he should have appreciated church ministers in Kenya for the great work that they have done for many years. Leaders claimed it was false to state that that Church leaders in the country had failed to give direction on the reform agenda. They were steadfast that Kenyans needed a new constitution according to agenda four of the National accord before the next General Election.¹⁰

⁹ Press report 04/01/2010.

¹⁰ This document was signed by the following leaders: 1. Bishop Dr. Washington Ogonyo Ngede, Chairman; 2. Arch Bishop Julius Otieno, Vice Chairman; 3. Bishop Jasper Ogello wadegu; 4. Bishop Hesbon Njera; 5. Bishop Eliakim Mbata; 6. Bishop Allan Ojwang Iro; 7. Bishop George Obul; 8. Bishop Richard Odongo; 9. Bishop John Ongonga; 10. Bishop George Odoyo Owiti; 11. Bishop Jason Gor Mirambe; 12. Bishop John Onyango Ober.

Evangelical churches launched a scathing attack on Prophet Owuor over his allegations that churches were engaging in corruption. The Federation of Evangelical and Independent Christian Churches of Kenya (FEICCK) said Owuor's claims were not only unfounded but also uncalled for. Led by FEICCK National Chairman Bishop Joseph Methu and Organising Secretary Archbishop John Mugecha, the religious leaders described the evangelist as a lone-ranger, saying his sentiments demeaned the role churches were playing in shaping the national destiny.

According to Bishop Methu it was unfortunate Owuor was spreading hate speech in public forums instead of taking such opportunities to preach peace and harmony and to address critical issues affecting the nation. According to him Owuor had a 'holier than thou' attitude and was not leading other Kenyans in addressing critical issues that affected them. Owuor was not playing the noble role of guiding the leadership of the country and was under the influence of politicians advancing personal interests through the Church. The leaders spoke a day after their counterparts in Nyanza defended the Church against Owuor's accusations. The more than two hundred representatives of the Church in Nyanza questioned the evangelist's moral authority to brand them corrupt.¹¹

As a consequence of the position of the church both the Church and the nation are in currently in judgement. The altar of the Lord has to be restored. The judgement in the house of God is going to be most severe.

Visions form part and parcel of his messages and he interprets each effectively in line with the bible. The accuracy of his prophecy is also a source of strength for his followers and non-followers. The miraculous has always been a very important source of strength of any mission work and so this has enhanced the number of followers and the respect to his ministry. Although the spiritual has contributed to the expansion of the movement his academic achievements have served as a paradox in that on the one hand his followers is a mixed crowd with a large middle class component perhaps because he serves as a role model of high achievement and yet used by God in a great ministry.. He has also been accused of over displaying his academic credentials. This has afforded him followers in institutions of higher learning

His message and demeanour are a source of admiration. His speech is articulate and his attire is smart and neat and the only unusual thing is the long beard.

Owuor's movement and the state

In many nations of the world there is a tendency to allow some religions to have an upper hand despite differences in religious integration. The nature of the contemporary African state is largely due to the colonial era, when

¹¹ James Munyeki More evangelical churches lash out at Prophet Owuor, *The Standard* 04/01/2010.

administrators employed religion tactically in their pursuit of religious political domination. Missionary activities were an important facet of attempted colonial cultural domination, with both repressive and liberal functions. They were agents of both European superiority and political domination and the agents of modernization especially western education.

Most African countries became independent in the 1960s on a surge of optimism. Before long, however, the optimism of early 1960s turned sour because the African state had merely become an agency for control and extraction. There was no attempt to merge the state and society as common expressions of shared values. Hence there has been no popular commitment to public institutions like the church/religion. In Kenya, the post-colonial state was essentially a reproduction of the colonial state in terms of ideological orientation, laws and the basic economic structures (Gutto 1993: 265). It therefore ignored certain religious identities by excluding most of them from central manipulation of policy issues and control of power due to the perceived association of its adherents with some religions that missionaries and colonialists disliked (Kenyatta 1968). Such suspicion by the state regarding some religious minority groups and some of the emergent movements still persist.

Apart from the mainline churches and indigenous groups, religious diversity exists in Kenya in other words the religious space and the public realm is shared. Despite the diversity of religious identities the government of Kenya has been accused of being more attentive to the mainline Christian churches. Consequently, minority religious identities including NRMs seem to be subordinated against. This scenario has at times generated violent sectarian confrontations. The contest between the nation and these minority religious identities generate serious implications on issues of democracy, human rights, and freedom as well as on citizenship.

Although freedom of worship is embodied in the Kenyan constitution, there are no existing policies in the relations between religion and the affairs of state (Haynes 1966) and yet religion and politics in any nation concern each other. Hence it would be stated that the separation of religion and state in the individual national context is usually one of theoretical degree rather than practical certainty. Religion and the nation state are power centres, bound to affect each other a great deal given the nature of African politics with its personalisation of issues and then, often close relationship between socio-economic elites.

In this section the struggle of the Repentance and Holiness Movement to enter the limited religious space in the Kenyan state narration in the new millennium is briefly interrogated. It particularly focuses on the dynamics of accommodation and exclusion which inform the relationship between the state and the minority religious discourses that operate on its margins. It also indicates how this religious identity has enhanced or threatened the stability of the state

and the various methods it has used to assert itself as it has looked for space within the nation.

It is assumed here that the interest of the Kenyan state since the start of the millennium has been political stability hence the position of various religious groups remained ambivalent and ambiguous. The ambivalence of the state and its negative responses to the minority religious groups often led to negative externalities such as intolerance and aggression that afflicted the society. Culminating in some religious groups remaining suspect in spite of state efforts to accommodate them. Open or hidden conflicts characterized the state when it ignores or suppressed certain minority identities. Evidently despite the coexistence of the minority religious groups and the state, they have had numerous grievances, thwarted hopes, state manipulation that caused some of them to voice their marginality. However when the stability of the state is at stake the state will always call on board any religious group that could help in the pursuit of stability. In other words the state forgets its fear of alternative centre of independent power and the desire by many religious groups for a collective common space where all would be equal, at home and exercise the basic freedoms.

The ministry of Repentance and Holiness has been concerned not only with individuals but with institutions and states for it insists that these are in God's agenda. The movement states that a nation's state of affairs is a reflection of the manifest spiritual condition of the Church inside such a nation. Any nation therefore needs the church for direction because the Church speaks to God. Prophet Owuor insists that the church in Kenya is aware of its mandate given that it prayed successfully for a new government in 2002, but rested easy thereafter believing that it had accomplished its mission. However he states that currently the church has lost its fervour due to the position it held during the referendums and the 2007 general elections. The church lost its moral authority and could only regain it by sincere repentance. The existence of rape and the poor leadership in the country are in fact a reflection of the occurrences in the Church.

As a prophet he has given many messages quite confidently to the nation of Kenya. On 22nd February 2007 he again called Kenya to repentance and warned of earthquakes. In July 2007 he also warned Kenyans of an impending bloodshed which he saw in a vision if Kenyans did not pray and repent. In the vision he had seen women and children trooping to refugee camps but nobody paid heed and in 2008 there was the post election violence.¹² Before Kenya's political violence Owuor proclaimed in a rally in Eldoret that his hometown city Kisumu was cursed and he could see women and Children on their backs running from Eldoret town which later became the epicentre of the Kikuyu

¹² Interview with Prof. Onitiri, *op.cit.*

people targeted tribal violence.¹³ Owuor predicted a great disappointment to Kenyans following the passing of the draft constitution during the referendum in August 2010. It was during an interview on Jeff Koinange's Capital Talk K24 programme that he said "God talked to me two days ago and showed me disappointed Kenyans with some even crying."

For the prophet Kenya's case was not yet concluded as indicated by the numerous national calamities such as the drought that struck Kenya in the recent past. During the drought many, particularly the pastoral communities, lost cattle, migrated from home in search for water and food and there were many deaths. Given his mandate Owuor comments on all issues of significance to the nation when he gets revelation for instance he has commented on Al-Shabaab and called on Kenyans to hold a national repentance day in order to attain protection from terrorists. During an impromptu interview in the streets of Nairobi, Owuor called on Kenyans to repent and ask for forgiveness as this alone could protect them against Al-Shabaab attacks.

The Kenyan state has not sufficiently responded to the message of repentance but after the post election violence the state would welcome any effort at reconciliation and the movement has been at the forefront of this.¹⁴ After the 2007 post-election violence that left more than 1000 people and nearly half a million homeless Owuor held a number of crusades in different parts of the country that saw many people who had stolen guns and military explosives like grenades returning them and handed them to the Kenyan Police. After the post election violence in Kenya, Prophet Owuor could no longer be ignored by the state because of the massive gatherings in which men and women opted to repent and return the weapons they had used during the violence.¹⁵ Around this time the government decided to turn to divine intervention in its efforts to promote reconciliation and restore peace in areas hit by violence. The Office of the President through the Ministry of Special Programmes approached Owuor, the self-styled prophet and increasingly popular preacher, to help forge peace and repentance in areas that were adversely affected by violence.

He held repentance meetings in various places in the Rift Valley where people returned property and weapons of all sorts. One such meeting took place in Naivasha town where Kenyans gathered in their hundreds of thousands. It was a three-day outdoor church service. It is the events in this meeting which culminated in the government requesting him to assist with reconciliation. People were encouraged to bring along any weapons they used during post-election violence plus any items they looted. In Naivasha the result looked like a macabre

¹³ Kenya's 'Prophet' sees great disappointment and weeping over referendum results in Alshahid: News and Analysis, August 9, 2010 | Filed under: East Africa, Featured, News.

¹⁴ Lucas Barasa "Kenya: State Turns To God For Healing Wounds Of Election Violence" *Daily Nation on the Web*, 4 July 2009.

¹⁵ Bill Ross, BBC News, Rift Valley, Kenya.

car boot sale; a vast array of kitchenware, mattresses, roofing sheets, milk churns, a photo of the French 1998 World Cup winning team, a guitar, a stack of machetes and poisoned arrows, plus an evil-looking club with nails sticking out of it. One Willis Onyango stated “I have come to repent and return my weapons”, after handing over a machete that he said he had bought to defend himself but never used, and bicycles pump. It has remained unclear what will happen to all these weapons but the prophet was given a medal of recognition by state at a rally in Nakuru in 2011. People like Ms Alice Ochieng were among many residents of Njoro who surrendered guns, arrows and pangas to Prophet David Owuor at Njoro in Molo constituency. The residents vowed to live peacefully now and after the referendum.¹⁶

It was reported by Siasa Duni (Wednesday, July 1, 2009) that the government of Kenya had “hired” the prophet to lead the nationwide prayer campaign. Indeed the government had on Tuesday 30th June officially contracted the services of a self-proclaimed prophet to bring reconciliation after post-election violence. The Special Programmes ministry was to engage Owuor in countrywide prayers and fasting to foster healing. The programme was to involve conducting prayers at places that were adversely affected by the violence and culminate in a national prayer day in Nairobi. The declaration was made by PS Mohammed Ali who said the move was meant to restore the hearts of the victims of the 2007 general elections mayhem. He was accompanied by Dr Owuor at his office. Mr Ali said: “This is the only way we can promote long lasting peace among the people.”

With this authorization by the state prophet Owuor held many crusades in the Rift Valley where several people returned items they had looted from their neighbours as well as weapons. Owuor was clear that in such circumstances a world government could only provide physical restoration by providing houses and land to the displaced people but would not be able to heal their hearts. In this venture Owuor was not given financial support for his meetings “But the police and the provincial administration officers will provide security and transport during the rallies.”¹⁷

He has also prayed for hardcore criminals and even officiated at the baptism ceremony of Prime Minister Raila Odinga on 5 May 2009 which followed with several politicians visiting him and getting saved after being baptized.¹⁸ Kasarani MP Elizabeth Ongoro was the second MP to be publicly baptised by prophet Owuor. Speaking before her dip in the pool at Riverside,

¹⁶ *The Standard* 21/07/2010.

¹⁷ These were the words of Ali during his meeting with Owuor on Tuesday 30th June, as reported in *Siasa Duni*, 29/06/2009.

¹⁸ *The London Evening Post* 11/01/2012.

¹⁹ Rosalind I. J. Hackett *Millennial and Apocalyptic Movements in Africa From Neo-Traditional to Neo-Pentecostals*.

Nairobi, Ongoro said the haunting memories of post-election violence had driven her to accept Jesus Christ as her personal saviour.

Despite all these efforts Owuor sees the only solution for Kenya as national repentance called by the Kenyan leaders. He has asked the leadership repeatedly to call a national repentance in Nairobi's Uhuru Park but the state has continuously developed cold feet. He has always emphasized the necessity for national prayer and repentance done by individual believers, churches and the state. It seems that until this is done Kenya's woes will be persistent.

Conclusion

Citing corruption in the churches as well as in national politics, Kenyan scientist-turned-prophet Dr. David Owuor also disseminates his End time prophecies via modern media technologies, using blogs, Facebook, or his Jesus is Lord Radio station. Viewed by many as a "prophet of doom," and by others as a timely critical visionary, Owuor has been preaching a stark message of repentance and holiness since 2003. While focused on Kenya's "defiled state", his website lists the natural disasters he has predicted in various parts of the world. He is also well known for organizing a National Day of Repentance in Nakuru and in June 2009 he was appointed by the Kenyan government to lead a nationwide prayer campaign following the post-election violence of 2007¹⁹.

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