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Public Preaching by Muslims and Pentecostals in Mumias, Western Kenya and its Influence on Interfaith Relations

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Date: January 2013

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Abstract

This research argues that the huge presence of "free preachers" points to the development ofnew religious leadership both in Islam and Pentecostalism in Kenya in general, and Mumias, Western Kenya, in particular. Both traditions are witnessing a fragmentation of leadership through the emergence of new leaders whose claim to authority is based on experience and not traditional learning. The emergence of this new crop of leadership leads to competition between the new leadership and traditional leadership, and also between members of the two traditions. Both Islamic and Pentecostal preachers engage in the public sphere in varying but also common ways. The contestation of the preachers in the public sphere must be understood within the broader context of Kenya's public sphere. The unbalanced sharing of resources in Kenya which has adversely affected Muslim-dominated areas such as the coastal and North Eastern provincesis widely acknowledged. Such inequality, real and perceived, has led to claims of deliberate marginalization of Muslims. The imbalances between Muslims and Christians in the country impact on differentiated engagements in the public sphere; which this thesis highlights through a study of public preaching as *daʿwah* and mission respectively. Muslim preachers in their sermons invite non-Muslims to embrace Islam as a more rational and more 'biblical" tradition. They call on Christians to debate with them, mainly on a set of Biblical texts. Their *daʿwah* is a debate staged in the public square, and proclaims the truth of Islam against the dominant Christian tradition. The Pentecostals, on the other hand, extend their churches into the public square. The stage is not a debating duel, but an extension of the Church. They ask Christians to recognize "salvation" in the word and deed of God, and recommit themselves to Jesus Christ. This acceptance is also framed around the Bible, which speaks to the challenges facing contemporaryKenyans. Pentecostal Preaching acts reach a high point when listeners turn to Jesus by entering the Church. This research argues that public preaching by Muslims and Christians reflects their positions in the public sphere, and indicative of the competition between them. From a perceived marginalized position, Muslims want to prove that Christianserr on the basis of Biblical and Qur'anic texts. Pentecostal Christian preachers, on the othe hand, extend their religious spaces into the public sphere and invite Kenyans in general, and mainline Christians in particular, to recommit themselves

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to Jesus. The preaching of both Muslims and Christians has potential and real negative effects for public order.

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INTRODUCTION

The global resurgence of religion is a well-discussed phenomenon in religious scholarship (see Stark and Bainbridge 1985; Martin 1990; Berger et al.1999). The renewed religious vitality that we experience today in various forms is happening all over the world. Its underlying causes vary from place to place. The social impact of this new religious vitality gives rise to competition for public space in which religions are now engaged with each other and with the secular society. The present awakening of various religions and their demand for presence and recognition in the public sphere defies the assumption that the impact of the Enlightenment and modernization would eventually relegate religion to the private sphere.

Since the 1980s, this claim on the public space by religious actors is remarkably strong in East Africa. Although Kenya is a secular state with constitutionally enshrined freedom of worship, religion continues to be present in the public sphere functioning as a key framework for communal life.[1] This research addresses the issue of the growing relevance of religion in Kenya's public sphere as witnessed through religious polemics between Christians and Muslims. Today, it is a common sight to find itinerant Muslim and Pentecostal preachers moving from place to place competing with each other through preaching at open-air revival meetings.

This preaching is usually preceded by equally competitive publicity events. Colourful posters and banners can be found in various places, from shop walls, taxi-stages, bill boards and the bark of trees announcing "miracle crusades" organized by the numerous Pentecostal churches. Mosques proliferate in small towns, sometimes hardly two hundred metres from each other. One can hear the call to prayer from the various mosques within a short radius from each other, which sets Muslims in a rush for prayer. Fiery youthful Muslim public preachers are a common feature in various parts of Kenya. These preachers stage their events on a daily basis not only in Eastleigh near the city of Nairobi, but also in faraway small towns and villages such as Mumias, Bungoma, Busia

[1] On the relevance of religion in East Africa's public space, compare a recent survey: 'Pew Forum on religion and public life, tolerance and tension: Islam and Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa' (Pew Forum, Washington, DC, 2010).

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and Butere. Public preaching is one of the important forms by which religion is manifesting itself in the public sphere. Similarly, Pentocostal Churches go out into public parks and preach sermons to the public. They call Christians and Kenyans in general to renew their commitment to God and Jesus, and join their every-increasing Churches.

In Kenya, the engagement of religion in public life is intricately linked to the opening up of democratic space from the 1990's. During this period, churches and civil society with support from the international community led the movement for the demand for the introduction of multi-party politics and a new constitutional dispensation. Religious leaders in East Africa in general and Kenya in particular played a critical role in demanding for a new democratic dispensation. Within the Kenyan context, the voice of the church has also been heard in its condemnation of Kadhis Courts in the new constitution, and in opposition to the introduction of sex education in schools.

Christianity's increasing involvement in public life in Africa has been noted and debated by various scholars (see for example, Gifford, 1998:21). In the 1980's various churches began to get actively involved in public life. This engagement surprised many observers who had earlier predicted that after independence, the influence of Christianity in public life would decline (Gifford, 1998:21). The emergence and rapid spread of Pentecostalism, in particular, has been noted by many scholars. According to Anderson, Pentecostalism has become the dominant expression of Christianity in many African countries (Anderson 1987:34; 2004:121). Westerlund also notes that "by 1960s to the 1970s, the growth of African Pentecostalism, now including neo-Pentecostalism, became more massive" (Westerlund, 2009:5-6). While recognising the constructive role of the churches in the democratization process, Gifford is pessimistic about their potential in enhancing real democratic reforms (Gifford, 1998:348). On the other hand, Freston discusses the deeper role and effects of the evangelical movement in the development of the modern state (Freston, 2001:2).

In the last ten years, the public presence of Islam is also more noticeable than hitherto. Muslims in Kenya form a significant religious minority and may constitute between ten to fifteen percent of the total population of Kenya (Oded, 2000:1). While the presence of Islam may be attributed to the global resurgence of Islam, it could also be attributed to

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various events in the recent past. These include the August 1998 twin bombing of the American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, which galvanized Muslims together against the negative image of Islam portrayed in the media. As in other parts of world, there is a wider resurgence of Islam in the public sphere. The public presence of Islam in Kenya is evident in greater attention to religious observance including prayer, fasting, dress, pilgrimage and Islamic banking. Like the Churches, Muslim bodies such as the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (Supkem) among several other Muslim institutions have been outspoken on a variety of issues ranging from the need for secondary schools to allow the adorning of *hijāb* by female Muslim students, to the general marginalization of Kenyan Muslims.

The above description of the role of religious leadership in Kenyan public life is deliberately generalized so as to give a broad picture of the state of affairs. Underneath this broad and generalized picture is a more complex reality on the nature of religious leadership and their practices. In order to understand the inner dynamics of Christian and Islamic leaders and their role in the public sphere, it is important that we move from the general picture to a narrower view. This study, therefore, is a systematic examination of the public sermons of Muslim and Christian preachers in Mumias.

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Mumias lies in the interior of Kenya, and experienced one of the earliest contacts between Islam and Christianity in Kenya. The coming of Islam to Mumias was followed by the arrival of various Christian mission groups from Europe and the United States. Today there are various Muslim and Christian groups in Mumias. Christian mission groups engaged in heavy proselytization that Muslims quickly noticed and began responding to with their own outreach activities (Loimeier, 2006). Relations between Muslims and Christians were characterized by suspicion and competition.

Individual religious leaders in general and preachers in particular are not necessarily representative of the larger groups to which they belong. This is particularly true with leaders who make claim to direct religious experiences with the divine and thus bring a specific personal charisma to their activities. An important perspective of this study, thus, is approaching the public preachers from the perspective of their individuality rather than merely looking at them as part of larger social groups of Muslims and

Christians and their sub-groups. The study accomplishes this individualist approach by examining the life stories of the preachers focusing especially on their formative influences. Where evident, it will mention the particular denominational or sectarian group to which individuals belong. In the case of Mumias, public preachers were mainly representatives of new Pentecostal churches. No clear sectarian identity was evident among the Muslim public preachers.

The study also identifies how the various preachers approach the notion of religious experience within their own traditions, and how this has impacted their sermons. The research closely examines the nature of the sermons focusing on aspects such the use of space, the texts used and their themes, and finally the various rhetorical approaches employed. Religious actors in one tradition, moreover, do not act in isolation from other religious traditions. By examining both Muslim and Christian preachers, the study offers interesting comparative insights to public preaching.

The theoretical framework used in this research will be addressed more extensively in Chapter 1. For now it may suffice to state that the research is located within the theoretical frame of religion in the public sphere. The notion of the public sphere is an important approach for analysing the contemporary revival of religion. This approach can be useful in explaining the resurgence of religion in the contemporary context in its complex and variant dimensions (Casanova, 1994; Ellisand ter Har 1998). Tayob argues that "the role of religion in public life seemed a more neutral approach to a complex and sensitive phenomenon" that has dominated public life since the 1970s (Tayob, 2011:1). In locating Islam within the notion of religion in the public sphere, public Islam refers to a discourse within a new space (Muslim public) where ideas are presented and developed (Tayob, 2011:2). Such new spaces include open-air markets, streets and stadiums where public preaching takes place.

In addition to locating the present study within the above theoretical framework, I also approach public preaching in Islam and Christianity as forms of *daʿwah* and mission respectively. My approach in this study, thus, goes beyond the limitations [to be discussed in Chapter 1] of previous approaches on studying public Islam and Christianity as *politics*, and seeks to reflect much more critically on the religious

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practices within public Islam. By focussing on preaching and mission/*daʿwah*, I hope to extend the understanding of religion *qua* religion in the public sphere.
Studies on the public role of religion movements have tended to focus on big and highly visible groups, leaving out of their analyses, the small churches and mosques in rural places. There is also limited discussion on the contribution of individual preachers to public life and their encounter with members of other traditions. This lack of comparative studies across the religious divide has also been noted by some scholars of Islam (Soares, 2006). This study is therefore a response to the need for such a biographical and comparative approach. As argued earlier, individual religious leaders do not always subscribe to the practices of larger groups. The formative influences on individual preachers are also as varied as their public roles. Religious actors do not exist in isolation from other traditions, hence the need for a comparative study.

In this introduction, I have attempted to locate the present study within the framework of the contemporary resurgence of religion. I argue that the engagement of preachers, Pentecostal and Muslim is evident of this resurgence. I highlight briefly the broad context of these preaching activities as being the competitive conditions under which Muslims and Christians live in Kenya which leads to competition evident through their public sermons. Finally, I discuss the specific approach I am using in this study namely looking at preachers in their individual roles while not forgetting the bigger context.

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CHAPTER 1:OPEN-AIR PREACHING BY MUSLIMS AND PENTECOSTALS IN MUMIAS TODAY

1.1 Background to the Study

My interest in public sermons began in the early 1990's through my encounters with Muslim street preachers, first in Kenya's capital Nairobi, and later in Mumias, Western Kenya. An afternoon walk in Eastlands, one of the busiest suburbs of Nairobi revealed a crowd of people gathered around a Muslim preacher. The crowd listened intently to the fiery sermon delivered in Swahili with the aid of a public address system. Some Muslim listeners cheered as the preacher criticised Christianity.

The *mihadhara* (public sermons) were largely polemical and critical of some central doctrines of Christianity such as the divinity of Jesus, his crucifixion and resurrection.[2] The Muslim preachers mainly used the Bible to attack Christian belief. The sermons also invited Christians to convert to Islam. However, the sermons also reminded Muslims of their religious obligations. For example, on one occasion the preacher reminded Muslims that it was *harām* (forbidden) to take alcohol or keep a dog, [like the Christians did] and that *ṣalāt* (prayer) ought to be taken seriously.

Apart from encountering Muslim preachers, I also had numerous encounters with Pentecostal public preachers in various towns of Western Kenya. These preachers organized what is commonly known in Christian circles as "crusades". These were huge open-air meetings which took place in various open spaces and were presented in an aggressive and emotional style accompanied with much singing and dancing.
Commenting on polemics in the Ethiopian context, Jon Abbink notes that "polemics not only fuel tensions but challenge the political domain-that is, the secular state order itself" (Abbink, 2011:254). Public preaching by Muslims and Christian groups in Keyna has on several occasions degenerated into verbal and physical confrontation and has been viewed by civic authorities as a danger to public peace. For example, during a large Christian "crusade" organised by the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the centre of

[2] The word polemics can be traced back, of course, to the Greek term polemicos, meaning warlike.

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Mumias town, the Christian preacher reportedly made derogatory remarks about the prophet Muhammed. As this was an open-air meeting, many Muslims heard these remarks. On the following Friday, after the prayer at *Jamia* Mosque, Muslims gathered and marched towards the venue of the crusade. A fight ensued between them and the Christians. Many people were injured during this scuffle. Bibles were torn and bicycles belonging to Christians were into broken into pieces.

During the above incident, the fight was so intense and protracted that it took the intervention of the police to restore order. The police cancelled the preaching event and banned any similar events for a period.[3] In these confrontations with the state, one could easily notice how Muslims and Christians took opposite sides, with each group blaming the other for the state of events. A respondent narrated to me how the police intervened:

> They [Christians] went and reported to the police who came and stopped the *mhadhara* on the basis that in this meeting we were abusing people. Now we went up to the DC [District Commissioner] yesterday to ask him what was wrong. He then said that people were complaining. We asked him to name the complainant. Even for us Muslims, there are questions that we pose at the *mhadhara*, there is still so much that we still do not know. The DC said that what he did not want are skirmishes and asked us to proceed with our activities, promising to attend the following day.[4]

Mazinge, one of the preachers whom I interviewed and will introduce in greater detail later, further recollected cases of conflict and violence and attributed the cause to provocation by Christians and state officials:

> In the course of our meetings we try to avoid conflict as much as possible. If you find a case where we have fought, it is because we have been provoked. For example, last year on 12th December in Migori, we had a meeting in which 35 people were converted including a Bishop's child. Now when the OCSC [Police Officer Commanding Station] who had granted us a permit saw this, he called in Deliverance Church. They came and put up their preaching in the same spot we were using. I explained that I had a prior permit to use this space. Muslims on Friday became annoyed and called for *Takbīr*.[5] There was stone throwing from

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[3] Interview with Dickson Manya, 2nd November 2009; Maurice Inganga, 15th November 2009; Nelson Ombuna, 16th December 2009 andKassim Swaleh 18th January, 2010.

[4] Interview with Alima Shiundu, 12th March 2010.

[5] '*Takbīr* is the invocation of the religious 'formula' 'Allahu Akbar'. However within the present adversarial context between Muslims and Christians, the invocation of the *takbīr* suggests a 'war cry'. During the sermons, normally this formular was shouted whenever the Muslim preacher felt that he had scored a significant point against his Christian opponent in the debate.

> Muslims. When the Christians saw this, they all ran away. We want peace because when there is peace even the message of God can be conveyed well.[6]

The question of the intervention of the police in Islamic preaching came up during an incident that I witnessed.[7] The police stopped Mazinge's preaching reportedly because he was abusing Christianity. In response, Muslims gathered at the *Jamia* Mosque at the centre of Mumias town and marched in protest to the District Commissioner's office:

> The OCSC [Officer Commanding Police Station] came and announced that he was closing the meeting. Why are you mentioning about Devil Worshipping, he asked me? When I announced to Muslims that the meeting was being closed, they became harsh. Not just Muslims, even Christians. They surrounded the OCSC in a disrespectful manner. We went to the mosque and deliberated. Muslims decided that they should demonstrate up to the District Commissioner.[8]

The main concern of the state appeared to be the enforcement of law and order. When I interviewed the head of the Police in Mumias, he recollected past incidences of skirmishes between Muslims and Christians:

> All we are interested in is peace. We do not want people's lives to be disrupted… As long as law and order is maintained, we have no problem with anybody.[9]

It is no surprise that a permit is required before one holds public meetings. Muslims view police intervention with suspicion claiming that it favours Christians. My personal assessment of this conflict revealed that it was caused by various competing interests, namely insensitive criticism of the Christian tradition by Mazinge, the Muslim preacher, but also an unmeasured response by a partial police force. We should also attribute the tension and conflicts that emerge out of public preaching to the aggressive proselytization by Christian preachers. Pentecostal preachers argued in their sermons that no one could be allowed a place in heaven unless he believed in Jesus. Such sermons tended to be exclusionary and dismissive in their comments on other traditions.

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[6] Interview with Suleiman Mazinge, 13th November 2009.
[7] This instead took place during a Mhadhara organized by Suleiman Mazinge on 10th March 2010 at Nabongo market.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Interview with Police Commanding Police Division, Mumias 18th March 2010

Public preaching, then, is part of the fabric of the society in Western Kenya. This preaching is polemical and sometimes leads to conflict. In Mumias, Western Kenya, the side-effects of these religious confrontations are not only debates about religious doctrine and practices, but also competition over public spaces in the most literal sense: which group should or should not use a particular site, use of media e.g. posters, and production of religious “noise” using loud speakers.

Inter-religious polemics take place in other parts of Africa, among them Nigeria, Mali and Ethiopia (Abbink,2011:254). The history of public preaching in East Africa is much longer in Tanzania than in Kenya. Be it in the broader region of Africa or in the specific area of East Africa, the impact of public preaching is felt everywhere. Wherever the events are staged, they generally generate tension and conflict between different religious groups; and between these groups and the state. The net effects of such public religious debates are a re-drawing of religious boundaries, decline of dialogue and toleration, and increased rivalry which spills over the immediate vicinity of the preaching venues and into the rest of the society affecting commercial activities in the towns, leading to tension and even physical violence.

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The impact of these public sermons was the main motivation behind this study. This study interrogates the following interrelated questions: First, What is the nature of the sermons by Muslims and Christians in Western Kenya? Who are present at these sermons? How are the sermons organized? The second question in this study follows from the first: Who are the preachers? How do they become preachers? How do they preach? Finally the study seeks to answer the question: What are the preachers saying through their sermons? What are the effects of the sermons upon society? What are the responses of the listeners to the sermons? How does the state respond to these sermons?

The thesis examines a specific type of sermon called “public sermons”. These sermons take place outside the Mosque and are not given within the context of regular *ṣalāt* or Sunday church services. The underlying thesis is that public preaching expresses discursive battles about religious “truth” that takes an essentialist character and re-shapes religious boundaries between Muslims and Christians. These boundaries are

also drawn between the religious communities and the state. The nature of engagements are largely polemic and tend to create antagonistic and hegemonic religious discourses in the public sphere that not only fuel interreligious tension, but also challenge the political domain and its secular order.

1.2 Literature Review

There have been several studies before on preachers and sermons in general and on East Africa in particular. In the following review, I would like to briefly discuss past studies on preaching by looking at their specific approaches. The review begins with studies on sermons and preachers at the global level before focussing on East Africa and Mumias, Western Kenya.

There have been some studies that focus on the conditions and impact of Christian sermons. In an edited work entitled *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Eighteenth Century* published in 2009, Eijnatten brings together a collection of articles that focus on eighteenth century preaching along a thematic approach. The authors in this volume identify general themes that influenced Christian sermons during the eighteenth century. The main geographic focus of this book is on central and north Western Europe, although some attention is given on Nordic countries, Southern Europe, and North America. The authors identify three ideologies that reflect eighteenth century preaching, namely: Neo-classicism, Pietism, and the Enlightenment. The main argument in this work is that the sermons in these periods were influenced by the various ideologies of that era.

Similar to the above ideological focus, Jonathan Strom explores the transformation in preaching that took place as a result of pietism and the revival movement. Strom argues that the hallmarks of Pietism's reform of preaching included an emphasis on speaking from the heart, the preacher's character, distaste for rhetorical formalism and a display of excessive learnedness in the pulpit (Strom, 2009:182). Strom states that revivalist preaching in the eighteenth century displayed certain parallels to pietistic preaching and dramatic delivery (Strom, 2009:182).

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In the same publication, Alexander Bitzel's chapter on "The Theology of the Sermon in the Eighteenth Century" offers an overview of the theology that undergirded the sermon. Bitzel begins his reflection by looking at the sixteenth century Reformation theology of the sermon and the Counter Reformation response to the theology as reflected in the work of the Council of Trent. The rest of the chapter consists of an analysis of the way the two important paradigms of the eighteenth century (Pietism and Enlightenment) impacted on preaching. Preachers and their sermons were impacted by the various contexts, especially the ideological developments present at that time.

Islamic studies in the 20th century have similarly addressed the nature of the sermon within various contexts. Richard T. Antoun (1989) demonstrates the flexibility of the sermon. The author documents and exemplifies the Friday congregational sermon as the single most important institution for the propagation of Islam in Jordan and Amman to reflect the scope of the Islamic corpus (beliefs, ritual norms, and ethics). Focusing his study on the central role of the preacher as a "cultural broker", the author compares the process of "organization of tradition" in rural Jordan with similar processes outside the Muslim world. Through his study, Antoun demonstrates the flexibility of the sermon in relation to contemporary social issues and specific social structures, and its capacity for interpretation and manipulation. The author depicts the preacher as a cultural broker who passes on the message to a congregation in a format accessible to them.

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In his study on Muslim preaching and the sermon in Indonesia, Watson (2005) discusses the theme of continuity and change in Indonesia through an examination of a public preacher known as Gymn. Watson attempts to show the impact that the public preacher in Indonesia has on the modern sermon. The preacher's use of new media enables him to reach a wider audience. Furthermore, Watson notes the interactive method in which the preacher engages with the listener, sometimes giving them an opportunity to ask questions. The simplicity of his messages is also examined.

There have been some studies within the African context on the nature of the Muslim sermon. Patrick Gaffney (1988) has conducted studies on Islamic sermons in Egypt. Based on in-depth field research, Gaffney draws on social history, political commentary and theological sources for his reflections on these sermons. Gaffney argues that the

actual performance of sermons is both "an instrument (tool) and an object of reform" (Gaffney, 1988:112). The sermon is used to attain desired reforms in society, but is at the same time subject to changes in the manner it is used. Thus as an object and also an instrument, Muslim activists make the sermon intelligible and its message relevant (Gaffney, 1988:112). When this happens, Gaffney argues, it produces authority for the preacher.

In his book *Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams and Sermons*, Tayob has analyzed sermons in the Brits and Claremont Mosques of South Africa. Tayob locates these sermons in their ritual, social, religious and mystical dimensions. The question of the sermon as a re-interpretation is central to Tayob's analysis. He, thus, argues that "the sermon within South Africa was connected with the basic forms of Qur'aninterpretation in Islam" and was "both a disciplinary elaboration of the Qur'an text in light of the discursive traditions in mosques and also a spontaneous, even inspirational, expansion of the text" (Tayob, 1999:136). Tayob's analysis also reveals the interpretation of Qur'an as 'Re-citation' where "as the preachers translated the verses, they took great liberty in introducing discursive textures into the new renderings" (Tayob, 1999:119).

Still within the context of South Africa, Larkin (2008) has studied the preaching of Ahmed Deedat. Larkin pays particular attention to the performative aspects of Deedat's sermons. The main argument in Larkin's work is that "religious movements are constituted through communicative acts, practices of mediation whereby adherents bind themselves to one another and to a higher power" (Larkin, 2008:101). Among the aspects which Larkin notes on the sermons included Deedat's knowledge of English rather than Arabic or Urdu, the more familiar languages of Islamic religious learning (Larkin, 2008:104-109). It is also noted that Deedat's style and presentation of the lecture is secular, very much like the form of a lecture one would follow at a university. His attire consists of a suit with an open-neck shirt. Deedat's performances follow a particular style. His sermons are nearly always live events recorded at institutions like town halls and universities and are mediated through videocassettes and CDs, and the internet. Larkin concludes that "for Deedat, and many Muslims … these secular perfomative and rhetorical forms … [were] an alternate version of Christianity rather than opposed to and separate from it". This, he argues, was "a way of reflexively

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commenting on Christianity itself" (Larkin, 2008:109). Larkin argues that Deedat mimics Pentecostal preaching. Larkin's work is important in pointing us to the "fluidity" of religious boundaries and the fact that religious actors copy their performance from other traditions in order to compete for the same public space.

Much closer to the context of my research, Ahmed Chanfi (2008) has studied Muslim sermons with a focus on Tanzania and Kenya. His study was conducted in 2004 and 2005 in the coastal cities and in the rural places. In the course of his research, Chanfi interviewed the main representatives of groups active in converting Christians. Unlike the traditional *Ulama*, these preachers give their sermons in open spaces such as stadiums and markets (Chanfi, 2008:4). This scholar interprets public preaching as a form of reform in Islam. Chanfi states that "unlike Islamic missionary groups that focus on education as a means of conversion" public preachers use sermons to deconstructbiblical texts in favour of Islam (Chanfi, 2008:4).
Similar to the above study, John Chesworth (2006) focuses on polemics within East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) and looks at how Muslims and Christians have a long history of engagement in *daʿwah* and mission. Chesworth shows how certain Muslims and Christians both employ aggressive strategies in their outreach engagements with members of other traditions. His study analyses open-air meetings of the early Christian missionaries during the middle of the nineteenth century. He similarly examines the use of *mihadhara*by Muslim groups, such as *Jumuiya ya Wahubiri wa Kiislamu Tanzania* (Society of Muslim Preachers of Tanzania, JUWAKITA) in the 20th century. His main argument is that fundamentalism in East Africa is expressed through competitive preaching by Muslims and Christians. Open air preaching by Muslims and Christians represents an "outworking of fundamentalism in East Africa" (Chesworth, 2006:185). He argues that a significant factor in fundamentalism is a desire for a return to the fundamentals of the faith. The desire for a return to the basics of the faith, he argues, has caused both Christian and Muslim groups to demonstrate the superiority of their faith over the others through public preaching (Chesworth, 2006:185).

The divisive nature of public sermons is a theme that is also taken up in a study that focuses on Tanzania by Loimeier. In his contribution entitled "Perceptions of

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Marginalization: Muslims in Contemporary Tanzania", Loimeier demonstrates how Muslims are struggling with their status as citizens in plural societies (Loimeier, 2006). The author argues that Muslims have perceptions (real or imagined) of marginalization which influence their activities in the public sphere. An important way in which Muslims engage with Christians, thus, is through "a new type of public preaching" which he argues accentuated "tension between Muslims and Christians" (Loimeier, 2006:145). Loimeier argues that this new kind of preaching should be seen as a reaction to the emergence of the Pentecostal movement in Tanzania.
The role of the Pentecostal movement and its effects in the public sphere is also taken up by Ojo (2007) who examines the engagement of Pentecostal Charismatic and Muslim groups in Nigeria in the 1970s andthe early period of the twenty-first century. According to Ojo, all these groups represent a new dimension in religious fundamentalism in contemporary Nigeria. Ojo observes that although these groups are internal revivalist movements within their respective traditions, they also reflect a stance which is characterised by continuous competition for public space.

Similar to the above line of argument, in a recent study entitled "Religion in Public Spaces: Emerging Muslim-Christian Polemics in Ethiopia," Jon Abbink argues that public religious polemics "have expressed discursive battles about religious 'truths', communal identities, and power claims" (Abbink, 2011:254). Abbink argues that polemical preaching by Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia fuel tensions between the two groups, which also spill over into the rest of Ethiopian society.

The above review of scholarly works on sermons shows how preachers and sermons are impacted upon by various contexts throughout history. Such contexts are ideological and religious. As a result of their focus on these contexts, the writers approach sermons as fluid and always subject to transformation. The various authors also approach their examination of sermons from the frame of continuity with tradition. In this way, for example, the preacher is presented as a transmitter of tradition, in accordance to "ritual, religious and mystical dimensions" of their particular traditions. However in passing on of traditions, the preacher re-interprets the message in the light of prevailing conditions. In all the works surveyed, there seems to a tension between the impact of modernity on sermons and the preacher's engagements with tradition.

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The present research approaches public preaching as engagements in the public sphere. This approach to the study of sermons has not been given detailed examination in all the works that I have surveyed. Although I take seriously the way in which various modern conditions are impacting on the sermon, it is not the specific emphasis of the study. Rather this study examines the nature of the specific sermons, their manifestation of mission/*daʿwah* and their reflection of public life in Kenya.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This research approaches public preachers as important actors in the public sphere. The concept of the public sphere has a long tradition in philosophy and social sciences. The contemporary understanding of the term is mainly based on the work of German sociologist Jurgen Habermas who provided a comprehensive analysis of the nature of the public sphere and its historic transformation (Habermas, 1962/1995). Between the state and society lies the public sphere, "a network for communicating information and points of view" (Habermas, 1996:360). The notion ofa public sphere has various meanings and implies a spatial concept, the social sites or arenas where meanings are articulated, distributed, and negotiated, as well as the collective body constituted in and through this process, called a "public" (Negst and Kluge, 1993). The development of the bourgeois public sphere was especially enhanced in the eighteenth century in Europe, promoted by resources such as newspapers, discussion forums and a free press. The public sphere in this context provided a "space where notions of the common good could be articulated and debated on the basis of reason alone" (Tayob, 2012:144). A central feature of this public sphere was its separation from the power of both the church and government because of its access to various economic and social resources.

Against this background, anthropologists Dale Eickelman and Armando Salvatore have discussed the Muslim public in detail. In their discussions, these scholars have presented what they call "Public Islam" and "Muslim publics". Public Islam refers to articulations of Islam in public spaces which leads to the emergence of discursive spaces called Muslim publics (Salvatore and Eickelman, 2004:16). Salvatore defines public Islam as:

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> .... highly diverse invocations of Islam as ideas and practices that religious scholars, self -ascribed religious authorities, secular intellectuals, Sufi orders, mothers, students, workers, engineers, and many others make to civic debate and public life. In this "public" capacity, "Islam" makes a difference in configuring the politics and social life of large parts of the globe, and not just for self-ascribed religious authorities (Salvatore and Eickelman,2004:xiii).

Salvatore and Eickelman identify two aspects central to Muslim publics namely; the role of new media which makes religious texts more widely accessible and shared, and the role of non-specialists. Studies on public Islam have noted how new technologies and means of communication such as the internet have led to faster communication and human mobility giving new meaning and expressions of Islam (Hirchkind, 2006, Eickelman and Anderson, 1999). These developments have led to a wider availability of religious texts and their sharing among people and groups over long distances. The role of non-specialists also has the effect of widening the scope of participants in public Islam, and increased contestation between them and the more traditional players. Non-specialist participants usually have not studied Islamic sciences over a long period. This leads to questioning of their religious credentials by the more traditional religious authorities.

These engagements lead to new avenues for both agreements and disagreements, but more significantly lead to the production and maintenance of discursive worlds (Salvatore and Eickelman, 2004:16). According to Tayob, there are two prominent themes in the Muslim engagement in the public sphere in Africa: "Politics of Identity" and "critical engagements with the heritage of Islam" (Tayob, 2012:2). Politics of identity are played out in various forms depending on contexts. For example, in Kenya where Muslims are a significant minority, the construction of a public identity hastaken place within the frame of claims of marginalization. Issues of identity also emerge within the context of Muslim public preaching with the preachers commenting on socio-economic matters affecting Muslims. Among Muslims in Mumias, Mwakimako has shown how during the colonial period, identification with a group was socially defined: "...in certain situations, an individual [Muslim] may express his belonging as a Wanga, or a Swahili, in others as a stranger, or a Muslim..." (Mwakimako, 2008:427). Clearly, the boundaries of any of these groups are fluid. However, each gives a frame of reference

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and an “underlying identity in the presence of difference or opposition” (Mwakimako, 2008:427). However, there is a common thread in all manifestation of public Islam, namely the identification with and use of the Islamic tradition among the various Muslim actors.

Pioneering scholarship on public Islam make important contributions towards our understanding of how religion is playing itself in the public sphere amidst changing contexts. These reflections have helped us understand the increasing participation among Muslims in these discourses. Soares’ studies have demonstrated how the colonial policies in West Africa formed new spaces for Muslim political and social activities with Islam losing out on its independent political capital, but maintaints its social and cultural relevance (Soares, 2005). Haynes in his study of Islam and Politics in East Africa examined the “political significance of domestic and transnational Islamic militancy in the East African countries” (Haynes, 2006:490). Within the context of Mumias in Western Kenya, Hassan Mwakimako has also studied the engagement of Muslims in political debate especially focusing on the contestation over the appointment of a *Kadhi* in Mumias (Mwakimako, 2008:440). Mwakimako’s study shows how colonial policies influenced this process. Thus; his conclusion is that “the ultimate power that accorded authority to the *Kadhi* during the colonial period was the colonial state… (Mwakimako, 2008:440).

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However, these approaches important as they are have some limitations. According to Tayob, these approaches were heavily influenced by Habermas and Smith with their considerable focus on democratic values and on the production of a discourse on the *representation* of Islam (Tayob, 2012). The specific role of religion in this contestation in Mumias is not articulated. Although the role of religion in social processes is now widely acknowledged by various scholars (Stark and Bainbridge 1985; Martin 1990; Berger et al.1999), this factor is not sufficiently interrogated in studies on Islam in African public sphere as religions. According to Tayob, the impact of religion within the context of the public sphere deserves much more critical reflection. This can be done, for example, through reflecting more specifically on religious practices of public Islam (Tayob, 2012).

Following Tayob, this study focuses on what is going on inside religious rituals in the public sphere within a Kenyan context in general and Mumias in particular. The study examines public preaching in order to understand the contemporary dynamics of religion in the public sphere. Therefore the research does not merely focus on the socio-political processes impacting on the sermons. Rather, the research mainly focuses on the actual preaching activities (rituals), the religious formation of the preachers and the content of their message. I approach the emergence of public preaching as part of a process where people have reverted to religion as their frame of reference. I closely examine the biographies of the preachers through their conversion narratives, and I also examine their preaching as part of a long tradition of mission and *daʿwah* in Christianity and Islam respectively.

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Going futher into the specificity of religion, this study approaches public preaching by both Muslims and Christians as engagements in *daʿwah* and mission respectively. *Daʿwah* is a term that has acquired a number of meanings in the history of Islam. According to Westerlund, the term can be used to refer to: call, invite, persuade, pray, invoke, bless, demand, and achieve (Westerlund, 2004:170). However, the term is mainly thought of as religious outreach for purposes of conversion or bringing back lapsed Muslims back into the faith. Kerr corroborates the above understanding of the term and states that it is derived from the verb *dāʿa*, "to call", of which *dāʿī* is the active participle, "one who calls or invites" (Kerr, 2000:151; see also Esposito, 1988:71). Faruqi has provided one theological definition: "...it is the effort by the Muslim to enable other men to share and benefit from the supreme vision, the religious truth, which he has appropriated. In this respect, it is rationally necessary, for truth wants to be known" (Faruqi: 391).

An examination at the sacred text of Muslims can also help us gain some insights into the meaning of *daʿwah*. According to the Quran, "God summons us to the abode of Peace" (10:25). God also calls on humans to worship and believe in him (14:10). Muhammad is designated as "God's caller" or "God's invitor", *dāʿiya ilā allah* (4:31). According to Juan E. Campo in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, "The prophets are the ones who effectively transmit the call to their people to sway them from praying to false gods or idols and to guide them on the monotheistic path to salvation" (Campo, 2000:177).

Ordinary believers are equally charged with the responsibility of *daʿwah* (Qur'an 3:104).

In the past *daʿwah* accompanied commercial ventures and military conquests (Esposito, 2003:64). It was also the role of a Caliph in extending authority over Muslims outside Islamic lands and enhancing Islamic unity. Esposito also states that in the twentieth century, "*daʿwah* has become the foundation for social, economic, political, and cultural activities as well as domestic and foreign policy; justification for breaking away from the secular order of colonial west; legitimation for claims to independent authority within the nation state; and a call to membership in the righteous Islamic community" (Esposito, 2003:64). Thus, whether understood from the standpoint of the study of religion or from a more theological perspective, the understanding and practice of *daʿwah* entails crossing frontiers and has a public dimension.

According to David Kerr, mission implies the centrifugal action of "sending" (Kerr, 2000:151). Thinking and practice of mission has undergone transformation down through history. In his influential book entitled, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, David Bosch gives a theological definition of mission as "...the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to belie. It is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world" (Bosch, 1991:519). The above understanding of mission portrays it as a public exercise i.e. "sending out" and "witness of a community". In his book entitled *The Missionary Movement in Christian History,* Andrew Walls shows how the nature of Christian mission went through various transformations in six phases of history (Walls, 2005:16-25). The phases are: Jewish preaching in the first age of the Christian tradition, the Helenistic Roman phase, the Barbarian age, the Western Europe age, the age of expanding Europe, and the Cross Cultural transition. Walls argue that in each of these phases, Christian mission was influenced by the prevailing cultures (Walls, 2005:16). The central point in Walls' work is the dynamic nature of Christian mission in terms of understanding and practice.

In this research I am interested in the *daʿwah* and mission by public preachers. I am approaching public preaching as engagements in *daʿwah* and mission. These practices

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are public by their very nature of engagement in "reaching out" and so crossing frontiers. The public and polemical nature of these engagements heavily impact public life. These religious polemics are an expression of discursive battles about religious "truths" that take on a "primordialist" character and sharpen inter-religious boundaries as well as between citizens. These activities involve contestation in public leading to tension and conflict. They create antagonistic and hegemonic religious discussions in Western Kenya's public spaces. In doing so, these polemics fuel tension while also potentially challenging the political domain - that is the secular state order itself.

The foregoing theoretical reflection has located the practice of public preaching within the frame of religion in the public sphere. I have focused on public sermons as exemplifying *daʿwah* and mission in the public sphere. Tayob has argued that discussions of religion in the public sphere in Africa were limited to the impact on democratic processes. Following him, I have proposed to look more closely at public preaching as *daʿwah* and mission. This thesis investigates this form of *daʿwah* and mission, its transformation and impacts. My study on the nature of *daʿwah* and mission reveals that it is largely characterised by polemics by Muslims, and proselytism by Pentecostals who extend the Church into the public square. An important effect of these activities is the fragmentation of the public sphere. Such fragmentation is evident through contestation about the legitimacy of doctrines, the authority of the preachers and the impact of their activities upon public order. In summary, public preaching impacts on the public sphere by creating antagonistic and hegemonic religious discourses. This process fuels tension between Muslims and Christians and also challenges the secular state order.

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1.4 Significance of this study

Chande (1998), Mutei (2006) and Chesworth (2008) have done some research on public sermons focussing on towns and cities places where the presence of Islam is significant. My geographical focus, however, is on rather more humble places, Mumias, a largely rural township, surrounded by a huge Christian presence. Such locations in the study of Islam constitute what John Voll (1982a) has characterised as a "non-dominant"

minority Muslim situation. Scott Reese in a recent book has commented on works by western and western trained scholars. "They have," he says:

> ...devoted ample space to the reformist voices of the colonial era. Their attention, however, has focused on largely on those forming the highest levels of intellectual discourse, located in the so-called "centre" of the Islamic world". Subsequently, "numerous smaller" or more "local" voices of reformist discourse located largely on the so-called Islamic "periphery" of Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia West of Persia, however, have attracted far less consideration (Reese, 2008:5).

The research captures the "small" voices of Islam and Pentecostalism in the small urban centres of Western Kenya, where one might find hitherto undocumented public preachers. By focusing my analysis on such "marginal" places and preachers, I hope to shed light on a larger phenomenon. Through this process I make a contribution to our general understanding of rural Islam especially in relation to public sermons.

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Individual religious leaders in general and preachers in particular do not necessarily represent their larger groups. This is especially true with religious leadership that lays claim to religious experience. An important perspective of this study, thus, is approaching the public preachers from the perspective of their individuality. The study examines the life stories of the preachers focusing especially on their formative influences. The study also identifies how the various preachers approach the notion of religious experience within their own traditions.

Formal Islamic sermons have received some scholarly attention (see Tayob, 1999, Gaffney, 1994 and Antoun, 1994). Analyses on the content, form and style of the Friday sermon have been carried out. Such analyzes have shown how the Friday sermon contributed to revivalism and public life and the institutions within which they have emerged. However, such analyses have left public sermons (*mihadhara*) out of focus. The present research compliments previous researches done on preaching outside the formal traditional contexts.

Recent scholarship on religion in Africa has tended to focus on one religious tradition at a time. Benjamin Soares (2006:8) notes the "... lack of studies considering both Muslims and Christians". He attributes this neglect to "the difficulty of finding expertise in more

than one area" but also to the very nature of academic training and specialization (see also Larkin & Meyer 2006:288). Studying public sermons of both Muslims and Pentecostals simultaneously is particularly instructive for the study of comparative religion. In proposing to study both Islamic and Pentecostal sermons, I make a contribution toward a comparative literature, a much needed aspect in the study of religion in the public sphere. Moreover, the intense inter- and intra-religious debates on the future influence of religion on society and politics in Sub-Saharan Africa have far reaching effects on the adherents of Islam and Christianity. Thus, this research focuses on the interrelations of actors in the religious field, their ideas, intentions, practices and ways of positioning one religious tradition against, or next to another.

While there have been some studies in the pastfocussing on Muslim and Pentecostal public preaching within the analytical frame of Muslims in contestation with Christians, my study reveals a more complex scenario. The present study approaches these preachers as engaged in the public sphere. These are new religious actors whose claim to legitimacy lies outside the traditional criteria. In addition to contestation, this study shows the specific practices at the sites of public preachers. It shows the commonalities and differences between the preachers, and examines their particular manifestation of mission and *daʿwah.*

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1.5 Scope of the study

The study covered a specific historical period, geographical area and subject matter. I focused mainly on contemporary public sermons by Muslims and Pentecostal preachers in Mumias, Western Kenya within the period of November 2009 and November 2012. I recorded the sermons as they were delivered. The research was limited to sermons in the context of Western Kenya and specifically Mumias town. Mumias has one of the earliest contacts with Islam in rural Kenya. While other parts of Kenya and East Africa in general may be alluded to, I have limited my focus to this manageable area. My ability to communicate in Luhya, the local dialect and Kiswahili was also an added advantage during my fieldwork. A comparative perspective was thus afforded through the study. Although reference is made to other types of sermons, this research is on public sermons.

The site was selected because of the presence of each of the traditions being studied. These two traditions are also actively engaged in public preaching in these places. Mumias town has a long history of Islam, having been the headquarters of the *Wanga*, an ancient monarchy with an early history of Islam. Since I had prior contacts with the sites, I did not need much time to settle down and begin work. However, aware of my familiarity with the context, and the need for objectivity, I made every effort to take a critical and dis-interested position in the conduct of the interviews.

1.6 Methods of Research[10]

An in-depth field-work approach was used in the study. This method of research was necessary because it was necessary to be immersed within the preaching context to gather data. Two methods were used to collect data in Mumias. First, there was observation of public sermons which was the most basic task in the project. I observed and documented as many sermons as I could, carefully noting the identities of the preachers and their sites of preaching. Apart from a careful observation of the preacher himself and his rhetorical style, I also noted the composition of the audience e.g. ages, gender and possible religious tradition. Other questions that I considered included: how were the events publicised? What equipment was in use? Did the preachers use question and answer sessions during the sermons? How was this conducted? I listened and recorded thirty-seven sermons using a digital recorder. Since some of the sermons were in Swahili, I translated them into English and transcribed them.

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Secondly, unstructured oral interviews were conducted with preachers from both Islamic and Pentecostal groups. I developed a set of questions that guided me in the conduct of the interviews, but used this flexibly as the interview progressed. I aimed for in-depth interviews. The number of sessions with each preacher was determined by the issues that still needed probing, and the availability of the respondents. Crucial to these interviews were the life stories of the preachers, paying close attention to their educational and conversion experiences. The second group of people that I interviewed were the civic leadership, where the same principles were used during the interviews.

[10] I have where necessary used Arabic transliteration.

Any significant events related to sermons were probed and recorded. Sometimes I telephoned the preachers and other participants later after the interviews were done to seek clarifications on certain aspects.

1.7 Analysis

In most qualitative studies, the analysis of data is not a distinct stage of the research. Rather, in this type of research, data collection and analysis are dynamic, interconnected, and interactive processes. Thus, the analysis determines new questions and the subsequent answers become data for further analysis. Following each phase of data collection, all interviews and sermons were translated and transcribed as comprehensively as possible. As soon as the transcripts were completed, I read and analysed the field notes. During the re-transcriptions, I got to know the narratives better. Transcriptions were the beginning of the organizing process, but at the same time this was the beginning of interpretation.

In organizing the material, I was especially interested in creating coherence in the stories or constructing life stories, for the case of biographies of preachers. I began my analyses with broad sensitizing questions, looking for example, at what factors led to the rise of public sermons among Muslims. Since one of my research questions was to establish under what conditions public sermons emerged, I tried to establish critical stages and periods in the life of the preachers. A coherent time line was thus created.

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1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that public preaching is a common phenomenon in Kenya in general and Mumias, Western Kenya, in particular. This religious phenomenon is growing and is part of the public sphere in the region. A study of this phenomenon reveals that the public sphere is characterised by the emergence of itinerant Muslim and Pentecostal preachers. These preachers are new actors in the public sphere whose effects are widely felt. The preaching is characterised by competition. However, these

activities are interpreted by the preachers themselves as engagements in *daʿwah* and mission, which this study proceeds to present and analyze. Public preaching has a huge impact on the public sphere. The preachers and their sermons often lead to tension and conflict between the preachers from the two traditions but also between the preachers and the state. I have approached public preaching as engagements in the public sphere. The sermons point to a transformation of *daʿwah* and mission in the public sphere.

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CHAPTER 2: THE INTRODUCTION OF ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY IN MUMIAS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the introduction and establishment of Islam and Christianity in Mumias during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It examines the role of politics, trade and missions in this process. I argue that *Nabongo* (King) Mumia of the *Wanga* and the local people played an active role in the spread of the two religions. Mumia and his subjects were largely driven by political interests in their friendship with Muslims and Christian missionaries. Mumia faced stiff opposition from his neighbours and wanted to secure his Kingdom with the help, successively, of Muslims and Christians. The chapter also points to the competitive nature of Christian-Muslim relations in Mumias. This contestation began in the nineteenth-century and continues into the contemporary period.

2.2 Background: Islam in East Africa

A study of Islam in Mumias necessitates that we trace its origin in an earlier period. There were trading contacts between East Africa and Western Asia even before the coming of Islam. The East African coast formed part of the western section of the Indian Ocean and was an important destination in the monsoon-based trade (Horton, 1996:414-418; Horton and Middleton, 2000:72-78). It is in this context that Islam entered the coast of East Africa. Archaeologists have discovered the presence of a mosque and Muslim burial sites at Shanga in the Lamu archipelago (off the eastern coast of Kenya) dated between 780 and 850 (Pouwels, 2000:252). Trading activities at the coast reached a climax between 1000 and 1500 (Pouwells, 2000:253). By 1300, Islam transformed and incorporated the East African coast into the Islamic religious and cultural world. When Ibn Battuta visited the town during the fourteenth century, Kilwa, one of the Swahili towns on the stretch of the East African coast was occupied by Muslims and ruled by a sultan (Gibb, H.A.R, 1956:380-1).

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The Swahili people of East Africa have one of the earliest traditions of Islam in the region (Pouwells, 2000: 251). These people came into existence as a result of intermarriage between the Arabs and the local Bantu tribes at the coast. Through this process, Islam spread among the indigenous people. These communities produced dominant attributes of Swahili Islam (*Sunni* and the *Shafi'i* schools of law), and adopted common traits in culture, especially cuisine, dress, dances and songs and Swahil*i* language. Pouwels alludes to this process of interaction between Islam and local cultures when he writes of Islam as being "adopted, adapted and internalized, as a coastal African religion" (Pouwels, 2000:251). The wide usage of Swahili today by both Muslims and Christians shows the effects of these interactions.

Islam remained confined to the coast until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when it began to spread into the interior (see Kasozi, 1986; Hiskett, 1994; Owino, 2002; Nasambu, 1999; Levtzion and Randall, 2000, Robinson, 2004). There were several factors that contributed to this process. These included the transfer by Sultan Sayyid Said of his capital from Oman to Zanzibar, an ideal base for his activities (Owino, 2002:58). With this development, Sayyid Said was able to support more trading in ivory and slaves, sugar, cloves and grain. With slave labour, the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, and Mauritius rose in prominence (Robinson, 2004:157). There was greater demand on the international level for such items. In exchange for these products, India, America, and Europe channelled items such as cloths, guns, beads, and ironware to Zanzibar. With Zanzibar being transformed into a commercial and cultural centre of East Africa, caravans of traders and preachers of Islam organized themselves and ventured into the interior (Kasozi, 1973:16). By 1830s and 1840s, trade caravans belonging to Arabs, the Swahili and Indians were making regular forays into the interior. The sultanate of Zanzibar also later in ninteenth century impacted upon the development of British colonialism and the subsequent entry of Christian missions.

The construction of the railway line from Mombasa to Uganda also enhanced the penetration of Islam into the interior. With its arrival at Kisumu in the year 1901, a large number of Swahilis and Indians began to arrive in Kavirondo (Western Kenya). These groups engaged in trade even in the remotest parts of this region with the natives

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(Wagner, 1949:32). Richard notes the significant religious and economic changes which the railway brought about:

> Plates, cups, and saucers, watches and clocks, shorts, shirts, jackets, kanzus are findingtheir way by the useful railway into the regions by the Lake. … [In addition to these] came a tremendous influx of those of the Muslim faith… (Richards, 1956:8-9).

Some Asians settled in the interior either as businesspersons or as railway workers, and introduced Islam to the local people who watched them perform religious practices such as prayer and fasting. Arab traders also travelled from the coast to towns like Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Eldoret, and Nyeri and built mosques. Some of the Muslim guests in these regions also married local women who eventually converted to Islam.

Although traders first blazed the trail in the introduction of Islam, we should attribute the introduction of Islam to the holy men and teachers who accompanied them. This is because wherever trade established new Muslim communities, there was need for teachers to train the converts and direct the religious life of the adherents (Lewis, 1966:27). Sufi *turuq* (orders) were active in the spread of Islam in East Africa (Nimtz, 1980). The earliest was the Qādiriyya, Tijaniyya and Shadiliyya. In Bagamoyo North of Dar es Salam, for example, the Qādiriya branch which is today probably the biggest started its activities in 1905. Under the leadership of Khalif Yahya bin Abdallah, of slave origin and generally known as Shaykh Ramiya, this brotherhood expanded in the area around Bagamoyo and Tanga and further north. In the west, Sheikh Ramiya's influence was felt as far as Ujiji at Lake Tanganyika (Lodhi and Westerlund 1999). Nimtz records the *dhikr* as practised in Bagamoyo. "The male murids meet with the *Shaykh* twice a week on Thursday and Sunday evenings. It is a ceremony that consists of reading and chanting, rhythmic swayings and a respiratory exercise that results in hyperventilation" (Nimtz 1980:127). Further, the *Qadiriyya* were a "noisy" order who used forms of devotion that were familiar to Africans. In this way, they presented Islam - using the familiar aspects of the unfamiliar religion. This attracted people to Islam. The influence of local Islamic learning centres of knowledge was also felt, for example, in Riyadh Mosque in Lamu.

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The opening of the interior of Kenya by both the British East African Company and Christian missionaries also enhanced the penetration of Islam into the interior, especially through the work of porters, many of whom were Muslims. Apart from transporting goods, the porters married local African women who converted to Islam. They also practised Islamic prayers, hence attracting the local people to Islam. The arrival of a small but growing number of Christian missionaries in the 1860s and 1870s led to a steady expansion of missionary enterprise, evangelization, and education (Sperling, 2000:296). The Muslims emulated some of the Christian approaches to outreach to propagate Islam. Islam, therefore, became established on the coast and spread inland from the eighteenth century. Muslims are to be found throughout East Africa, with concentrations in urban areas and in Northern Kenya, Western and Southern Tanzania as well as coastal regions (Trimingham 1964; Safari 1994; Nzibo 1995). Clearly, the establishment of Islam in the interior was determined by the interplay in the region between politics, trade and religion.

In Kenya, in particular, Islam is diverse. Though the majority of Muslims are *Sunni*, many Asians are members of one of the *Shī'ah* groups (Bakari 1995). During 1940s the Ismaili community was offered economic opportunities by Sultan Seyyid Said and settled in Zanzibar and the Kenyan coastal towns. Members of this community established small retail shops (dukas) and then developed wholesale trading empires. For example, Allidana Visram had modest beginnings in Zanzibar and then later opened a chain of stores in other towns in Kenya. He became one of the wealthiest Ismaili traders and philanthropists in Kenya. There are also an Ibādī presence in Kenya due to those Muslims with Omani origins (Hoffman 2004). In more recent times, Wahhābi-inspired reform movements have impacted especially among youthful Muslims (Kahumbi 1995; Chande 1998). There is also a small population of *Ahmadiyya* in Kenya. With their origin in India, members of this group are active missionaries and within a short span of time, established themselves in Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu and Mombasa. Considered heretical by the rest of Muslims, this group has significant following in the more rural parts of Kenya such as Bungoma and Mumias. This group is actively engaged in missionary work through the establishment of medical facilities and other social welfare activities.

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2.2.1 Islam in Mumias

Mumias is a small urban town in the Western province of Kenya. The town had a population of 32,965 according to the 1999 Census and is linked by road to Kakamega (east), Busia (west), Bungoma (north), and Butere (south). The town serves as the headquarters for the larger Mumias District. Before the arrival of the Arab-Swahilis and Europeans, it was known as *Lureko,* and was the capital of the Wanga Kingdom, an ancient aristocracy. From 1894 onwards Mumias developed as a centre of British administration for the Nyanza region (Mwakimako, 2008:429). This development significantly impacted the lives of the Muslims in Mumias who had "to negotiate between the interests of the colonial state, the religiosity of Arab Swahili Muslims and a sense of identity and belonging expressed by the indigenous Wanga people" (Mwakimako,2008:429). The Wanga Kingdom, as I will show, played an important role in the establishment of Islam in the wider region in general, and Mumias in particular. While there have been considerable studies on the neighboring Kingdoms such as Buganda, there is no extensive research on the Kingdom of Wanga. There is also little written works on the person and leadership of king Mumia. Furthermore, the role of the Wanga Kingdom in the spread of Islam in Western Kenya has received only limited attention by scholars (Were, 1967; Mwakimako, 2003: 423).

When the Arab/Swahili traders arrived during the reign of Shiundu, the King of Wanga (1841-82), they referred to the place as "*kwa sundu*". His son, Mumia, succeeded him to the throne in 1882. The precise date of the establishment of the Wanga Kingdom is not available in the literature. When the Europeans arrived, they found Mumia ruling the Wanga Kingdom and, thus, named the place Mumias. Mumias town and the surrounding region took after the name of the King who ruled until his death in 1949 (Were, 1967:119).

In the colonial period, the area called Mumias was part of the Eastern Province of Uganda. The people in this province were mainly the Luo and Luhya ethnic groups. Other groups in this province were the Gusii, Kalenjin-speaking people, Iteso and

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Wakwavi (Kenyanchui, 1992:25). In 1902 this province ceased being part of the Uganda Protectorate when it was incorporated into Kenya.[11]

Gideon Were, citing the explorer Thomson, argues that Islam arrived in Mumias between 1841 and 1868 (Were, 1967:121). Shilaro corroborates this when he notes that the Arab/Swahili arrived in the region in 1857(Shilaro, 1991:89). In a map drawn by Charles New, there is a place of rest for caravans called *kwa Sundu* (*Swahili* for place of Shiundu, father of King Mumia) (New, 1971). Salim provides a slightly later date for the arrival of Muslims in Mumias. He argues that it was not until 1870 that the *Swahili* routes through Maasailand became established (Salim, 1973:32). In general, then, the Arab/Swahili established early contact with the people of Western Kenya, especially the Wanga from the second half of the nineteenth century.

By 1868, the presence of the Arab/Swahili in the Wanga Kingdom was most certain (Dealing, 1974:30). The precise dates when the first Muslims arrived in Mumias are not given in literature. The first Muslims to arrive in Mumias may have been a Mr. Mkuta, an ivory trader followed by Sudi, a Nyamwezi from Pangani who "baptized" Muhammed Mumia.[12] Both traders died at Itingale. The third group of arrivals consisted of Mwalimu Nasibu, Mwalimu Swalehe, Mwalimu Kombo, Majengo, and Ndusi (Were, 1967:121). The designation "Mwalimu" may be a pointer to the teaching and preaching role of these first Muslims.[13] Apart from the reported conversion of King Mumia, however, I could not find records of the earliest converts to Islam in this period. In an oral interview with the immediate former Grand Imam of *Jamia* Mosque, Mumias, he mentioned the following early converts to Islam: Ali Wamukoya, Suleiman Fwaya and Abdalla Omwitati.[14]

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[11] In the late 1800's European nations began their scramble for Africa. During the Berlin Conference of 1885, the nations divided among themselves various parts of Africa depending on their interests; Britain took the biggest share with the region of East Africa being declared a British Protectorate. It was further sub-divided into British East Africa (present day Kenya) (July 1st 1995) and Uganda Protectorate Present day Uganda (June 10th 1884).

[12] The use of the Christian term "baptised" may refer to the reported conversion of Mumia to Islam to be discussed later.

[13] In the course of my research of Muslim public preachers in Mumias, I noticed that they were sometimes referred to as Mwalimu. This same designation is used in Christian circles in Mumias in reference to church evangelists or lay readers. The terms carry notions of religious authority with it.

[14] Oral Interview with Muhammed Bakari Wanga, 20th October 2012

2.2.2 The Political factor in the Reception of Islam

The Muslims were accorded a warm reception by Mumia's father Shiundu (1841-1882) (Were, 1967:121, Dealing, 1974:291-92; Mwakimako, 2008). Shiundu's son Mumia succeeded his father in 1882 and was also positive towards Muslims. He allowed Muslims access to all parts of the Kingdom for trade and religious activities. Dealing reports that Mumia employed Muslims as butchers and regularly drank with them (Dealing, 1974:291-292). According to Kenyanchui, the Swahili and Arab Muslims in Mumias were circumcisers, advisors, and medicine men. They also worked as tax collectors and clerks for the colonial administration (Kenyanchui, 1992:34).

The Swahili were well established at the court of Nabongo Mumia by 1878. It is partly Mumia's personal rapport with the Arab and Swahili guests which may have contributed to his conversion to Islam. Bishop Tucker, an Anglican Bishop who passed through Mumias later in 1892, noted with a degree of cynicism that we can discount: "Mumia was in the grip of the Arab and Swahili traders from the Coast who exploited him for their own benefit" (Richards, 1956:8). During one (*'īd al-fitr),*(festivity of breaking the fast) occasion of which the dating is not provided, the Arabs and Swahili traders made a courtesy visit to Mumia's court. At around this time, Mumia converted to Islam and adopted the name Muhammad Mumia (Wolf, 1977:133).

The friendship which Mumia extended to the Muslims and their access to trading opportunities may largely account for the powerful presence of Islam in Mumias today. Mumia was both a political and religious leader whose word was taken seriously by his subjects. As a political leader, he provided the much needed security to the traders who traversed his Kingdom in search of slaves and ivory. As a religious leader, Mumia embodied the Wanga traditional religion and kept all the religious symbols under his custody. His conversion to Islam, therefore, had a huge influence on his subjects leading to their conversion to Islam. According to Hassan Mwakimako, it was during the reign of Mumia, that Islam gained ground. He invited Muslim traders into the town and allowed them full access to his Kingdom (Mwakimako, 2008: 428).

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The religious and cultural influence of the Arab and Swahili Muslims in Mumias is attested to by various sources. When Thompson and Martin passed through *Wanga* on his way to Uganda in 1883, they found that "Islam had become the religion of the royal family" (Lonsdale, 1964:180-181). By around 1890, when Carl Peter arrived in the Wanga Kingdom, he commented that "The Islamic demeanour had extended into dress and language of the local population" (Dealing, 1974:280). In the same year, Lugard met Mumia and observed, "He spoke in fairly good Swahili" (Perham, 1959, 397; Osogo, 1966:9). Sperling has noted that by the 1890s a "small but thriving Muslim trading community had been consolidated at Mumias" (Sperling, 2000:291). Much later in 1902 Richard also citing Crabtree noted the influence of Islam on Mumia:

> Imagine... my intense surprise when a tall man greeted us, wearing a long white *kanzu* and over that, a long black coat reaching to the feet… Numbers of his followers, young men and boys… Many of them can speak Swahili, though Mumia's is no longer on the Caravan route [italics, mine] (Richards, 1956; 8).

The openness with which Mumia welcomed the Muslims in Mumias cannot be divorced from the king's politics. King Mumia was a powerful leader who was interested in preserving his power. Owino notes that the Wanga were under strong military pressure from the Jo-Ugenya, Abanyala, Batsotso, and the Bukusu. On the other hand, the Arab/Swahili needed Mumia's support to establish an operational base for hunting game and slaves (Owino, 2002:50). According to John Arnsworth, the provincial commissioner of Nyanza:

> The Arabs and *Swahili* used to join forces with more powerful chiefs for looting and raiding weaker sections of their community … Mumia joined the league to help him crush his powerful neighbours (PC.NZA.1/1/4, 1908-09).

Gideon Were also reports that Mumia did not just ask the Arabs/*Swahili* for guns, he also sought for their direct involvement in the battles (Were, 1967:128). As a result of his alliance with the Swahili, Mumia's military and political strength grew rapidly. Archer, a colonial administrator noted that Mumia was regarded by the natives as Paramount Chief of the District and that his influence extended across the Uganda border and to the people on the slopes of Elgon (cited in Kenyanchui, 1992). K.R. Ndundas who succeeded Archer in April 1909 had an equally high regard for Mumia and wrote, "Mumia's position resembles very much that of the Kings of Buganda, and is distinctly on a different footing to that of an ordinary chief" (Kenyanchui, 1992).

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Clearly, Mumia's military and political power arising out of his alliance with Muslims contributed to the presence of Islam in Mumias. To the local people, the religion of Islam was powerful not just in terms of trade but militarily as well. Members of Mumia's family, especially his brothers who were appointed as governors in various parts of the Kingdom also converted to Islam and in turn introduced this tradition where they ruled. With this arrangement, the Arab and Swahili traders were now able to extend their influence beyond Mumias.

Although the co-operation between the Arab and Swahili traders and the Wanga kingship facilitated the spread of Islam, it was also an impediment to the further spread of Islam among other groups. Gilpin has noted that the Wanga formed an alliance with the Swahilitraders, which they used to expand their influence over other Luyia groups and establish a form of paramouncy in the area (Gilpin, 1976:3). Some Luhya sub-tribes like the Bukusu resented this Wanga hegemony, and by extension also Islam.[15] Only a few Bukusu embraced Islam in the initial years (Nasambu, 2001:37). Nasambu notes that the Bukusu demanded the removal of Wanga chiefs in the 1920s (Nasambu, 2001:37). Kenyanchui states that Islam was not popular to non-Wanga Luhya mainly because Muslims were associated with cunning and corrupt practices (Kenyanchui, 1992:35). Thompson noted in 1883 that when the Bukusu saw him they ran away in terror because they feared that, like the Arab and Swahili, he had come to capture them as slaves (Thompson, 1887: 278). This fear was based on the fact the Arab and Swahili traders used Mumias as a base for making incursions into other parts of western Kenya to capture slaves. Today one can still hear people commenting on the role of the "Muslims" in slave trade in the region. These suspicious relations between Muslims and other traditions laid the earliest foundations for Muslim-Christian competition in Western Kenya.

Apart from the royal family of Mumias, there were other players in the early development of Islam in Mumias. These included the immigrant noble, Swahili (*sharif*)families and leading indigenous families in Mumias (Mwakimako, 2008:424-443). Sharif Umar b. Abd Allah was one of the *Kadhis* in Mumias during the colonial era

[15] The *Bukusu* are a sub-tribe of the larger Luhya ethnic group. They neighbour the Wanga to the north.

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(Mwakimako, 2007:82). He was among the most visible personalities because of his activities of *daʿwah* and teaching among the Wanga in 1902 (Mwakimako, 2008:430). The strong presence of Arab Muslims in the Wanga Kingdom led to contestation over leadership between indigenous and Arab Muslims. According to Mwakimako, "as a centre of an African aristocracy, Mumias was under the control of Paramount Chiefs from the Wanga clans. These envied and sometimes resented the position of Kadhi held by Sharif Umar and demanded the appointment of a member of their group to the post" (Mwakimako, 2008:431).

Islam impacted on the Wanga traditional religious system. Before the coming of Islam, the *Wanga* people had their own indigenous religious systems. The *Wanga* regarded *Nyasaye* (God) to be the creator and ruler of the universe. In daily life, people did not feel his influence in a similar way as they felt the influence of other gods. *Nyasaye* was considered too mighty and exalted to take an interest in human affairs. Thompson, an early traveller reported, "The worship of their ancestors, coupled with the deity, is the basis of their formal religion" (cited in Richards, 1956:6). There were various shrines dedicated to various spirits (*emisambwa*) where the Wanga people paid homage through offering sacrifices. Some clans among the Wanga, for example, the Abashitsetse had totems. The Abashitsetse clan of the Wanga held the bushbuck to be their totem. A totem was a sacred animal which played a special role among the people and was the centre of reverence. Nobody was allowed to kill or eat a totem as it was the embodiment of the clan. The *Wanga* people practiced various rituals in the course of a person's lifecycle. Circumcision was an important rite of passage. Gideon Were reports that "no uncircumcised person can be installed as King (he would have to be circumcised first, usually about three months after the death of the older ruler)" (Were, 1967:109).

When the Muslims introduced the idea of Allah who was similarly exalted and invisible, they found an already existing concept of belief in one supreme God. This made Islam easily understood and acceptable among the people. The Islamic practice of circumcision also acted as a bridge between the Wanga and Muslims. The practice of polygamy by Muslims also resonated with a similar practice among the Wanga. There were, thus, similarities between aspects of Islam and Wanga traditional religion, which enhanced the spread of Islam.

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The Arab and Swahili Muslims did not also insist on strict adherence to all aspects of Islamic law lest they offended the local leadership. For example, they ignored the application of Islamic inheritance rules. The traditional practice of clan ownership of land was so entrenched that Islamic property ownership was not followed. The Wanga had a very strong, almost spiritual, understanding of land. Land was not merely a commodity but a symbolic entity connecting the community to their ancestors. Land was owned and utilized by the entire community. The Wanga could not accept Islamic law on property ownership that presupposed individual ownership of land. Therefore, in spite of their conversion to Islam, the people of Wanga continued to use indigenous customary law in certain aspects of their lives. This creative and sensitive encounter between the Muslims and the local people enhanced the presence of Islam in Mumias. This process made the new religion acceptable to the local people. Lewis noted that:

> ...as long as traditional beliefs can be adjusted in such a way they fall into place within a Muslim schema in which the absoluteness of Allah remains unquestioned, Islam does not ask its new adherents to abandon confidence in all their mystical forces (Lewis, 1966:58-75).

Today the public presence of Islam in Mumias is unmistakable. Any visitor to this town will quickly notice the various aspects of Islamic influence. Many people, including children, wear *Kanzus* and Islamic caps. Several shops and institutions bear Islamic names. These include: *Tawakal* Hotel, Nawal Agro Vet, Rehema M-pesa and *Jamia* Medical Centre among others. One distinctive feature in Mumias which is not evident in the neighbouring towns such Bungoma, Kakamega and Busia is the absence of a single pork-selling shop. I was informed that earlier attempts to have such shops were met with strong resistance from the Muslim population forcing the owners to close down the enterprises.[16]

There are several mosques in the town and its environs, all Sunni in orientation. They include *Jamia* Mosque first built in 1898 and renovated in 1947 and 1990 (Mwakimako, 2007:82). This Mosque is the oldest in the whole of Western Kenya region and was frequented by Muslims from as far as Kimilili, Kakamega and Bungoma.[17] The land upon

[16] Interview with Jackson Chitechi, Mumias, 13th August 2011.
[17] Interview with Imam Omar Mombo, 20th October, 2012

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which the present mosque stands was donated by a local Muslim by the name Omar Omulisia. According to Imam Muhammed Bakari Wanga, the Mosque was built through the support of the East African Muslim Welfare Association that donated money to build Muslim primary school and two residential houses for Islamic teachers.[18] The various *Imams* who have worked at Jamia Mosque are: Sharif Omar, Maalim Abubakr, Sharif Kassim, Sheikh Seif Wangara assisted by Osman Nalianya, Abubakr Gangu and Muhammed Bakari.

The second oldest Mosque located in Lukoye Mumias is Sheikh Khalifa. This Mosque was built in 1982 in order to make it easier for Muslims in that area to worship. Mzee Akida, a local Muslim donated the land where this mosque stands. Sheikh Khalifa, after whom the mosque is named, was based in Mombasa and raised money towards the construction of the Mosque. The permission to build the mosque was given by the main Jamia Mosque in Mumias. The first Imam at this Mosque was Sheikh Akida. His son Akida also worked as Imam at the Mosque in an acting capacity. The present Imam is Omar Mombo.[19]

There are several other Mosques which have been built in Mumias area with varied histories behind their emergence. These include: Shibale, Ekero, Mwitoti, Khunyiri, Khaunga, Emakunda, Eshitukhumi, Enyapora, Matawa, Ebwaliro, and Ichinga among others. Most of the mosques mentioned have fully fledged *madrasas* (Islamic schools). Muslims are also running various institutions in Mumias town. These include a Muslim girl's secondary school whose expansion has been supported by funds from Saudi Arabia.[20] The others are the Muslim mixed secondary school and the *Jamia* Medical Health Centre. There are many Muslims engaged in various commercial endeavours in Mumias. There is a Muslim cemetery enclosed by a wall where Muslim burials are conducted. The cemetery has a structure within it for washing the bodies before burial. There are various other Muslim welfare groups that are engaged in various activities, ranging from sinking of water wells for the community to organizing of workshops on good sanitation.

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[18] Interview with Muhammed Bakari, Grand Imam, Jamia Mosque, 20th October 2012.
[19] Interview with Imam Omar Mombo, 20th October, 2012.
[20] Oral Interview with Isa Mombo, 21st October 2012, Mumias.

The foregoing discussion has focussed on the introduction of Islam in Mumias. I have demonstrated that this process started at the East African coast as early as the thirteenth century. The political interests of King Mumia combined with traders and religious experts played an important role in this process. Because of its strategic location on a trade route and the existence of an indigenous political Kingdom, the Arabs and Swahili traders made in-roads into Mumias. I have also shown the role of King Mumia in welcoming Muslims and in its establishment. A flexible attitude to Wanga traditional religions was instrumental in bridging the gap between the two traditions. Because of this process, the local people embraced Islam whose influence was evident in dress, language, and use of Islamic names. I have also shown that the introduction of Islam in Mumias and the wider region was not uniform. Some communities such as the Bukusu associated Muslims with the infamous slave trade. Such perceptions provided an early background to conflict and competition between Muslims and Christians in Western region in general and Mumias in particular.

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2.3 The Introduction of Christianity East Africa

Christianity was first introduced to East Africa by the Portuguese. The broader context of this process was the competition between Christians and Islam at the Coast. The Portuguese were inspired by Henry the Navigator's goal of taking over Muslim lands while the Muslims saw the Christian new comers as "infidels". According to John Baur "... encounters between Portuguese and Arabs on both sides of the Indian Ocean took place in the spirit of crusade and Jihad, the holy wars of Christians and Muslims" (Baur, 1994:86). Vasco da Gama arrived at the coast in 1498 accompanied by Catholic missionaries. In 1593 the Portuguese began to build Fort Jesus on the Island of Mombasa. They, then, started their work of converting the local people in Mombasa and Malindi.

There are variant reports on the impact of this early missionary activity at the coast. Barrett reports that 600 people were converted (Barrett, 1973:21). Kuhn provides a much higher figure of conversions, pointing to one Augustinian administrator in

Mombasa in 1624 who reported to his Archbishop in Goa that in Mombasa and the towns of Faza and Pate, one thousand Black Christians had converted, with five hundred of these in Zanzibar and a "large number" in Kilwa (Kuhn, 2008:9). Mwaura's evaluation of this first phase of Christian missionary work at the coast concludes that it was a failure. This "failure" is attributed to a number of factors, including rivalry between the various Catholic orders, lack of catechesis (teaching), superficial conversions and mistreatment of local people by the Portuguese (Mwaura, 2004:160).

The second phase of the introduction of Christianity in East Africa took place in the middle of the nineteenth century. This phase seems to have had more lasting effect on the religious landscape of East Africa. Dr Johann Ludwig Krapf, a Lutheran from Germany working with the Church Mission Society (CMS), arrived at the Palace of the Sultan of Zanzibar in 1844 and moved to Mombasa "to convert the unbelieving world" (Baur, 1994: 224).[21] Among Krapf's strategies of outreach was the translation of the New Testament into *Swahili*, the language of the local people.

The process of the exploration and colonization of East Africa added a new impetus to missionary work. According to Pirouet, European powers seized large areas of the interior of Africa so as to secure their trading interests on the coast (Pirouet, 1989:132). Missionaries were only able to enter these areas after they were conquered. The missionaries were continuously in need of protection from the colonial governments. During this period, more Protestant and Catholic societies from Europe and North America settled in various parts of East Africa. The construction of the railway opened a flood of missions into Western Kenya leading to competition between Christians and Muslims. There was suspicion and competition among the various Christian groups as well. Anglican and Catholic missionaries disdained other Christian groups and viewed "Christianity as practiced by other denominations as bad as Islam" (Wolf, 1977:162). According to John Baur, "...there was an agreed rule that the various missions restrict themselves to "separate spheres of Influence" (Baur, 1994:256). However, with time, it proved difficult to uphold this agreement due to "a growing migration of workers that

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[21] Krapf and Rebmann were German pastors from Wuerttemberg. They were members of a pietist tradition of the Local Lutheran church. The British Church Missionary Society (CMS) gave them the possibility of being missionaries in Africa. This appears to have been a normal practice for CMS to recruit non-Anglicans to serve as missionaries (From Rabai to Mumias, Provincial Unit of Research, Nairobi:1)

threatened to undermine the agreed rule..."(Baur, 1994:256). We can, therefore, discern from this early period, tension not just between Christians and Islamic groups but also intra-Christian suspicions and tensions among the various Christian groups such as Anglicans and Catholics, Anglicans and Pentecostals and so on.

2.3.1 Establishment of Christianity in Mumias

The missionaries regarded Islam as a serious threat to the spread of Christianity. Islam had become the accepted religion of most of the *Wanga* Chiefs and headmen, who were used very extensively in the administration of North Kavirondo (Wolf, 1977:162). Richard argues that the "rapid advance" of Islam influenced the emergence of numerous missions in Kavirondo. He states: "It was this fact of the rapidly advancing Muslim religion that first awakened the Christian Church to its responsibilities" (Richards, 1956:9).

Early Church Missionary Society (CMS) records of proceedings also point to the interest that Anglicans had in establishing themselves in Mumias because of the construction of the railway and the need to combat 'Mohammedans'. CMS missionaries commissioned Mr Chadwick to go to Mumias for three months to prepare ground for work to "stop Mohamedan influence" (CMS Proceedings, 22nd May 1912). The missionaries expressed fear over what they saw as the spread of Islam, and sought to combat this through the establishment of Christian institutions. The stated aim of Bishop Willis was:

> To protect the eastern and N.E borders of the Diocese by a chain of Christian schools, which he is convinced, are the best defence against the *advance of Islam* [my emphasis]. At present the weakest point in the protection line is Mumia's District (CMS Proceedings, 22nd May 1912).

2.3.2King Mumia and Christian Missions

The role of King Mumia in the spread of Christianity in Mumias is yet to be documented. Although Mumia was friendly to Muslims and enhanced the spread of Islam, he also played an indirect role in the expansion of Christianity in Mumias. I will show Mumia supported Christian missionaries because of the political benefits that could be derived

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from such support. Mumia was indirectly instrumental in the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Mumias. He also influenced the establishment of the Anglican Church in Mumias. As King, there was no way the missionaries could have established mission stations in Mumias without his "permission". Because of his receptive attitude towards the missionaries various religious institutions were established in Mumias.

The Catholic Mill Hill Fathers approached King Mumia and requested to be allowed to establish a base in Mumias. This was granted and a Catholic Mission station was built in 1895. The use of religious education in evangelization through the local cultural idiom was evident in the neighbouring Catholic parish. The Priest in charge employed Sunday school instruction through question and answer sessions and the settling of disputes, "that were attractively framed within traditional songs and dances" (Baur, 1994:259). Mumias became an important centre for the presence of Catholicism in the Western province of Kenya. Wolf reports: "Originally people who desired to be baptized had to attend a two years course at Mumias, where they were forced to live at the mission station" (Wolf, 1977:163).

The Anglican CMS established themselves at Mount Elgon in 1894. They then entered at Maragoli Hills in 1905 before moving to Maseno in 1906. Finally, they built a station at Butere near Mumias in 1911. The Reverend John Jamieson Willis was the first Anglican missionary sent by C.M.S. to serve in Maseno until he was called back to Kampala to become a bishop. It has been noted by scholars that Willis was a strong advocate for indigenized Christianity (Hoehler-Fatton, 1996:15).

Later, Archdeacon Walter Chadwick, also from CMS, came to Nabongo Mumia and requested to be allowed to begin an Anglican Church in Mumias.[22] Mumia told him that the Catholics were already in Mumias and sent him to his brother, Chief Mulama, who ruled in Marama, Kisa and Bunyore. Chadwick introduced the Anglican Church in Namasoli, Butere, in 1911 and the present site of the Butere Diocesan headquarters in 1912.[23]Butere is a district neighbouring Mumias.

[22] This Information is available in undated booklet entitled, 10th Anniversary Celebrations: Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Mumias. Theo booklet was produced in 2003.
[23] Chadwick's Annual Letter "A Journey of Prospecting" CMS Archives, Birmingham".At Butere, 10 miles from Mumia's headquarter... as many as 300 persons are sometimes present at the Sunday morning Service. At one

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From Butere, the Anglican Church was introduced in Mumias. There are reports of their having been one outstation in Mumias, with four male African lay agents. There was no communicant or baptised persons at this early stage. However, there were nine catechumens (‘Proceedings of CMS,’ 1913-1914). There are reports of rivalry between the Anglicans and Catholics in Mumias. A Roman Catholic Evangelist, Joseph Tunguta who was a son of Mumia arrested Anglican Christians and sent them to the District Commissioner in Mumias.[24] The earliest Anglican parishes in Mumias area were established in Lubinu (1953), Namulungu (1957) and Musanda (1973).

It is important to reflect back on the circumstances under which Mumia gave support to Christian missionaries. His closeness to the colonial authorities and by extension Christian missionaries must be understood against the background of the military challenges he was facing. During the period from 1885 to 1914, most of Western Kenya came under colonial rule. The relationship between the Wanga and their neighbours deteriorated in the course of the 19th century and on the eve of the British colonial rule (Kenyanchui, 1992:28). Around 1892, the Luo, a Nilotic group neighbouring the Wanga, Swahili, and Maasai at Mumias, became more ambitious and wanted to expand trade in ivory and in slaves. The Maasai, on the other hand, were keen on intensifying cattle raids in neighbouring Wanga (Kenyanchui, 1992:28). During the same period, King Sakwa, Mumia’s brother, had set up a rival Kingdom in the northern part of Wanga. He soon challenged Mumia by signing a treaty with a German traveller Carl Peters, effectively making Nyanza a Germany Protectorate. All these developments stretched Mumia’s military capabilities. Owino states that Mumia’s military expeditions against his neighbours and especially the Ugenya clan of the neighbouring Luo, with the support of the Arab/Swahili, was not going on well. The King was eager to gain military support

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time the attendance was affected by a small market, opened rather near the church, which developed into a sort of fair on Sundays, and drew away some of the adherents. In order to counteract this tendency the members of the congregation were sometimes asked to assemble earlier than usual, and then go in procession to the crossroads near the fair for a preliminary open air service, at which an invitation was given to all present to accompany the procession when it reformed and returned to church. The congregation at Namasoli 5 miles from Butere, where the work is carried on by an honorary teacher, at times numbered 350, necessitating a new building in which to hold services, since the old one would accommodate about 75 people. Among the adherents there was ‘manifest progress in the practice of Christianity’. Some of them evidently realised more than before the privilege of prayer, and many persevered in attendance at school and classes (From “ Proceedings of C.M.S” CMS Archives, Birmingham 1913-1914

[24] Undated booklet “10th Anniversary Celebrations: Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Mumias”.

from the British (Owino, 2011:74). He was, thus, eager to co-operate with Christian missionaries. When Fredrick Lugard visited Mumias in the same period he noted in his diary that Mumia wanted to buy guns from him in exchange for ivory. When Carl Peters visited Mumias earlier in 1890, he was accorded "extravagant welcome" by Mumia upon which he was asked about assistance against Wangaenemies (Owino, 2011:74). Thus after 1899, King Mumia allowed the British to settle in Mumias. The missionaries came along.

Richards argues that the Church Missionary Socitety (CMS) was indebted to Chief Mumia for allowing them to rest and relax in Mumias (Richards, 1956: 8). When in 1885 the CMS sent James Hannington, their first East African Anglican Bishop, he passed through Mumias on his way from Mombasa to Uganda. Mumia accorded him armed escort on his journey (Owino, 2011:175). Richards reports that:

> One hundred and fifty of Bishop Hannigton's men stayed behind at Mumia's village near Butere while the Bishop went on to prepare the way to Uganda. Among them was a Yao, the Rev. W.H. Jones, [who had been rescued from a slave-ship]... (Richards, 1956:2).

Hannington subsequently met his death at the hands of the Baganda for defying Kabaka Mutesa's injunctions prohibiting foreigners from entering his Kingdom from the east. On learning of the death of Bishop Hannington, Mumia dispatched Wanga porters to fetch his body from Busoga. A local person from Mumias known as Otsyalo helped arrange to carry the body of Hannington from Busoga back to Mumias (Richards, 1956:2). Bishop Hannington's remains were buried in Mumias two kilometres from Mumia's court.

In September 1892, Bishop Tucker, the third Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa stayed at Mumias on his way to Uganda. After viewing the body of his predecessor, Bishop Hannington, and its exhumation, Tucker went ahead with his journey, "thinking and praying for the whole people of Kavirondo" (Richards, 1956:4). Similarly, in 1898, a missionary from Usukuma in German East Africa had remained for two months at Mumia's court. He was wounded and ill, as he waited for the road to Uganda, which was blocked due to a Sudanese Mutiny, to open again (Richards, 1956:8). Mumias's body was later exhumed and transported to his native England. An Anglican

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Church was later founded at this site in Mumias. Mumia, thus, played a determining role in the establishment of the Anglican Church in Mumias.

Mumia also went out of his way to support the British politically and in turn gained politically as well. According to Bethwel Ogot, between 1893 and 1908, Mumia collaborated with the British in "pacifying" much of Western Kenya (Ogot, 1971:95). From around 1908; the Wanga assisted the British in the establishment of a colonial administration. The British bestowed upon Nabongo Mumia the nominal title of "Paramount Chief" on 15th November, 1909. Horne even claimed in 1913 "Mumia may be said to owe his position to Government support" (Kenya National Archives, PRB/187-DC/NN.3/5).

With this close relationship between British colonial power and Mumias, numerous Christian churches and other social institutions in the town and the wider region were established. Obviously, the Anglican Church has a strong presence in Mumias. With its Diocesan head offices barely a walking distance from Mumias town, this Church built Bishop Hannington Cathedral in 1966. This church was named after the slain Bishop mentioned above. The Anglican Church has over 40 parishes in various parts of Mumias. Next to the Anglican Cathedral in Mumias is a cemetery where graves of early colonial administrators and missionaries can be found. The most recent grave in this cemetery is that of Bishop William Wesa who died in 2001. Bishop Hannington Teachers Training College, founded in 2009, is the latest educational institution of the Church. This college prepares people to be primary school teachers. The Anglicans also have several church sponsored educational and medical facilities around Mumias. With a strong heritage of engagement in the public sphere since the colonial period, the local Anglican Bishops are well known for their regular comments on matters affecting the welfare of the local people.

On a Sunday morning one cannot fail to notice adherents in a hurry to join the first mass at the local St Peter's Catholic Parish for the early morning mass. This church was established by the Mill Hill Fathers in 1902. There are several institutions which the Roman Catholic Church has founded in Mumias. St Peter's Boys' primary school was established in 1929. There is also the St Mary's Mission Hospital founded in 1932 by

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nuns from Bergen in Holland. This hospital has also established a teaching facility called St Mary's School of Clinical Medicine where clinicians are trained. Next to the hospital stands a secondary school for girls known as St Mary's, founded in 1952. St Peter's Boys Secondary School was founded in 1958. Other Church-sponsored institutions include St Judes Technical College, Mumias Vocational School for Deaf Girls and Catechist Training Centre. All these educational institutions are managed under the umbrella of the Catholic Diocese of Kakamega. The Parish Catholic priest who is an appointee of the Bishop is represented on most boards in order to ensure that the interests of the Church are upheld. There are other mainline churches that have a significant presence in Mumias. These include: Salvation Army (1990), Seventh Day Adventist (1998), Church of God (2002) and Friends Church (2005).

The emergence and development of Pentecostal Churches in Mumias is also unmistakable. Most of these churches emerged after the year 2000 and are continuing to grow. The Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) may be the oldest Pentecostal church in Mumias. This church was established in 1984 and is situated directly opposite Sheikh Khalifa Mosque in Lukoye. Other Pentecostal churches in Mumias include: Chrisco (1994), Full Gospel Church(1995),Pentecostal Church of East Africa (2000),Pentecostal Fellowship of Africa (2001), *Utatu* Gospel Church (2003), New Testament God (2005), Glory Faith Church (2007), Believers Church (2008), Bible Way Ministries (2009), Faith Arena Ministries (2010),Kings Outreach Ministries (2011),Gospel Pentecostal Church (2011), Repentance and Holiness (2011), El Bethel (2011), Ushindi (2011). Pentecostal churches in Mumias are well known because of their charismatic worship styles that includes the use of powerful electronic gadgets. Most worship services typically begin with about thirty minutes of "worship music" led by a band. This is followed by a brief moment of prayer where everyone in attendance joins in a chorus- like prayer which finally closes with one prayer led by one person. Pentecostal churches are engaged in various forms of social ministries, although smaller in scale compared to the Catholics and Anglicans. These include small academies within the church compounds, micro-credit facilities among the worshippers, and visits to those in various needs such as sickness and bereavement. Apart from loud music and preaching, the public presence of Pentecostalism in Mumias is also evident through posters announcing "crusades", banners, and billboards all pointing to one event or another.

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2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the introduction of Islam and Christianity in Mumias. Both traditions entered Kenya and later Mumias in a historical context of the politics, trade and mission work. The Sultanate of Zanzibar established a base in East Africa that promoted the establishment of Islam. The sultanate also formed the foundation upon which British influence in the latter part of the 19th century, andthe establishment of a protectorate and later a colony would work. Christian missions would later accompany the Europeans colonialists. King Mumia endeared himself to both Muslim traders and Christian missionaries to expand his rule. Through his conversion to Islam and the support he gave Christian missionaries, both traditions were established in the region. The chapter has also discussed the effects of the introduction of Islam in Mumias including *Swahili* language, Islamic dress code and names, Islamic cuisines and institutions such as the Kadhi court. The proliferation of various religious, educational and medical institutions attests to the far-reaching effects of Christianity in Mumias as well.

By the time Christian missions penetrated Western Kenya in the late twentieth century, they found Islam already well established. There was, thus, an uneasy relationship between Muslims and Christians. Christian missionaries, in particular, were wary of the strong presence and "advance" of Islam in Mumias. Because of a desire to combat Muslims, Christian missionaries established Christian institutions in Mumias. The missionaries regarded Mumias to be the weakest point in the "protection line" and endeavoured to counter the spread of Islam. Therefore tension between the two traditions has a longstanding history.

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CHAPTER 3: HISTORY OF PREACHING IN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

3.1 Introduction

Sermons occupy a central place in the practices of Islam. The sound of the Friday *khutbah* (sermon) emerging from a loud speaker hoisted on top of *Jamia* Mosque is a powerful indicator of the presence of Islam.[25] On special festivals such as 'Īd al-fiṭr, Muslims will be seen gathering at the football field at Muslim Primary School to make special prayers and listen to the *khutbah*. Sometimes after the prayers, they will engage in animated discussions on some aspect of the sermon. Tayob has noted the "disagreement" among earlier Islamic scholars on the timing of a sermon during Friday prayers (Tayob, 1999:115). However, he also notes that the "*minbar* and sermon exude authority as no other symbols in Islam" (Tayob, 1999:115). According to Gaffney, the sermon is "...a major indicator and pre-eminent vehicle of ...[the] religious-political resurgence" of Islamic tradition (Gaffney, 1988:111). Apart from Mosque sermons, public preaching (*mihadhara*) is an increasingly common phenomenon in the wider East African region in general (Chande, 2000:349; Chesworth, 2006:168, Loimeier,2007:145).[26]

For Christians, the sermon is also important. I can recall my mother getting unhappy for missing the "*amakambo*[27]" (the sermon) because of having to walk for a long distance to her local Church. Christians also appraise the quality of preaching by their pastors. Sixteenth century Protestant reformation with its focus on *solascriptura* (scripture alone!), placed a strong premium on the "word of God" being preached among Protestants. According to Edwards, "There is no activity more characteristic of the church than preaching" (Edward: 2004:3). Public preaching by Christians (commonly known as "crusades") is a common feature on the East African religious landscape

[25] *Khuṭbah* refers to a sermon address by the *khaṭīb* (preacher).
[26] Chesworth, J (2006) offers some insights into the etymology the Swahili word "*mihadhara*" defining them as a lecture, a public talk, and discourse. He further argues that *mihadhara* has gained a wider popular usage for public meetings; this includes meetings for community, political and religious purposes (pp.168-169).
[27] *Luhya* (*Kinyore*-sub-tribe) term for preaching

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(Shorter and Njiru, 2001:18; Gifford, 2009:139). Open air sermons are a common phenomenon in Mumias.

This chapter provides a broad historical outline on the development of preaching in Christianity and Islam from their inception to the contemporary period. It identifies the characteristic features of the sermon and argues that it has undergone various transformations. Open-air preaching has been more common in the contemporary period as a form of outreach. In Christianity, open-air preaching has become part of mission. Similarly, open-air informal preaching has become a central part of *daʿwah*.

3.2 Foundations of Preaching in Christianity

The development of Christian preaching can be traced back to the Jewish and Greco-Roman culture. In this section, I will show how this background shaped the sermon. I will also discuss how the apostolic, medieval and reformation processes impacted on preaching. There are other movements in history that impacted on the sermon. These include: pietism, revival and the eighteenth century revival. Finally, I reflect on the emergence of free preaching in East Africa.

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3.2.1 Pre - Christian Influences

There have been several works on the earliest history of preaching. According to White, contemporary preaching has origins in Jewish and Greco-Roman preaching (White, 1980:152). Edward argues that these early foundations shaped the technical vocabulary about oratory and its analysis (Edward, 2004:12). In the Jewish context, the sermon served nationalistic aspirations of the Jews particularly their need for survival and maintenance of identity during exile (White, 1980:152). Jews celebrated God's actions through reflection on that history (White, 1980:153). Such reflection also helped transmit that history (White, 1980:153).

In the New Testament, preaching was closely associated with Jesus and his earliest followers. Jesus read a text from the prophet Isaiah and preached in a Synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-28). Preaching also took place in Pisidian Antioch, where "after the

reading of the law and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue" invited Paul and companions to speak (Acts 13:15) (White, 1980:154). The eleven apostles were sent to preach on rooftops and streets together with their companions (Matt.10.27; Luke 12.3, Matt.28.16-20; Mark 16.14-20). Preaching focused on various themes such as the cross (1 Cor.1.23), the resurrection (Rom. 10.8-9), the second coming of Christ (Acts 10.42) and repentance and belief in the risen Lord (White, 1980:153). Unlike in Judaism, Christian sermons had a strong missionary motive. They aimed at extending the Christian community (Acts 2.14-36; 10:34-8; 17.19-31). According to Edwards, evangelistic preaching "through the ages ... has been a major activity of the church, especially as new populations have become open to the extension of the Christian community" (Edwards, 2004:774). The listeners were challenged to forsake their religious alliances such as Judaism and Paganism and embrace Christianity.

3.2.2 Historical developments

After the apostolic period, the earliest Christian sermons included the sermon of 2 Clement and Origen in the second half of the second century (White, 1980:154-55). The Capaddocians presented homilies (a commentary that follows the reading of scripture) while Chrysostom and Augustine performed catechetical and doctrinal sermons respectively.

The writing of Justin Martyr (c.150) entitled *First Apology* sheds some light on the nature of the sermon. It involved the Sunday practice of reading from the Prophets of the 'memoirs of the apostles' (the Gospels) (Cyril Richardson, cited in White, 1980:154-55). In his book entitled A *History of Preaching*, Edward argues that texts in the mid to late second century were written for oral delivery and involved thematic expositions, catechetical (teaching) explanations, or mystagogy (teaching for the newly baptized) (Edward, 2004:15).

Several studies have been conducted on the nature and effects of the medieval period on the sermon. In an article entitled "G.R. Owst: The Sermon Exempla in Medieval England," Dunbar notes that the most common and effective form preaching in this period was the sermon exempla (Dunbar, 2008:23-30). In this approach, "a mode of oratory and

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discourse rich in humor, wit, satire, critical thinking, imagination, and religious principle" was employed (Dunbar, 2008:23-30). According to Dunbar, this approach was very instrumental in the development of the art and discipline of reading and the appreciation of literature during the Middle Ages (Dunbar, 2008:23-30). The sermons also later influenced the seminal thinking evident in the protestant reformation and later in the renaissance in Europe (Dunbar, 2008:23-30). According to Dunbar, conceptually and structurally, the aim of the sermon exempla was not to expound or necessarily to teach doctrine but rather give examples of moral spiritual principles that related to the human experience and that could be applied in practical social/moral life (Dunbar, 2008:23-30). Other scholars such as Sabine Volk-Birke, in his article "Chaucer and Medieval Preaching: Rhetoric for Listeners in Sermons and Poetry" has explored the wide usage of the visual in European medieval preaching to aid devotion (Volk-Birke, 1991:349). Strategies of preaching were used to give instructions in an appealing way that was easy for the audience to remember and yet impacting both intellectually and emotionally.

The sixteenth century Reformation emphasized the efficacy of the "word of God". Both Luther and Calvin regarded preaching as the medium by which people were saved (Edward, 2004:5; Bitzel, 2009:58). The sermon was an "efficacious word, which moves, realigns and reconstitutes men" (Luther, cited by Bitzel: 2009:58). Christians must listen to sermons so as to renew their faith (Bitzen, 2009:59-60). The Reformation emphasized that all believers and not just priests could preach. What made sermons new was not just that the preachers had "a good mind, a rhetorical reflex, and personal holiness" but also that they carried with them the weight of religious authority in a way that was different (Edward, 2004:830). All believers by virtue of their baptism could serve God in various ways. The "radically ad hoc" approach to preaching in the modern era is partly influenced by this development (Edward, 2004:830). Although the Reformation introduced new aspects to sermons, it also was in continuity with the classical era. Strom identifies what he calls the 'heroic', or free method of preaching connected with Luther, which owed its origins to a classical period. This method shaped the structure of the sermons well into the eighteenth century (Strom, 2009:177).

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In response to the impact of the Reformation on the sermons, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) passed several decrees on preaching that focused on the regulation of preachers, sites and times for preaching (Bitzel, 2009: 61). They also emphasized the role of Bishops in supervising preachers. According to Bitzel, these decisions were meant to block Protestant preachers from entering Catholic domains (Bitzel, 2009:61). The council clarified that the sermon was "an instruction of the things that the congregation should know for their salvation" (Bitzel, 2009:61). The sermon, also, exhorted and enhanced good characteristics among the worshippers "to avoid hell and participate in the glory of God" (Bitzel**,** 2009:61). The council also emphasized that sermon did not have a sacramental or soteriological character (Bitzel, 2009:62). Preaching was viewed as an "indispensable medium for the internalization of the new Roman Catholic edifice of teaching" (Bitzel, 2009:62). Different from Protestants who approached humanity as intrinsically disposed to sin and in need oftherenewal by means of the sermon, the council stated that, "the sermon must only provide stimuli and encouragement to help him progress on his chosen path" (Bitzel, 2009:62).

The era of Pietism in the seventeenth century also impacted the sermon in various ways. Concerns were raised about the morality of the clergy, asking them to focus more on pastoral care and leave preaching to the lay people (Strom, 2009:178). The phenomenon of lay prophecy in the seventeenth century also challenged traditional parish ministry. These prophecies claimed to draw from supernatural revelation, and focused on specific concerns or events, usually with the intent of encouraging repentance (Strom, 2009:179). Due to the wide availability of devotional literature in the seventeenth century, lay people began to approach their religious lives apart from regular parish preaching. They also used devotional literature to measure the spirituality and rhetorical skills of the local preachers (Strom, 2009:179). While the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries focused on proving and understanding faith empirically, pietism presented "a good mode of living" as evident of faith (Bitzel, 2009:67). The theology of the sermon remained traditional but gradually shifted its focus towards the moralization of preaching (Bitzel, 2009:66).

The pietist period also focused on the delivery of the sermon. Eijnatten argues that the pietists first projected an image of a supposedly obsolete orthodoxy and skillfully

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employed new means of communication, pointing to the success of their own preaching (Eijnatten, 2009: xi). In order to communicate effectively, the preacher needed to embody "belief in his voice, eyes, hands, arms and the whole body" (Eijnatten, 2009: xiii).

Proponents of the enlightenment held that the only thing that was true was that which was "rationally comprehensible". The main focus of the sermon in this period was on the relationship between revelation and reason (Bitzel, 2009:74). Various doctrines of the church were rejected as their "content … could not be made rationally plausible" (Bitzel, 2009:75). Sermons were constructed to offer proofs for various positions. The sermon, also, provided ethical exhortation, not salvation. However, such sermons were steeped in tradition, for example, through historicizing the coming of Christ (Bitzel, 2009:75).

The eighteenth-century revivalist movements also significantly impacted the sermons. According to Strom, these effects were more profound that those of pietism (Strom, 2009:217). Charles Finney, a prominent evangelist of the Second Great Awakening adopted the "new measures" of preaching which included spontaneous exhortation to attain conversions (Strom, 2009:216). In this period, itinerancy and lay preaching were common in North America. There wasan increased emphasis during the nineteenth century on mission as "crossing frontiers". The phenomenon developed out of camp meetings staged to bring people from a large area together for preaching, spiritual direction, baptism for those converted, and a concluding Eucharist (White, 1980:164).

Beginning from the early twentieth century, the Pentecostal[28] tradition emphasized spontaneity in preaching over formal structures (White, 1980:164). Such flexibility included the various Biblical texts used in preaching. The twentieth century witnessed the emergence of the social gospel movement and the African American preachers, both products of the Second Awakening. The African American preachers went out to preach vigorously, challenging racism and asserting the place of the African American in

[28] Following Anderson (2006:276), I use the term "Pentecostalism" in a broad sense to refer to a wide variety of movements that all emphasize gifts of the spirit (especially as listed in 1 Cor.12). It includes Pentecostal denominations that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Charismatic movements in Catholic and Protestant Churches, and the neo-Charismatic churches since the 1970's.

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society. Within evangelical circles, there have been preachers such as Billy Graham with his special emphasis on mass-audience preaching. This period also witnessed the rise of tele-evangelists and the modern technology of mega churches. The exponential growth in some of these evangelical denominations and the concomitant decline of many mainline Protestant churches is related to their flashy styles of preaching together with its accompanying technology and performance (Edward, 2004:90). The sermons among these groups have mainly focused on the so- called prosperity gospel which promised worldly prosperity for those believers who tuen to God.

In the period between the late 19th century and early to mid 20th century, there were many famous open-air preachers in the United States. Billy Graham, born in 1918, is one of the oldest and well known public preachers based in the United States. Around 1949, Graham began his evangelism campaigns in the United States of America. By 1955 his "crusades" had extended to England and Scotland. Stanley High reported in 1956 that "Billy Graham [had] probably preached to more people than any spokesman for the faith in all Christian history" (High, 1956:3). Graham's lifetime audience, including radio and television broadcasts has been approximated to have topped 2.2 billion. Graham made it a highlight of his preaching to make an "altar call" for people who were yet to commit their lives to Jesus to do so. In the next few years, the crusades extended to Asia from India to Korea and Japan. This was followed by Australia, Africa, the Middle East, South and Central America and eventually behind the Iron curtain (Edward, 2004:776-77).

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Two modern variants of preaching emerged in the 1980s. The first, which is popularly known as "praise and worship", devotes the first part of the service to songs of praise generally by the entire congregation, often from words projected on a screen (White, 1980:164). The second part of the service is committed to teaching with a focus on a biblical text or some topic relevant to living (White, 1980:164). The second development is a form of evangelism which begins with a musical performance followed by a talk that pursues further the subject of the music (White, 1980:165).

3.2.3 The Development of public preaching

Public preaching in Christianity has a long history. Jesus preached his sermon on the mount and on a plain (Luke 5:1; 6:17-49). There is some evidence of charismatic preaching by itinerant prophets in the *Didache* (c.90 CE) and *The Shepherd of Hermas* (c.100-150 CE). During the Reformation, the Protestants used open air preaching in Europe as they could not access Roman Catholic churches. The practice of open-air preaching was also used in Europe during the emergence of puritanism and other protestant movements.

Public preaching as polemics against Islam has a long history that can be traced back to debates held in Agra in 1854 (Chesworth, 2010:355). Karl Pfander (1803-1865) and others were confronted with the latest arguments of liberal theology from Europe in their encounter with Muslim scholars in Northern India. Pfander, a German who served with the Church Missionary Society (CMS), travelled to Persia at the age of twenty-two and worked there for twelve years. When he was twenty-six, he wrote *Mizan al-Haqq* (*The Balance of Truth*). The book sets out to show the superiority of the Gospel over the Qur'an. While in India, Pfander spoke at a number of public debates and wrote apologetic literature. In 1854, he was involved in several public debates in Agra with Rahmat Allah al-Kairanawi (1818-1891). Goddard reports that Al-Kairanawi "by most accounts bested Pfander" (Goddard, 2000, 131). A few years later, in 1867, Rahmat Allah wrote Izhar al-Haqq (*The Revealed Truth*). Chesworth notes that Rahmat Allah "won" because of his facility in biblical criticism which was in wide use in that period (Chesworth, 2010:355).

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In East Africa, early missionaries used public preaching in order to reach out to Muslims. Chesworth argues that these sermons were delivered in an open-air context, away from the usual Sunday church services, and were attended by both Christians and Muslims (Chesworth, 2006:160). An Anglican clergyman, Rev. W.E. Taylor described the events in 1894:

> … we have found a regular preaching site in a shed devoted to barbers and razor-grinders, and seek to preach by word and song the Gospel, which we know is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Greeks foolishness, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the *Mohammedans* [my emphasis] both these; but to them that are called Jews, Greeks, and *Mohammedans* [*my emphasis*]-Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God... (Chesworth, 2006:161).

F. Burt in his Annual Letter of 1896 writes of a hundred people at the market place and a hundred and fifty to two hundred at Zizi la K'onzi (Chesworth, 2006:162). The songs which Taylor sang while preaching were well known, and used along the coast both to the north and south of Mombasa (Chesworth, 2006:162).

Other churches also adopted this method to outreach. In his annual report to CMS in 1894, Taylor reports how he introduced the practice to German missionaries and their response:

> We had great pleasure in inaugurating market services to those at Mombasa, and these have been kept up since by the German Neukirchen missionaries… They said that in German open-air meetings were so rare that they had no experience in this so public a method scattering the good seed (Chesworth, 2006:162).

Clearly, public preaching was used in outreach in Mombasa. During the 1920's and 1930's, the use of this approach in the interior was reported in Nairobi and Nakuru (Chesworth, 2006:162).

Open-air preaching raised considerable contestation in the market places between the preachers, and their Muslim interlocutors. Such contestation mainly took the form of polemical arguments. Taylor reports:

> Once I was suffering from an infection of the ears and had stuffed them with cotton-wool. The quick-eyed opponent saw this, and immediately objected. "He has stopped his ears; he is afraid to hear our arguments". Of course I had to remove it (Chesworth, 2003:8).

It appears from the report that in the 1940s, public preaching as a method of evangelism was not successful due to increasing opposition, including physical attacks on the preachers (Chesworth, 2006:162). Clearly, public preaching in East Africa has an early history and began at the coast before penetrating into the interior. It involved Christian missionaries who engaged Muslims in the public space. This engagement between the two groups was largely polemical and competitive.

Another development that impacted public preaching was the East African Revival. It contributed significantly to the popularity of public preaching in East Africa. This

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movement emerged within African Protestantism in the late 1920s and 1930s (Ward, 2012:3). Members organized huge public meetings where sermons were delivered that called people to repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ. The effects of the East African Revival to preaching were similar to those of the Pentecostal movement. Several open-air preaching events in Kenya led by Pentecostal groups popularized open-air preaching. These included a series of public meetings in Kenya by T.L. Osborn (1957), American Billy Graham (1960) in Nairobi and Kisumu, and later in the 1960s, Oral Roberts (1968) in Nairobi (Shorter & Njiru, 2001:18). According to Shorter and Njiru, Osborn organized huge rallies in 1957 while Billy Graham arrived in Kenya in 1960 and held "sensational rallies" in Nairobi and Kisumu in Western Kenya (Shorter & Njiru, 2001:18). These practices were localized through young people and other local preachers. Kalu argues:

> When Billy Graham evangelized in 1960 in Nairobi and Kisumu, the tradition of public preaching and outreach invigorated the young secondary school students who came from many types of mainline churches. School holiday periods were consumed by charismatic camp meetings (Kalu, 2007:19-20).

From 1980's onwards, Christians began to regularly organize preaching events including street preaching. The growth of street preaching was linked to the growth of urban populations, including industrial and office workers. Shorter and Njiru report: "From the 1960s onwards, urban street preaching gathered momentum, until it became a common place" (Shorter & Njiru, 2001:18). The last few decades have witnessed an explosion of "open-air rallies, crusades and revival meetings" (Shorter and Njiru, 2001:7). These crusades are held in open grounds, for example in Uhuru Park, Nairobi and the Sunday market in Mumias. According to Galgalo, these events have now become the most popular forms of evangelism in Kenya (Galgalo, 2003:30). Several local preachers have adopted this approach. They include Bishop David Gitonga of Deliverance Church, and Pastor Joe Kayo. One of the most well known public preachers in Kenya today is Dr. David Owuor. Born in 1966 to Hezekiah and Margaret Achieng Owuor, Dr. Owuor's public preaching events attract thousands. His "calling" began in 1996 when he received a vision while studying in Israel. In 2001, he experienced

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another vision, in which the "Lord called him" and commissioned him to begin preaching. The central theme of his sermons is "repentance and holiness".[29]

Preaching has been shaped by various historical periods which sometimes overlapped in their effects. During the pre-Christian period, preaching focused on transmission of Jewish culture. Reflections on Jewish culture were evident during the apostolic period even though sermons in this period centered more on the teaching about the person of Christ. The medieval period laid great attention on proper delivery of the sermon. In this period, preachers were keen that the audience remembered what was preached and were intellectually satisfied. The Reformation put renewed emphasis on the centrality of the sermon in the Christian life while pietism was more concerned with questions of morality of preachers' involvement of the laity in preaching. The revivals brought in to preaching a new emphasis on "crossing frontiers". Later, this led to the emergence of free preaching in the 20th century which focused less on formal structures and more on spontaneity. The emergence of free preaching in the 20th century focused on preaching as polemics. This process also gave more attention to outreach. In East Africa the practice of public preaching has a long history that can be traced back to the activities of the missionaries at the coast in the early 20th century. The missionaries engaged in competitive open - air preaching in places such as Mombasa and later in the interior. Although introduced by missionaries, public preaching was popularized by local preachers. The sermon's emphasis on outreach led to competition between Christians and Muslims.

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3.3 Preaching in Islam

Preaching in Islam also has a long and varied history which has impactedthe nature of the sermons. This section addresses the emergence of informal and formal preaching in Islam. Both types of sermons emerged from varied contexts and are given in specific ritual requirements. There has been significant contestation with regard to the practice of the two types of sermons.

[29] Beatrice Obwocha's interview with Dr David Owuor: http://majimbokenya.com 22nd July, 2011. For more information on Dr Owuor's ministry visit http://www.repentancepreparetheway.org

3.3.1 Pre-Islamic Origins

Islamic preaching finds inspiration in the example of the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an. However, its cultural, social and political foundations reach back to Arab culture. According to Wise, the *khaṭīb* in pre-Islamic Arabia was a tribal spokesman or story teller, similar in status and role to that of the poet (*shāʿir)* (Wise, 2003:17). Inheritance played a role in the office of *khaṭīb*. Other personal attributes required for this position were the *khaṭīb's* ability at oratory, his reputation for bravery and his ability to defend the tribe's honour. The preacher possessed attributes of courage, boldness, clarity of speech and pronunciation (Wise, 2003:17). These attributes were considered more important than birth or educational process.

> They [preachers] appear not only at the head of a *wafd* (delegation) to negotiate as representatives of their tribe ... but, like the poets, they were also the leaders in the war of wits with the enemy (*mufākharah*). The *khaṭīb* had to extol the …the noble qualities of his tribe and to narrate them in perfect language...[30]

There were no special guilds or castes that developed around the position of *khaṭīb* (Wise, 2003:17). One had to earn this position as opposed to inheriting it. Other speaking roles in pre-Islamic Arabia included the *sayyid* (chief) who was believed to possess special spiritual gifting, and the soothsayer (*kāhin*) who gave oracles in rhymed prose (Antoun, 1998:67). Unlike the *khaṭīb* who possessed special personal abilities of charisma, the *sayyid* and *kāhin* possessed supernatural abilities. The *khaṭībs* carried along with them special insignia associated with their role. These were the lance, staff and bow which they always carried in public (Wise, 2003:17). The *khaṭīb* was a brave warrior as well as a public spokesman for his tribe (Antoun, 1989:68). Muhammad "inherited" the position of *khaṭīb* when he led the nascent Islamic community. However, the prophet brought into this role a new religious dimension.

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[30]The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Ed; s.v "khuṭbah"

3.3.2 Muhammad and the Sermon

There is no comprehensive historical study of Islamic preaching (*khuṭbah*). Similarly, the study of oratory from the *minbar* or pulpit remains to be undertaken.[31] According to Hallden, "studies of the history of Muslim rhetoric in the sense of oratory and preaching are surprisingly hard to find" (Hallden, 2005:19).

During the seventh century, the Prophet Muhammad received his call. After a long period of internal conflict and days and nights of meditation and prayer at mount Hira, Muhammad was convinced of his divine mission. The prophet's first sermon was on Mount as-Safa, a few years following his call to prophethood (Safi-ur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri, 1995:82-84). Muslims regard Muhammad to be the "first and model preacher (*khaṭīb*)'' (Antoun, 1989:67). According to Gaffney, the prophet delivered his first formal sermon in a mosque, "a space, adjacent to his home in Medina" (Gaffney, 1994:18).

Muhammad took on the role of the *khaṭīb* to preach "publicly with ceremony and authority".[32] The prophet also carried the staff and lances of the tribal *khaṭīb*, symbols of authority and dignity. However, the prophet now addressed the Muslim community, not in the context of tribal war and rivalry but as God's messenger (Wise, 2003:17). Muhammad did not preach on spiritual topics alone; he also used the pulpit to promote a dynamic project of ethical and social reform (Wise, 2003:17). Islamic society from the very beginning was an "organic community" in which religion was interwoven with all institutions (Antoun, 1989: 68). The role of the preacher integrated the worldly and soteriological, basically mediating between the two (Wise, 2003:15). Muhammad employed the sermon to construct society (*ummah)* and a new vision, a better community based on the will of God.

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[31] The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Ed; s.v "khuṭba". See also L.G Jones (2006) "Ibn Abbad of Ronda's sermon on the prophet's birthday celebration: Preaching the Sufi and Sunni paths of Islam" Medieval Sermon Studies vol.50.

[32] Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Ed; s.v "khuṭbah"

Religions which have sacred texts place value on the textual origins of religious knowledge (Turner, 1976). There are various Qur'anic texts on preaching. They include: "Invite (all) to the Way of the Lord with wisdom. And beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious" (Qur'an 16:125). There are also exhortations found in the Medinan chapters, pronounced at a time when Muhammad was leading the army during his reign which contains such warnings (Qur'an 3:12, 3.19; 22:66-7). From the above texts it is clear the Qur'an provides a basis for preaching in Islam.

3.3.3 The Sermon (*khuṭbah*) in History

Muhammad died in 632 CE after an illustrious career as the leader of the Islamic community. The rightly guided caliphs continued to deliver the *khuṭbah* as leaders of the Islamic community. This was in continuity with both the tradition of the Prophet and that of the pre-Islamic *khaṭīb*. The Umayyads (661-750 CE) exercised tight control on the *minbar* and gave the Friday sermon and led worship (*ṣalāt*) (Wise, 2003:18). The *khaṭīb*'s role was closely associated with his symbolic position as the representative of the Prophet and his successors (*khalifa*) in a religio-political sense (Antoun, 1989:68). The ruler did not just give edifying sermons from the *minbar* but also gave orders and decisions.[33]

During the period of the Abbasids (750-1258 CE), the caliph delegated the *khaṭib's* function to the religious judges (*qādīs*). When the caliphs lost power to various military heads as well as local dynasties, this close relationship between preaching and power shifted. There was now a diversified Islamic *ummah* with no central point of unity. Gaffney notes that "the recognition of power through sermons indicated the fragmentation of the Islamic imperium as much as it's idealized unity" (Gaffney, 1988:112). In Egypt, the Fatimids (909-1171 CE) designated the duty of delivering the *khuṭbah* to others, but "still occasionally preached themselves (behind a veil), namely three times in the month of Ramadan and at the great festivals".[34]

[33]Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed; s.v "*khuṭbah*"
[34]Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed; s.v "*khuṭbah*"

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Long after the ruler ceased to be the *khaṭīb,* a tradition developed where the preacher in the course of the sermon mentioned the ruler's name (Wise, 2003:18). After the fall of Baghdad in the thirteenth century and particularly following the Ottoman conquests of the sixteenth century, the title of caliph became an anachronism for "those who actually ruled" (Gaffney, 1988:112). In 1924, title of Caliphs was abolished through an act of parliament in Turkey but without resolving the question of the authority of the preacher (Gaffney, 1988:112). But the practice of mentioning the ruler's name persisted. Gaffney mentions the influence of this tradition in 20th century Egypt through an examination of sermons (Gaffney, 1988:23) while Antoun found the same in Jordan (Antoun, 1989:71).

During the post-medieval period, the Islamic sermon considerably declined. In some cases, the sermon was presented in a "highly stylized recitation, often consisting in the repetition of an ornate prose poem in an archaic language" that could hardly be understood by ordinary Muslims (Gaffney, 1988:112). Consequently, there has been a move to recover the lost glory of Mosque preaching. Gaffney also captures the aspect of reform in sermons when he argues that the sermon is known both as an instrument and object of reform (Gaffney, 1988:112). During the late modern period, the role of the sermon increased especially within the context of modern reform movements. For example, during this period, sermons were tailored to respond to the activities of Christian missionaries. Kerr has pointed out that Egyptian Muhammed Abduh (1849-1905) and his disciple, Syrian Rashid Rida (1865-1935) were committed to using sermons to defend Islam against Christian missionaries (Kerr, 2009:154). Abduh and Rida argued that Christian evangelism (*tabshīr*) and imperialism (*istiʿmār*) were similar in their opposition to Islam.

Hassan-al Banna (1906-1949) founded the Muslim Brothers in Egypt with the aim of reforming the *umma*. Poston has stated that "in the institutionalization of his activities he [al-Banna] intentionally by-passed the traditional institution of the Mosque, which he considered…, quiescent" (Poston, 1992:65). Hassan- al Banna argued that mosque sermons were not enough to reform the *umma* (Poston, 1992:65). Al-Banna formed the

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Muslim Brothers of youth, workers and students and sent them to coffee houses and other public places to preach Islam.

Within modern Muslim states, political leadership began to show interest in using the sermon for political mobilization. In this context, "the continuing tension between the different ideologies of nationalism and internationalism along with the related questions of democracy, equality, and ultimately the sovereignty of the nationstate" have featured in the sermon's"form and content" (Gaffney,1988:113). The sermon embodied public authority with mosques attracting both subsidies and control from the state (Gaffney, 1988; Antoun, 1989:71).

During the second half of the twentieth century, the development of modern technology influenced the nature and effectiveness of the sermons. Popular preachers have now taken to audio- and video-taping their sermons for wider distribution to the public. This considerably adds to the popularity of the preachers. Hirschkind views this as an indicator of Islamic renewal:

> From the inception of the practice in the late 1960s and early 1970s, cassette sermon audition has been an important and integral part of the Islamic revival (Hirchkind, 2006:6).

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The distribution of such cassettes ensures that sermons are available not just in a written form, but also in the original form in which they were delivered. The deployment of various media in presenting the sermon goes hand in hand with public preaching which targets a bigger audience than the usual mosque preaching. This phenomenon is increasingly common in the East African context as well (Chande, 2000:349; Ahmed, 2008:4). It is also a common practice for public preachers to display in public audio and/ or visual cassettes of their sermons for sale.

3.3.4 Formal and Informal *khuṭbah*

I would now like to focus my discussion specifically to the distinction between formal and free preaching in Islam. Formal preaching took place within specific ritual provisions while free preaching was more flexible. The effectiveness of the formal

sermon lay in its location, timing and credentials of the preacher. The free sermon as I will show later emphasizes less on these aspects. The development of the two types of sermons with varied requirements generated contestation between advocates of tradition and change.

As earlier noted, the prophet Muhammad delivered his first sermon in "a space, adjacent to his home in Medina" (Gaffney, 1994:18)[35]. The construction of mosques as special spaces for Islamic prayer took place over time. This development was symbolic of the "setting aside of a place for prayer representing authority" as well as "serving convenience and propriety" (Gaffney, 1994:20). The Mosque was also a place for meetings for both Muslims and non-Muslims and for collective prayer (Gaffney, 1994:19). It provided asylum, a place for learning (school), place of rest for travelers, and a place of worship (Antoun, 1989:68).

The infrastructure inside the mosque influenced the meaning of the sermon. Antoun notes that the *minbar* (pulpit) "possessed extraordinary religious and even ritual legitimacy since the *minbar*, along with the *miḥrāb* or prayer niche, was located in the most sanctified area of the mosque and regarded by some as a source of special blessings" (Antoun, 1998: 68-69). Therefore, the *minbar* gave the sermon a higher degree of authority (Gaffney, 1994:20). The importance of the preacher's *minbar* as a space where earthly and spiritual authority converged, increased in its traditional association with the prophet and the Rightly Guided Caliphs, all of whom delivered the *khutbah* in their capacity as leaders of the Muslim community.

The Friday sermon may be the most well known form of Islamic preaching. The performance of the *khuṭbah* comes before the Friday prayers (*ṣalāt*) and consists of two addresses (Wise, 2003:16). Among the conditions for the validity of the Friday service is that the *khaṭīb* must be in state of ritual purity; his dress must be consistent with legal prescriptions and the number of auditors required for a valid Friday service must be

[35]In Mecca, the original Muslim community had no special place designated for worship. The Prophet used to perform the *salat* in secret in then narrow alleys of Mecca with his first male follower 'Ali and with the other earliest companions also (Ibn Hisham, 159, 166, 13 ff.). In the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad, a sanctuary was not a fundamental necessity. What was important in prayer was humility in the presence of God.(Encyclopaedia of Islam,*Masdjid*)

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present.[36] Following the formal introduction, the preacher would normally say "Now then (*ammā baʿd*)" to indicate the beginning of the body of the sermon itself (Wise, 2003:17). The preacher sits briefly on the *minbar* in-between the two addresses, but presents them both in a standing position (Wise, 2003:17). It is recommended (*sunnah*)[37] for the preacher to use a pulpit or an elevated place, to greet the congregation when facing them, to sit down until the *adhān* (call to prayer) is pronounced, to lean on a bow, a sword or staff, and to direct himself straight away to the audience.[38] Both addresses are prefaced with the *basmallah* (to say "In the name of God"), h*amdalah* (praising God) and the *ṣalawāt* (blessings on the Prophet) (Wise, 2003:17). The first address is a short one while the second address may be extended. The following are obligatory: the *ḥamdala* (praises to God), the *ṣalawāt* (blessings) on the Prophet, admonitions to piety in both addresses, prayer (*duʿā*) on behalf of the faithful, and the recitation of a part of the Qur'anin the first address or, according to some scholars, in both (Wise, 2003:17). Thus the *khuṭbah* is given within extensive liturgical requirements. This means that there are certain standard requirements in the order of the service that must be adhered to. Hirschkind has noted the significance of the Friday sermon in terms of how it is performed:

> Traditionally, the Friday sermon occurs in a highly structured spatial and temporal frame, as a duty upon every Muslim as established in the exemplary practices of the prophet … the *khaṭīb's* performance anchors its authority in its location and timing in the *khaṭīb's* competent enactment of tradition (2006:10).

The adherence to tradition was an important matter for formal preachers and their audiences. However, this did not stop the emergence of an alternative approach to preaching which was more flexible.

In contrast to formal preaching, there was another type of sermon whose setting and performance was informal. Radtke in his article in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* states that those who give this sermon are known as *wāʿīẓ, mudhakkir* and *qāṣṣ* (Pedersen, 1953:15). The *mudhakkir* or "reminder" (of judgment Day), the *wāʿīẓ* or "admonisher" (to follow the right path stipulated in the Qur'an*),* and the *qāṣṣ* (teller of edifying

[36] Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed; s.v "*khuṭbah*"
[37] Refers to practice of the Prophet
[38] Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed.; s.v "*khuṭbah*"

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religious stories) were all preachers.[39] Ibn al-Jawzī (1292-1350CE) is reported to have stated that the *qāṣṣ*"is a man who tells tales about what has happened" (Pedersen, 1953:226). According to Radtke, the*wāʿīẓ* (pl. *wuʿʿāẓ*) is an Arabic term used to refer to a preacher who admonishes.[40] Pedersen notes that the practice of counsel and admonition, *waʿẓ* was freely given and regularly sought, especially by rulers and other persons in positions of responsibility (Pedersen, 1949-1950:216). The precise reference of all these terms (*wāʿīẓ, mudhakkir* and *qāṣṣ*) was somewhat ambiguous (Antoun, 1989, 69). Also, Berkey's recent study on popular preaching in the classical era reveals little distinction between the various designations for these preachers (2001).

The preachers were active during the period of the four rightly guided caliphs. It seems that the adherents of the pietistic mystical movements were active as free preachers.[41] The most outstanding of the early free preachers in Islam was al-Hassan al-Basri (642-728). While the free preacher could be a mosque official, most of them would be free preachers without a formal attachment to a mosque. According to Pedersen, "it was because of his free position that his task more than that of the *khaṭīb*, [was] to intensify the faith and religious practice" of members of the congregation (Pedersen, 1949-1950:216). According to Pedersen, the position of the free preacher accorded him space for less controlled activity (Pedersen, 1949-1950:216). While it would appear that only the official *qāṣṣ* was allowed to use the pulpit (*minbar*), there were no hard regulations in this respect. The historian Al-Asmāʿī (d. 216/831) reports how he witnessed a Bedouin in Dariyya in Nedjd "wrapping up his turban, with his bow on his shoulder" speaking to a Mosque congregation from the *minbar* (Pedersen, 1949-1950:216). However, unlike the Friday sermon that was given inside the mosque, the free sermon was conducted anywhere and anytime. According to Swartz, the popular sermon was generally not given in a context of a prayer service (*ṣalāt*) inside a mosque. It was also directed to an impromptu audience that was not subject to the same ritual preparations as the congregation of a prayer service (Swartz, 1983:230).

The free sermon was dedicated to themes such as the transitoriness of the world and of life and called people to a renunciation of the world (*zuhd*). Pedersen while citing the

[39] Ibid
[40] Ibid.
[41] Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed. ;s.v " *wāʿiẓ*"

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writings of Al-Asma ʻi (d.216/831), argues that the preachers stressed the vanity of this world (Pedersen, 1949-1950:216). According to Pedersen, the free preacher had additional functions: "his role was that of stimulating the warriors during the *djihād,* and conducting meetings in the mosque with recitation of the Qur'an, with *ṣalāt*and sermons" (Pedersen, 1949-1950:15).

Free preachers tended to contest with the state on some issues. Pedersen points out that the difference between the *qāṣṣ*and *khaṭīb* derived from the status of the latter as a representative of the Islamic ruler (Pedersen, 1949-1950:216). On the other hand, Young notes that "the *madjlis* [gathering of the free preacher] even became a forum for criticism directed against the authorities" (Young, 2003:195). In contrast to the *khuṭbah's* legally mandated structure in which the ruler had become conventional, popular preachers seldom did this (Young, 2003:194, 195). However, in some cases, the free preacher was also used or misused by the state for political roles.[42] Popular preachers, therefore, had the potential for promoting political as well as doctrinal subversion but could also be co-opted into state machinery (Young, 2003:195). In the 5th /11th century onwards, the function of free preaching was institutionalized. Thus Nizam al-Mulk introduced it at the *Nizamiyya* in Baghdad. Consequently, the *wāʿīẓ* was often used for political and ideological purposes for example. For instance, the *wāʿīẓ*was used in debates between schools of law and dogmatic movements, especially in Baghdad.

Apart from contestation with the state, informal preaching attracted considerable criticism for their lack of structure. According to Antoun, these preachers were criticized not only for their extravagant display of emotions (Antoun, 1989:69). Ibn al-Jawzi (1292-1350CE), a famous Islamic scholar and preacher warned against their excesses "They (preachers) sang the Qur'an (rather than chanted it) and draped the *minbar* with multi-colored garments. They feigned weeping to advance a reputation for piety; they rent their garments…" (Young, 2003:1950). Therefore, the discourse on free preachers brought into sharp focuses what constituted "proper" Islamic ritual of preaching in terms of content and performance.

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[42] Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed. ;s.v " wāiz"

Free preaching was distinctly different from formal sermons in various ways. The preachers were not the regular preachers in Mosques. The preachers focused more on giving sermons of admonitions and counsel. Unlike the *khuṭbah* which was given in specific ritual settings, these sermons were given in a flexible way. This approach raised considerable contestation from those who favored a more traditional approach to preaching.

3.4 Early Islamic Free Preaching in East Africa

There have been some scholarly reflections on public preaching in the region (Chande, 2000, Chesworth, 2006; Loimeier, 2007:145). John Chesworth has written about public preachers in East Africa and argues that they have followed the approach used by Ahmed Deedat (1918-2005) (Chesworth, 2006:172). Westerlund also follows a similar line of argument about Deedat's influence (Westerlund, 1997:101). In this short section, I want to make the connection between Deedat and East African Muslim preachers. The preachers that I interviewed in Mumias did not mention any direct link with Deedat, but their style and the choice of topics certainly betrays the influence. Moreover, it shows how Deedat's method and approach have become deeply integrated into East African public preaching by Muslims.

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A Muslim of Indian origin, Deedat accompanied his father and settled in Durban South Africa in the early 20th century. He encountered Christian missionaries in Durban who challenged him about Islam. According to Westerlund, one day, Deedat came across a book in the village store entitled "Izhar Ul-Huqq" (Truth Revealed) by Rahmatullah Kairanawi. This book chronicled the efforts of Christian missionaries in India a century earlier, which was an influence on his subsequent engagement with Christians (Westerlund, 2003:266).

Deedat's pamphlets first appeared on the East African scene in the 1960s (Chesworth, 2006:172). One well-known example of these materials is entitled: *Muhammad (PBUH) in the Old and New Testaments*. Loimeier states that in Tanzania "Muslims began to employ references to the Bible, a strategy which was…influenced by a visit of Ahmad Deedat in 1981" (Loimeier, 2007:145). Similar to the South African context, the open-air

preaching movement in East Africa can be understood as a response to the emergence of Pentecostal churches in Tanzania (Loimeier, 2007:145).

The origins of public preaching in East Africa can be traced back to 1986. Deedat's method in propagating Islam generally influenced other Muslim preachers such as Ustadh Ngariba Mussa Fundi (d.1993), one of the founders of the Muslim Preachers Movement in East Africa, and Kawemba Mohammed Ali (Westerlund, 2003:101). Smith notes that a series of public lectures were delivered in Tabora by Ustadh Musa Fundi Ngariba and Ustadh Musa Ali Kawemba (Smith, 1988:106). Similar lectures took place in Dar-es Salaam on February 13th to February 15th 1987. Ngariba challenged Christians to prove that Jesus was the son of God from the Bible. Other topics included prayer, fasting and ritual cleansing. After Tanzania, public preaching spread to Kenya in the late 1980s. In particular, Tanzanian preachers such as Suleiman Mazinge (not the subject of this study) and Sheikh Sharif, a young charismatic preacher popularized Islamic public preaching *mihadhara*.

3.5 Conclusion

The chapter has examined the history of the preaching in the Christian and Islamic traditions. I have argued that in both traditions, preaching occupies a central place. One common function of the sermon in both traditions is that of reaching out to members of the tradition and those outside of it. The chapter has demonstrated how various historical events impacted on the sermon. Sometimes in response to these events, the nature of the sermon shifted away from tradition while also maintaining some continuity. While formal preaching has a central place in the two traditions, there is a parallel tradition in both of free preaching. This type ofpreaching was not conducted by the traditional preachers. It was not necessarily performed inside a mosque or church. Essentially informal preaching in Islam did not adhere to the traditional ritual patterns of preaching, thus leading to contestation between agents of tradition and those who favor change.

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CHAPTER 4: *DAʿWAH* IN MUSLIM PUBLIC PREACHING

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a broad overview on the history of preaching in Christianity and Islam. It demonstrated the growing presence of the phenomenon of open-air preaching in the two traditions. This chapter examines contemporary Muslim public preaching as exemplified in Mumias, Western Kenya. It identifies a particular form of *daʿwah* in Muslim preaching that reflects and negotiates the position of Muslim in public life.

The chapter begins by discussing the life stories of the preachers showing where they were born, their family, educational and religious backgrounds. Moreover, the chapter discusses the preachers' particular journeys towards Islam and how these ushered them into their public engagements. The Chapter then turns to the sermons given by the various preachers between November 2009 and November 2012. It examines the various settings of the sermons, the audiences and the different ways in which the preachers present the sermons. The chapter analyzes the central themes emerging from the sermons, ranging from theological matters to ritual and social issues. On occasion, these themes touched on national issues, but mostly they contributed to drawing a sharper distinction between Muslims and Christians in the country, and in the region. They debate on matters that divided Muslims and Christians, always attempting to argue that Islam was the absolute truth in all aspects.

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Their sermons are a form of polemical *daʿwah* in the style of Ahmed Deedat, but the chapter brings out some of the peculiar approaches to the Bible among the preachers. They do not all use the Bible in exactly the same way. Some use the Bible to support Qur'anic positions, while others are more forceful in rejecting its validity. This special approach to the Bible is one of the main findings in this thesis. It demonstrates a specific articulation of *daʿwah* in Mumias. This chapter also shows that public preachers exemplify a new religious authority. Unlike the *ʿulamāʾ*, all the preachers interviewed were former Christians who converted to Islam. These preachers have no training in religious sciences, and so base their authority on religious experiences and their knowledge of the Bible. They all related to me extraordinary religious experiences that

confirmed their calling and their mission to convert Christians. Upon going through various experiential encounters, the preachers began moving from place to place to preach Islam.

4.2 Biographies of the Preachers

I recorded thirty-seven sermons and interviewed eighteen preachers in Mumias at various periods. The preachers were interviewed as they availed themselves for this research. Their preaching experiences are varied. Some of them have been preaching for over ten years while others are under a form of apprenticeship.

The more experienced preachers were accorded more time to address the audience while the less experienced ones observed or contributed in minor ways to a preaching event (*mhadhara)*. The latter preachers were briefly introduced to the audience with the promise that they would be preaching on another occasion. This Chapter focuses on five preachers: Suleiman Mazinge, Muhammed Wangulu, Asman Ngashe, Ishaq Kariuki and Salim Ndeeda. They were the most active preachers during the research period. Ngashe, Kariuki and Ndeeda addressed the meetings for only one day before moving on to other towns, while Muhammed Wangulu and Suleiman Mazinge preached on more than two occasions. These two preachers also attracted more attention from the crowd that the other three. Mazinge's sermons also led to temporary cancellation by the police in Mumias, which led in turn to a huge demonstration by Mazinge's followers.

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In introducing the preachers, it is important that we provide some general features about all the eighteen preachers before narrowing down to the selected group. All the preachers were youthful males aged from twenty-five to forty years. All except Mazinge were married and had children. They all attained education up to secondary level but did not get into formal gainful employment. In addition to the financial support they raised from the audience, some of the preachers were engaged in small commercial activities to support their families. Public preachers were well known in the places they visited. They easily interacted with local people with some of them calling out the preacher's names and stating how much they had looked forward to the *mihadhara*.

Most of the preachers wore long white robes and Islamic caps. Some preferred to use casual attire, while others interchanged between casual and religious attire on the different occasions when they preached. All the preachers spoke fluent Swahili, the language they also used in their sermons. However, none of the preachers communicated effectively in the English language, an indication of their low level of formal schooling. Except Mazinge, all the preachers that I interviewed had also preached outside Kenya, particularly in Tanzania and Uganda. Preachers from these countries were in turn invited to preach in Kenya. Among the preachers interviewed there, were those that were still undergoing a period of apprenticeship. They were not allowed to preach at a fully-fledged *mhadhara* (public sermon). Such preachers were allowed to recite the Qur'an at the beginning of the sessions or simply accompanied the main preachers. Some of the trainee preachers helped to organize the meetings by attending to practical details such as ushering in guests, attending to seating arrangements, and the public address systems.

This discussion of the preachers' biographies begins with Mazinge's story.[43] He was born in 1986 at Malindi within a strict Baptist tradition. Mazinge's parents worshipped at the local Baptist church and ensured that their son attended children services at this church. Mazinge recollected how, as a young boy, he participated in various activities on Sundays such as singing, acting and reciting biblical memory verses. He also stated that the desire to meet his playmates every Sunday at the Church was a strong motivation for his regular attendance of services. Mazinge easily remembers some of the songs they used to sing as children while at the church. Clearly, he was well grounded in his tradition from a tender age. When he reached the age of twelve, Mazinge began attending the youth services at his church. He also served as a choir teacher, first in the youth service, and later in the services for adults.

Mazinge converted from Christianity to Islam following two distinct religious experiences. These experiences took place while he was in Mombasa. At the age of 14, he said that he was transported in a dream to the inside of a mosque in Mecca:

> The bicycle I used to supply paint was the one with which I was carried up to Mecca. I entered the Mosque up to the black stone and was transported the same night back to Mombasa.

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[43] Interview with Suleiman Mazinge, 10th February, 2010.

During a second religious experience, Mazinge said that he was transported from Mombasa to his home-town of Malindi. While there, he was introduced to a large gathering of people and heard "a voice" telling him "this will be your work in good times or bad times". At first Mazinge was terrified by these experiences. He broke down into uncontrollable tears praying that God comes to his rescue from these tormenting experiences. After spending three hours in intense prayer, Mazinge was persuaded that the voice he heard was from a heavenly being, most likely an angel. When asked if his religious experiences could be likened to those of the prophet Muhammed, Mazinge was quick to respond: "while mine was a dream, Muhammed's was real". However, Mazinge stated that like Muhammed's experience, his encounter marked the turning point of his life transforming him from being a Christian to a Muslim. He was now persuaded that he was in the wrong religious tradition and that he needed to convert to the truthful tradition, Islam.

Mazinge went to a Mosque in Manyatta in Mombasa and converted to Islam. Ahmed Mwanza, the Imam at this Mosque asked him to recite the *shahāda* (witness to Islam) after him, which he did thus converting to Islam. It is at this point that Mazinge changed his first name from Andrew to Suleiman Mazinge. He stated that his conversion to Islam was the most important decision he made in life. He observed that his conversion had given him peace and a purpose in life. Immediately after his conversion, Mazinge underwent the Islamic rite of circumcision. Ahmed Mwanza, the Imam at Manyatta linked him up to his fellow Imam at Sakina Mosque requesting that he be accommodated there for a while as he recuperated (from the surgery). Mazinge was supported financially by benevolent Muslims who had learned about his conversion. These Muslims ensured that he was properly fed to speed up the healing process. They also contributed money for his upkeep and encouraged him to be committed to his newly found religion (*dini*). Mazinge stated that following the social support he received from many Muslims, "he felt at home" with the decision he had made to convert. He was convinced that these Muslims were now his new family of faith to whom he would fall back to incase of any social problems.

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Later, Mazinge was directed to *Uhuru* gardens in Mombasa where he found two public preachers. One of the preachers called Matano, upon learning about Mazinge's conversion, invited him to his house. In addition to providing hospitality to Mazinge, he also volunteered to train him in the work of *daʿwah* so that he too, would help call others to Islam. Mazinge recollected how knowledgeable Matano was in the Bible. Mazinge explained: "Matano taught me how to read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation". He added that Matano had such a strong "memory capacity" and could recite the entire Bible without reading. It was under the tutelage of Matano that Mazinge developed his earliest skills in preaching using the Bible. It is also during this period that Mazinge learned how to counter the central doctrines of Christianity. Mazinge explained that his host taught him how to begin an argument in a *mhadhara* and buid it up to winning level. Matano also taught Mazinge some of the more common objections Christians raised about Muslim use of the Bible. Mazinge denied having read any of Ahmed Deedat, the well-known South African Muslim preacher and polemicist. He stated that Deedat's approaches to public engagements were overtaken by events as Christians now posed more difficult questions to Muslims.

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The second preacher interviewed was Salim Ndeeda.[44] Ndeeda adorned a long black beard and walked with a slight limp following a bad road accident he had encountered in the course of his preaching journeys. Ndeeda was born in December 1971 in Mumias. His mother worshipped at the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) while his father attended the Church of God, a mainline church from the United States. Ndeeda narrated how his mother attended services at the local church without fail. His mother also assisted to clean the church every Saturday before services on the following Sunday. While still a young boy, Ndeeda noticed the presence of various other Christian traditions around his village. He also noticed that there was a mosque near his grandfather's house, not very far from where they lived. One of his cousins called Alima Khangati was a Muslim. From this early period, Ndeeda began to reflect on why there were various religious traditions, and yet all teaching belief in the existence of one God. He referred to this process of reflection as "comparative religion". As a result of this process, Ndeeda began reading the Qur'an and Bible as well as other Christian books. After a long time of reading the Bible and Qur'an and reflecting upon them, Ndeeda

[44] Interview with Salim Ndeeda, 22nd March 2010

"felt" that Islam was the true religion. Ndeeda explained: "I felt inside my heart that this [Islam] provided better answers to life's questions". Following this conviction, Ndeeda embraced Islam in 1996. A year after his conversion, Ndeeda joined a group of young Muslims to preach Islam in his village. This was an annual *daʿwah* event that was organized by their mosque. Later, Ndeeda joined another group of public preachers who had visited his village. He requested to be taught how to conduct *daʿwah* and was readily accepted.

The biography of Muhammed Wangulu also points to his conversion process.[45] He was born in 1976 at Ebuhuyi village in Matungu District. Wangulu's parents were staunch Catholics and so the young boy was influenced to be active at his church. He became an altar boy and assisted the local Priest in many practical aspects of preparation for the mass. Wangulu remembered how one day, while he was assisting the priest organize the mass, he slipped while carrying wine. Fortunately his bottle of wine did not break and the mass went on well.

Upon completion of primary schooling at the age of fourteen, Wangulu fell sick with Malaria. Despite using "strong drugs" he did not get well. Later Wangulu experienced pain and numbness in his legs which eventually developed into complete paralysis. Various Christian groups offered prayers to heal the young boy but to no avail. At the same time, Wangulu began "hearing strange voices" while asleep. He saw visions of people wearing Islamic *kanzus* (dress) beating drums while singing and dancing. When the local Catholic evangelist was consulted about this unusual experience, he asked the family to trust in God for healing. Still worried, and feeling dejected, the family through one of Wangulu's uncle, a Muslim, turned to the local Imam for help. The Imam offered prayers and thereafter invited Wangulu's family to embrace Islam. It was at this point that Wangulu converted to Islam. Wangulu recollected how he "felt a sense of inner peace" after his conversion. Eventually Wangulu was healed of his ailment without visiting any other medical facility. He attributed this healing to his decision to convert to Islam. Later after listening to a number of public preachers in Kakamega town near Mumias, Wangulu developed interest in *daʿwah* and was invited by one of the preachers to a process of apprenticeship in Kakamega.

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[45] Interview with Muhammed Wangulu, 18th August, 2010, Mumias

Asman Ngashe was born in 1971 in Ogallo also at Ebuhuyi village.[46] His father was a Roman Catholic while his mother was a Muslim. Like most children in Luhya culture, Ngashe identified with his father's religious tradition, Roman Catholicism. However Ngashe's father later converted to Islam influencing his son to also convert. Ngashe's traced the beginning of this journey towards becoming a preacher to his father's conversion and a subsequent "spiritual crisis". Before his conversion, a major Christian crusade was organized in Kisumu by a visiting American Evangelist known as Timothy Larry. Ngashe reported how Christians from his village attended this public meeting and returned home full of stories of how "God had transformed lives" at this crusade, including miraculously healing the physically deformed. On the evening that Ngashe was contemplating converting to Christianity, he "had a new feeling" in his heart that Islam was the right religion. This experience took place on an evening after his routine prayers.

Ngashe studied at Buhuyi primary school where he also attended the Pastoral Programme Instruction (PPI). While this programme was meant to instruct pupils in religious beliefs and practices of various religions, Ngashe stated that in his school, this was used to proselyze Muslims. Ngashe stated that the teachers used this period to ridicule Islam. As a result, Ngashe and his Muslim friend boycotted the classes and did not attend them any further lessons despite their teachers's pleas that they return. Despite of his boycott of PPI classes, Ngashe stated that he remained an outstanding student of Christian religious education. In 1985, Ngashe sat for his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). He did not proceed to secondary level of education due to his father's inability to raise school fees.

In 1998, Ngashe moved to Bungoma town where he worked as a Matatu (taxi) tout. It was while working in that town that he encountered the Al Mahid Propagation group from Tanzania. This group was especially reknowned because they moved around with an eleven year-old boy reportedly born miraculously, who displayed a mastery of both the Qur'an and the Bible. Asman requested if he could join this group of preachers but was turned down. After working for about a year in Bungoma, in 1999 Ngashe returned

[46] Interview with Asman Ngashe, 29th August 2010, Mumias

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to Mumias and was based at Mayoni shopping centre. He pointed out that at that time there were many Churches in Mayoni that organized various public preaching events. In response, Ngashe began to play Islamic sermons on his cassette player which attracted the attention of the Christians leading to heated debates about the sermons.

Ibrahim Issack was born in 1979 in Kisumu at the New Nyanza hospital.[47] Before converting to Islam, Issack was a Quaker. He regularly attended Church services at his church and was a strong member of the youth group. Occasionally on days other than Sundays, Issack joined the adult members of his church in their numerous "fellowships". One day during worship at his Quaker Church, Issack "felt a deep conviction" of his sins. This was preceded by a sermon and an invitation to members of the church to reflect over their past sins. Following this experience, Issack "gave his life to Jesus". In order to maintain the momentum of his newly found religious experience, Issack joined a Pentecostal church known as Word of Faith that was based in Kisumu. This church was well known for its programmes of rigorous Bible study and outreach. Beginning as an ordinary worshipper at this church, Issack eventually became the assistant pastor. It was while he was serving at this church that Issack began to engage in debate with Muslims in Kisumu. He recollected how he was almost physically assaulted by a mob in a debate with a Muslim.

In 1991, Issack converted to Islam. This conversion was prompted by three dreams in which he reported being tormented by evil spirits. "For those three days, I could not sleep". The spirits kept on asking him why his Christian religion could not help protect him. During the third dream, Issack was shown a tiny mosque overlooking a river near his village, and he wasdirected to visit the Imam. It was at this point that he awoke from his sleep, and decided to convert to Islam.

Compared to the earlier narratives, the conversion of Ishaq Kariuki from Christianity to Islam sounds less dramatic.[48] His parents were also devout Christians. Kariuki stated that his decision to convert to Islam in 1993 was necessitated by the various doctrinal disagreements he observed within Christianity. He argued, for example, that Protestants

[47] Interview with Ibrahim Issack, 27th October 2012.
[48] Interview with Ishaq Kariuki, 27th October 2012.

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and Roman Catholics held varying positions on the number of books that were canonical in the Bible. While the Protestants held that sixty-six books were valid, their Catholic counterparts suggested more. Kariuki stated that he found many practices within Christianity lacking scriptural foundation. He referred to the celebration of Christmas annually on the 25th of December as an example. He also argued that the rule of celibacy among Roman Catholics was an error of belief. Since his conversion, Kariuki has been engaged in public preaching in various places of Western Kenya.

There are several central characteristics that emerge from the preacher's biographies that merit reflection. First, the preachers were all former Christians from varied traditions. Second, the preachers claim to have had religious experiences, many in dreams, before their conversion. Finally, the preachers were impacted upon by the Bible in their religious formation. I would like to discuss these characteristics in greater detail.

The former Christian backgrounds of the preachers are important towards understanding the inter-religious nature of the Kenyan society that has both Muslims and Christians living side by side. In Kenya, Christians are in the majority in most towns. All the preacher's families were Christian, even though some had Muslims among close and/or distant relatives. What is clear is that all the preachers were in one way or another impacted upon by their Christian past. The Christian background of the preachers equipped them well for their engagements with other Christians in public preaching.

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As former Christians, the preachers referred authoritatively to Christian doctrines, creeds and songs. They were well conversant with key doctrines such as the miraculous birth of Jesus and his crucifixion. As will be evident in the discussion of their sermons, the preacher's awareness of Christian themes was useful in their disputation with Christians. The preachers also employed songs used in the Christian contexts. They used the songs to challenge and sometimes mock and ridicule their opponents. The preachers were adept at their occupation of double religious boundaries, speaking as Muslims but in a Christian way. This double identity was also derived from their blood relations in the community.

Because of their familial relations with Christians, the preachers were well known within the larger society. The preachers were not engaging with Christians as strangers but as kinsmen who had switched religious traditions. This context provided the preachers with a double social identity as members of their larger communities but also preachers of Islam. Such connections with Christians enabled the preachers to master their social contexts and formulate better strategies of engagements.

Extra-ordinary religious experiences played a critical role in the formation of the preachers. In their dreams, the preachers believed in their encounter with the "divine". These experiences provided the turning point in the preachers' lives, transforming them from being Christians to Muslims. Through these experiences, the preachers were persuaded that they had a calling to preach the message of Islam everywhere. In the absence of training in religious sciences and with the preachers being recent converts to Islam, these experiences supported the preachers' work amidst growing opposition from the formal religious class. It is these experiences, also, that enabled the preachers to persist with their work even when they encountered opposition from the police.

The role of the Bible in the formation of the preachers also deserves attention. Most of the preachers spoke about how they studied or even reflected on the Bible before and after their conversion to Islam. Upon his conversion, Suleiman Mazinge was introduced to the Bible by his host, Matano. Before his conversion to Islam, Salim Ndeeda reported having read "Christian literature" and the Qur'an as a way of comparing Islam and Christianity. Ishaq Kariuki reflected on the Bible, noting the disagreements among Christians about the valid number of books. Issack joined a Pentecostal church where Bible study was strictly adhered to. The preachers' familiarity with the Bible enabled them to engage with their Christian counterparts through public debate quoting various texts, with the aim of showing the falsity of the Christian tradition. The preacher's Christian past and their familiarity with the Bible exemplifies the ways in which religious traditions are in mutual tension, borrowing from each other and at the same time defining themselvesin relation to each other.

This section of the chapter sought to present and briefly analyze the key features of the life trajectories of five public preachers to be discussed. All the preachers were former

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Christians, and their family backgrounds played an important role in their religious allegiances. One common factor in all the preachers' biographies is the role of religious experience in their conversion. These experiences seemed important for their conviction as Muslims in a country dominated by Christians. Their conversions were followed by an immersion in studying the Bible in order to counter Christians. They denied that they read the works of Ahmed Deedat, but the themes that they touched on shows the impact of his pamphlets and books. A close analysis of the sermons shows how they tried to persuade their audiences of the truth of Islam.

4.3 The Sermons

As earlier indicated, a total of eighteen different sermons were recorded. For the following discussion, the focus is on only nine sermons by Suleiman Mazinge, Muhammed Wangulu, Asman Ngashe, Ishaq Kariuki and Salim Ndeeda. These sermons were given during the period of my research already stated. The selection was also based on the fact that they were the most active preachers in the town. I have chosen Suleiman Mazinge because he preached for four consecutive days in Mumias. His sermons were the most critical of the Christian tradition and attracted the attention of not only the Christians but the police as well. Wangulu preached for two days, while Ngashe and Kariuki preached for a day each. Although both Ngashe and Wangulu preached for just a day, their sermons were long.

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Public sermons were held at the Nabongo open-air market in Mumias. This market was frequented by thousands of people from far and wide. There were hundreds of youth who stood next to their bicycles (known as *boda boda* in Kenya) waiting to be hired at a fee. One could find almost anything at this market: chicken, groundnuts, *sukuma wiki* (a common vegetable), and plastic containers. In addition to the local people who frequented the market, traders also came from Bungoma, Busia, Butere, Kakamega, Eldoret and Kisumu. This market hosted numerous political meetings especially during campaigns for national general elections. The market is in close proximity to various commercial enterprises such as Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), Barclays Bank of Kenya (BBK), Equity Bank and Kenya Women Finance Trust (KWFT). There are a host of other shops near the market as well. There were several churches about 200 metres away

from the preaching field. These were the Deliverance church, Neno Evangelism Centre, Bible Way Ministries and Chrico Fellowship.

Apart from Nabongo Market, sermons were also given at Mayoni "matatu" (taxi) terminus, at the Muslim primary football grounds, and Maraba market. Public preaching also took place in towns neighbouring Mumias. Such towns included, Kakamega (East), Busia (West), Bungoma (North), and Butere (South). Normally the preachers in Mumias would move on to these towns after preaching in Mumias. Sometimes the preachers coordinated their visits to the region, and divided themselves among the various towns for preaching.

Public preaching may be held in the afternoons on any day of the week, but most events took place from Friday to Sunday. A series of sermons was arranged in such a way that the climax fell on a Sunday in order to coincide with the Christian day of prayers. Preaching on a Sunday attracted the participation of many Christians. Sundays was also the main market day at Nabongo market, allowing thousands of people visiting the market to listen to the sermons.

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Muslims were reminded about the *mhadhara* during the Friday prayers at the Mosques and invited to attend in large numbers. The publicity for the events was also conducted in other ways. Using an open truck, the organizers drove around the various residential places announcing the event with the aid of a public address system (PA). The preachers were also given a chance to announce the events in various Mosques around Mumias such as Lukoye, Matungu and Eshitukhumi.

The sermons usually began at around 2:00 p.m. and went on up to 6:00 p.m., and occasionally, they were extended up to around 7:00 p.m. Sometimes; the preaching began much earlier at around 12:00 noon. Preaching was extended whenever there was heated debate between the preacher and his interlocutor. The preachers asked the audience whether the debate should continue or not. The members of the audience shouted back "*tuendelee*" (let us continue). Preachers thrived on the presence of a big audience. The sermons became more animated as the size of the crowd increased. The preachers also endeavoured to extent the sermons when the audience was large. On the

other hand, they brought the discussions to an end when the size of the audience was going down and interest waned.

The preaching was conducted much earlier whenever the previous day's sermon came to a premature end due to heavy rains. Mumias experiences heavy rains during the months of April to June each year. Sometimes it began to rain as early as 11:00 a.m., necessitating that all activities taking place come to an end until the rain stopped. Sometimes the preachers and their followers braved the rain and carried on with the sermon. In most cases when the rain intensified, they called off the event promising to begin preaching much earlier on the following day. Another more important reason for a premature ending of a *mhadhara* and its earlier beginning the following day was the occurrence of tension and even scuffles. On one such occasion on the 25th February 2010, Muhammed Wangulu said that certain churches in Mumias were "devil worshippers". He went on to say that that some business enterprises such as Barclays Bank of Kenya were owned by "devil worshippers". Some Christians went to the local police station and lodged a complaint that Wangulu was "abusing" the Christians. The police intervened by cancelling the preaching to the utter annoyance of Muslims. This incident will be revisited later in this chapter.

In order to be allowed to preach in open spaces, the preachers were required to get a government permit. Mazinge stated that he was supported by the Muslims to pay for the permit:[49] "The Muslims at *Jamia* contributed money for the National Environmental Management (NEMA) Permit".[50] Other preachers interviewed also stated that they had to acquire permits for their events.[51] To my knowledge, nobody was refused a permit.

At the beginning of the sermons, the crowd usually numbered about two hundred people. As the sermons intensified the audience grew bigger and bigger making it

[49] Interview with Suleiman Mazinge, 13th April 2010.

[50] The National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) was established under the Enviromental Management and coordination Act (EMCA) No 8 of 1999, as the principal instrument in the Implementation of all policies relating to the environment. The Authority became operational on 1st July 2002. (Source: http:/www.nema.go.ke) cited on 30th August 2011.

[51] Interviews with Salim Ndeeda,27th March 2010, Ishaq Ngige Kariuki, 27th April 2010, Muhammed Wangulu, 18th August 2010 and Ibrahim Issack, 12th September 2011

difficult for those who arrived late to find a place to sit. A public sermon could easily grow to five hundred intensive participants/observers.

The infrastructure and seating arrangement of *mihadhara* (sermon) was significant for how the sermon and debate were staged. There was a table, a chair and a microphone for the person whose task was to audibly read both the Bible and Qur'ān. A Christian interlocutor, when there was one, sat on the opposite end of the Muslim reader of the various scriptural texts. On the opposite end sat the moderator of the session sandwiched between two Muslim preachers. He, too, had a microphone on the table in front of him. It is common to have two or three Muslim preachers taking turns to preach during one event. When no formal Christian interlocutor was present, the Muslim preacher tried to invite and/or goad one from the audience. This was an important part of the *mhadhara*, and many preachers spent considerable effort to ensure that a "debate" was staged.

There was provision for seating places for visiting *Imams* from local Mosques and other prominent Muslim traders in Mumias. On a preaching event of 26th February 2010, there were some Muslim traders and politicians, including Hamisi Imbuye, a civic leader, and Hussein Shingora, a trader who donated money towards the cost of the event. The rest of the participants stood in a big circle around the preacher. The Christians stood in one corner of the preaching site waiting for the event to begin. They would not have been identified until the preacher asked Muslims present to identify themselves by raising their hands. Women had a separate space reserved for them at a considerable distance away from the men. They covered their heads with headscarves in accordance with Islamic norms. Some participants had pens and pieces of paper and made notes of the various Qur'anic and Biblical texts used by the preacher. The organizers also made sound recordings of the sermons for mass distribution. A young man sold compact disks at a hundred Kenya shillings in 2012 (equivalent to $1.25). Other items like Qur'ans, white caps and prayer mats were also on sale.

A public address system was used to amplify the sermon. This device was powered by a small red generator placed immediately behind the preacher. There were three big speakers strategically hoisted facing different directions. There was one microphone for

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the Islamic preacher, another for his Christian counterpart and a third for the reader of the Qur'ān. During the sermon of 22ndMarch 2010, I witnessed the preacher appealing to his Muslim audience to contribute money towards the buying of a new public address system. The preacher also chided Muslims that they were not as generous as Christians who contributed massively for their preacher's welfare.

The sermons touched on three main themes namely; belief, ritual and social issues. The preachers mainly used the Bible and in few cases, the Qur'an. In most cases there was an interlocutor present while in a few cases the preachers managed to find an interlocutor from the audience. The preachers and their interlocutors took differing positions on matters of biblical interpretation leading to a stalemate. All the sermons were inconclusive with the preaching resorting to various rhetorical means to declare victory over their opponents and to demonstrate the futility of the Christian tradition. These aspects of the sermons will be demonstrated in detail in the next session.

4.3.1 "We must Debate with one another"

The first sermon by Muhammed Wangulu was presented on the 26th February 2010 at Nabongo market. On the day before this event, there had been a conflict between Muslims and Christians as pointed out earlier in this chapter. My Christian respondents explained that Wangulu had begun to preach at Nabongo Market when trouble started.[52] The preacher made remarks to the effect that some Christians were devil worshippers because they knelt in front of idols in their churches. Among other arguments, the preacher also stated that only Muslims understood the meaning of ritual cleanliness before going to pray. Unlike Christians who prayed while "stinking in all manner of filth", Muslims were keen to be pure before approaching God. The Christians present were offended by the preacher's remarks and reported the incident at the local police station in Mumias. The police intervened while Wangulu was preaching and ordered the meeting to stop. The Muslims marched to the District Commissioner's office and complained that they were being discriminated against as Christians always held their meetings without interference. The District Commissioner warned the Muslims to

[52] Interview with David Andanje, Mumias 27th February 2010.

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keep peace in the conduct of their affairs, promising to attend the following day's event. This incident set the mood for the following day's event.

There was a big crowd of people in attendance, numbering about five hundred. The majority of the members of the audience were Muslims. They were wearing *Kanzus* and Islamic caps. There were also some Christians present who could be seen whispering to each other, perhaps in anticipation of the duel that was about to begin. On the opposite end sat the preacher, Wangulu, who was surrounded by Muslim youth, some of whom wore white caps. The mood was set for a preaching "contest". The preacher went straight into the opening prayer before announcing the theme of his sermon as: "Jesus was a Muslim". He explained that prayer was necessary in order for the sermon to go on peacefully. I observed some Muslims extend their forearms in supplication while Christians closed their eyes during the prayer. As he prayed the preacher paused at certain moments while the Muslims responded in unison "*āmīn*". I noted that the content of the prayer was a commentary on the social challenges facing the community in Mumias such as unemployment, immorality and insecurity. The prayer thus proceeded:

> And for him who has no work, almighty Allah grant him work,
> Not just any work, we have work even in alcohol selling joints,
> Which will not bring you blessings in this world and in the hereafter
> Which shall be *fitna* to you on the last day when
> God will ask you on the last day why you were selling alcohol.

The above prayer set the scene for the preaching and the contest that was to follow. The preacher spent most of the time arguing on the necessity for Muslims and Christians to gather for debate. By 5.00 p.m, he had still not gotten to the theme. He invited any "knowledgeable Christian" to present himself for a debate. Although there were many Christians present, none came forward. Wangulu pleaded "God is calling Muslims and Christians to engage in debate so as to find the truth". After much prodding from Wangulu, the moderator declared the end of the meeting promising that the sermon would go on the following day. The failure by the preacher to address the anticipated theme was not uncommon. The preachers did not follow the promised themes but instead deviated from time to time.

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This sermon had some salient features that merit discussion. It was largely influenced by its immediate context which was the conflict on the day preceding the event. Wangulu started the session with a prayer that focused mainly on the social challenges within the community. The preacher spent considerable amount of time justifying the need for debate between Muslims and Christians. Wangulu, like other preachers that we will discuss later, tried hard to get Christian interlocutors to "debate" with him. Unlike some subsequent sermons where there were interlocutors ready to engage, this was not the case. Instead the preacher spent a considerable amount of time defending the need for "debate" between Muslims and Christians. Debate underlined an important feature of Muslim public preaching in Mumias and elsewhere. This debate was reflected in the stage and places occupied by the preacher and his interlocuters. It revealed an important part of Muslim self-understanding that the public space was a stage where the truth had to be revealed through debate.

4.3.2 "Jesus was human and Muslim"

Wangulu continued his third sermon on the 27th of February, 2010. On this day he addressed the theme that he had earlier promised. He began by stating that there were numerous Biblical references that addressed the topic of the nature of Jesus. Wangulu stated that in Matthew 13beginning from verse 55 people acknowledged that Jesus was the son of the Carpenter. He also observed that Jesus' mother was Mary and that James, Simon and Judas were Christ's brothers. Wangulu added that people were aware that Jesus had sisters and wondered why Christians preached that Jesus was the Son of God. Based on the above Biblical text, Wangulu demonstrated that Christians were wrong in ascribing divinity to Christ. He further elaborated that Jesus was just an ordinary faithful prophet of God whom God used in a special way to convey his message, the gospel (*injil*). Wangulu went on to state that the subject of the nature Jesus was clearly shown in the sacred book of Muslims as well. Without providing the specific text from the Qur'an Wangulu argued:

> We Muslims believe that Jesus was one of the messengers of God, that
> He was the Christ born miraculously without any human intervention,
> That he gave life to the dead by God's permission and that he healed
> Those born blind and the lepers by God's permit

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Having set out his argument, first from the Bible and secondly from the Qur'an, Wangulu posed a question to the Christians present: "How come Christians claim to know Jesus more than us Muslims, when there is every evidence that Islam teaches a lot about Jesus?" Wangulu argued that the true spirit of charity that Muslims display always towards Jesus and his mother Mary derived from the fountain of Islam, the holy Qur'an. Moreover, Wangulu argued that the Christians were ignorant about the fact that Muslims do not take the holy name of Jesus without saying -*Eisa, alaiha assalam* (Jesus, peace be upon him). Wangulu put to rest his case by stating that "Jesus was a Muslim prophet".

At this meeting James Lwande raised his hand and was given an opportunity to ask Wangulu: "*Tupe maandiko ya Qur'an kutia nguvu maada yako …"* (Give us some evidence from the Qur'an in order to back your argument). Wangulu responded by stating that Jesus was mentioned in the Qur'an 25 times. He gave some examples of verses from the Qur'an:

> We gave Jesus, the son of Mary clear signs and strengthened him with the
> Holy Spirit (2:87). Oh Mary God giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him:
> His name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary (3:45). Christ Jesus
> The son of Mary was [no more than] an apostle of God (4:171).

The Christian interlocutor intervened again protesting that even though the Qur'an mentioned Jesus in a number of verses, this was not valid as it missed one central aspect about who Jesus was: "The son of God". In response, Wangulu laughed and said that he expected that kind of objection from the Christian, as that was the pet topic of most Christians without *elimu* (knowledge). Lwande responded by stating that the nature of Christ was central to Christianity. The Muslim preacher ignored Lwande's response and instead shouted "*Takbīr*" to which all Muslims responded in unison "*Allah Akbar*" (God is great).

In the sermon, Wangulu sought to put forward the case of Jesus as being human and a Muslim, in according with Muslim belief. He presented "evidence" from the Bible such as Matthew 13:55. In response, the Christian insisted that the preacher should provide evidence for this position from the Qur'an. But the Christian wanted evidence that Jesus

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was the Son of God. In the absence of such Qur'anic evidence, the Christians did not accept the Muslim position. Both preacher and interlocutor were talking at cross purposes, with neither of them willing to give up their position. It seems that, in spite of an interlocutor, no debate was possible. Wangulu resorted to rhetoric to end the session by shouting "*Takbīr*". This sermon demonstrated the desire for debate; more pointedly, it demonstrated the need for the Muslim preacher to prove that his position was reflected in the Bible.

4.3.3 "Was Jesus the son of God?"

I now turn to Asman Ngashe's sermon at Nabongo market on 30th February, 2010. He, too, approached the topic of the nature of Christ. This particular sermon involved a disputation between Ngashe and James Maloba. Here was another "debate" that is worth a closer examination.

Ngashe argued that nowhere in the Bible did Mary tell Jesus that "your father is God". Ngashe countered that the name "Jesus" was given to him in accordance with the prophecy of the angel. Ngashe quoted Luke 2:21: "A week later, when the time came for the baby to be circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name which the angel had given him before he had been conceived". Ngashe argued that this name had nothing to do with Jesus' divinity. Moreover, Jesus underwent all the ritual ceremonies required of Jews. Ngashe quoted Luke 2:22-24 to support his claim:

> The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it written in the law of the Lord

Ngashe further argued that the idea of the divinity of Jesus was made up by the fathers of the church: "As far as I know, God did not marry at any one time and we have never got any information that he tried to engage a woman and was refused". He also made reference to John 8:40 stating that Jesus referred to himself as a person, not the son of God. Jesus did not have any association with God and was not even the second person of the trinity.

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At this point, Maloba intervened and requested that the reader read John 1:1.5. Kassim Jamal, the reader obliged and proceeded: "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God, inside him was life and darkness could not overcome him". Ngashe quickly interjected and asked Maloba to explain to the audience what the phrase "him" was referring to. Maloba answered back explaining that verse 10 of the chapter made it clear that it was Jesus who became God. He argued: "if you look at the reading closely, it indicates that Jesus participated in creation. But you [Ngashe] still hold that he is not the Son of God". Ngashe interjected at this point "Jesus does not have any power at all". He further directed the reader to read Luke 1:26:

> **Jamal:** Luke 1:26... In the sixth month, the Angel Gabriel encountered God, Go up to Galilaya in Nazareth because a Virgin Mary has a got a baby called Jesus.
> **Ngashe**: Proceed; I want to interview him there
> **Jamal:** And the Angel entered in the house and said "Greetings, you have been given grace by God, the Lord is with you. And Mary was distressed because of the words of the Angel. And the Angel told him; do not be afraid Mary because you have grace from God, Behold, you will conceive a male child and his name you will call him, Jesus.
> **Ngashe**: Please give him the microphone. I want us to go slowly so that People can understand. When the Angel came to Mary did he bring her a baby or what?
> **Maloba**: He brought a message
> **Ngashe**: He uttered or not?
> **Maloba**: He uttered.
> **Ngashe:** From his mouth came forth what?
> **Maloba**: Words.
> **Ngashe**: And where did these words come from?
> **Maloba**: From God.
> **Ngashe:** So that?
> **Maloba**: She will give birth…
> **Ngashe**: So what came to Mary?
> **Maloba**: Listen to the words carefully, Mary says: How will these happen yet I do not know a man?
> **Ngashe**: Listen, what did the angel bring to Mary?
> **Maloba:** He brought words.
> **Ngashe**: Message from whom?
> **Maloba**: From God.
> **Ngashe**: Message from whom?
> **Maloba**: From God.
> **Ngashe**: So Jesus was created from what?
> **Maloba**: We weeh …
> *(Crowd laughs).*
> **Ngashe**: *Takbīr*!

Ngashe gave Maloba the microphone and created a dramatic exchange which led to his desired interpretation. He ignored Maloba's plea to read the text in full. Ngashe's public

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display set up Maloba to agree that Jesus was human. Maloba was dismayed but the Muslim audience loved the exchange and applauded in victory.

The disputation between Ngashe and Maloba ended with the former insisting that God created Jesus, and therefore Christ was human. Like the sermon by Wangulu, this sermon contains several features that should be highlighted. First, using the Bible, Ngashe disputed the Christian teaching on the divinity of Jesus. He used the Bible, but gave it a new effect to support his argument. Unlike the previous sermon by Wangulu, Ngashe did not take recourse to the Qur'an to adduce evidence in support of his position. In fact, both preachers relied on the Bible to support their positions with each of them interpreting the Bible to suit his own argument. By closely interrogating Maloba towards a literal meaning of the Bible, Ngashe argued that Jesus was human, not divine. Secondly, there was no agreement between Ngashe and his interlocutor as both took different positions on how to interpret the Bible. Ngashe also used dramatic "dialogue" to support his Biblical interpretation. He did this by asking that the Bible be read while he repeated certain verses to validate his point. We see here how the Muslim preachers appear to be arguing on the basis of Biblical text, but relied equalled on the effect of the public engagement to support their interpretation. Like the others, moreover, this was another demonstration of a "debate" to find the truth in the public sphere.

4.3.4"The Holy Spirit"

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The sermon by Ishaq Kariuki was preached on 13th March, 2011 at Nabongo market. He focused on a different topic from the previous sermon. Kariuki's interlocutor was called Mureithi. Mureithi was aged 29 and worshipped Faith Evangelistic Church near Mumias. He was a regular debator with Muslim preachers, using this opportunities to "stop the lies being spread about Christianity".

In this sermon, Kariuki insisted that the reference to the "comforter" in John 16:12 referred to Muhammed. In response, Mureithi argued that when this promise was made, the disciples were in Jerusalem. It was impossible then that the "promised helper" would be born in Mecca and not in Jerusalem. Kariuki, then, requested that that the actual text of the Bible should read. The reader obliged:

> Jesus said, I still have so much to tell you, but you cannot understand it right now,
> but him when he will come that spirit of truth he will lead you
> unto all truth because he will not speak on his own accord. But all that
> he will hear he will speak them and the things to come he will pass to you
> the information. He will glorify me because he will be in one accord with me
> and to pass to you information. And all that the Father has is mine, that is
> why I say he will tell you my word and pass to you the information (John 16:12).

Kariuki commented on this reading by stating that the text was speaking about the spirit in human terms, and that this was in reference to Muhammed. Mureithi objected stating that the spirit was not human. The spirit could not hear and speak as he had no eyes, ears or even a mouth. Kariuki responded by citing the Qur'an 61:6. At this point the Christian interlocutor protested demanding that Kariuki gives evidence from the Bible, not the Qur'an. Kariuku responded that in John 16:12 Jesus foretold the coming of Muhammed:

> Jesus said, I still have so much to tell you but you cannot
> comprehend them this time. But when he comes, he will
> teach you everything.

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While Mureithi was attempting to develop an argument on the nature of the soirit, Kariuki was insistent on his specific identity. Like other Muslim debaters such as Ahmed Deedat, he wanted to show that the "comforter" predicted by the Holy Spirit in John 16:12 was Muhammed. The Christian interlocutor wanted him to quote the Bible only, but Kariuki used both the Bible and the Qur'an to make his point.

The main theme of this sermon was the identity of the "comforter". In this disputation, the Bible was used as the main source of evidence. Apart from his insistence on the use of the Bible, Mureithi in his response to Kariuki used a historical argument concerning the place where Muhammed was born. This exchange was a good demonstration of the evidence on which the debate was taking place. Muslim preachers were quick to refer to the Bible to support their arguments, with occasional references to the Qur'an. In close exchange, however, it became evident how difficult it was for scriptures to become the

standard reference point. The exchange between Mureithi and Kariuki showed that a common reference could not be found, as the texts were open to interpretation. In this public exchange, the debate could not find a reliable independent foundation. The Muslim preacher was satisfied but the Christian interlocutor and audience were not.

4.3.5 "One God, different places of Worship?"

Salim Ndeeda's sermon at Nabongo Market on 13th March, 2010 addressed the question of the "true" religion for mankind. Ndeeda used a combination of Qur'an and the Bible to put forward his position. But the central focus turned around the validity of a Muslim claim on the basis of the Bible.

Ndeeda stated that according to the Qur'an 2:15, all people originally subscribed to Islam. Later, other traditions emerged that corrupted the original purpose of God that all mankind worship the same God. Ndeeda quoted Ephesians 4:5-6 "There is only Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all". God gave only one religion to Moses, Jesus and Muhammed. This religion was Islam not Christianity, according to Ndeeda. Ndeeda adduced further support from the Qur'an quoting Surah 30:30: "Then show your face towards the right religion, the religion of Islam". The preacher further argued that even Jesus, the "alleged" founder of Christianity was a Muslim, not a Christian. This was because he worshipped in a mosque not a church as Christians did. This last statement became the central focus of the sermon.

To support this assertion Ndeeda quoted Luke 4:16 which stated that Jesus went to Nazareth and entered in a synagogue, which when translated means "a mosque". The preacher then invited any Christians present to pose any questions. Christopher Lubale presented himself and rejected Ndeeda's interpretation of the place of prayer mentioned in the text. He further stated that the synagogue was a place of worship for Jews. Lubale opined that the word "mosque" was not anywhere in the numerous translations of the Bible. Ndeeda quickly interjected stating that the word "mosque" had been erased from all versions of the Bible because its presence would have led to mass conversions of Christians to Islam. Lubale protested again, saying that Ndeeda was

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making sweeping allegations and that he should provide support for the alleged "erasing" of portions of the Bible by Christians: "Tell us who and when was the Bible changed and show us the original copy". Ndeeda responded saying that the fact that there were numerous versions of the same Bible was an indicator that it could not be trusted.

In this sermon, Ndeeda claim was challenged. And it seemed that he could not provide a justification for his claim that the synagogue referred to in Luke (4; 16) was a mosque. He himself was satisfied that both the Bible and Qur'an agreed on the veracity of Islam over against Christianity. Again, the sermon staged a "debate" on the truth of a religion. And the central claim by Ndeeda, the Muslim preacher, was resting on a Bible text.

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4.3.6 "Was Jesus Crucified on the Cross?"

We have now seen how the preachers refered repeatedly to the Bible to support the truth of Islam. I now turn to Suleiman Mazinge's sermons which take a more complex approach. His one sermon clearly rejected the Bible, but we then see him returning to the Bible in subsequent semond. As the most popular preacher, Mazinge's treatment of scripture deserves closer attention.

Mazinge preached at Nabongo market on 16 March, 2010. The people in attendance numbered about 500. The sermon focused on a historic theme namely the crucifixion of Jesus. On this day there was no Christian interlocutor against Mazinge, but Christians arrived at the close and explained that they had been held up at a similar event elsewhere.

Mazinge started the sermon by explaining that the meeting was a "dialogue about all the books" which had been revealed. He demonstrated his expertise of various sacred texts by identifying them and their dates:

> Moses, the Prophet, sent us the book of the Law meaningthe Taurat in 1010 BC, other sources state it was in 1350 BCWe have this book here. The second book is Psalms, *Zabur* ofProphet David, to whom it was revealed in 970 BC in the country which in the past was called Seif and whose namewas changed to Syria.

> The third book is called the Gospel, Injilwhich was revealed to Jesus? The Qur'an was revealed to Muhammedin 610... These are the books we are using to educate eachother the things of God…

After presenting the books as sources for the knowledge of God, Mazinge was ready to approach his topic for the day. Mazinge asked Christians present to be ready for an engagement with him on these books. Mazinge introduced the main theme of his sermon "Was Jesus Crucified on the Cross?"It would appear that Mazinge wanted this question answered in reference to the texts that he had presented. Mazinge quoted Qur'an 4:157 to build up his case:

> Those children of Israel say that we have killed the Messiah Jesus, the son of Mary and the Prophet of God, they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him. But the exchanged him with another person whom they thought was Jesus.

Mazinge repeated after the reader those sections of the verse that he wanted to emphasize. He repeatedly emphasized that Jesus was not crucified. He stated that Christians who believed this teaching were in error and would end up in hell unless they embraced Islam. Mazinge then stated that if the scriptures were interrogated, no evidence would be found for the alleged crucifixion of Jesus. Such a teaching, he argued, was mere human imagination that had no basis in *maandiko* (scriptures). Mazinge also contested the belief among Christians that God punished Jesus for the sins of others. "God does not act like that," he stated.

Like the other preachers, Mazinge quoted evidence from the Bible to say that Jesus was not crucified. He argued that according to Deuteronomy 19:15, it was important that there be two or three witnesses before passing judgement in any dispute. Mazinge then applied this principle to the Bible's testimony on the crucifiction. He requested tthe reader to open the three Gospel accounts about the crucifixion of Jesus in Mark 15:28, John 19:14 and also Luke and Matthew. Each of the various accounts of the gospels provided different times when Christ was crucified, claimed Mazinge. Therefore, he argued, the Bible on its own account could not used as evidence. The meaning of Deuteronomy (19:15) implied that the narratives of Mark, John, Luke and Matthew could not be relied upon. In triumph, Mazinge quoted Qur'an Surah 4:157-158:

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> That they said (in boast) we killed Christ JesusThe son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah, butThey killed him not, not crucified him, but so it was madeTo appear to them...

On the basis of the above reading, Mazinge argued that it was not Jesus that was crucified but Simon of Cyrene who was forced to carry the cross of Jesus. Mazinge also quoted a *hadith* to support his argument: "God does not oppress anyone". Mazinge's main point was that it would go against the just nature of God to punish Jesus for sins he did not commit. That would be tantamount to being oppressive on the part of God. He further raised difficulties of using the letters of Paul stating that they were composed much later after the period of Jesus. Mazinge also ruled out the use of the Old Testament as evidence for Christ's alleged crucifixion. He argued that the Old Testament was dated before the period of Jesus.

Mazinge also referred to popular songs on the Christian teaching on the crucifixion. At one point of his sermon, he broke into song: *"Walimpiga msalabani, Wakamtemea mate, Yesu alilia Mungu wangu, Mungu wangu mbona unaniacha"* (They beat him [Jesus] at the cross, they spit at him, and Jesus cried, my God, my God why have you forsaken me). Mazinge would have learned this son as part of his training as a Christian. The crown laughed as Mazinge sang this song. They seemed to appreciate the ability of Mazinge to sing songs used within a Christian setting. However, after singing, Mazinge quickly dismissed the message of the song calling it "rubbish". The song was clearly part of Mazinge's ability as a popular preacher, perhaps of some entertaining value.

However, I would argue that the main substance of Mazinge's sermon continued the tone set by the other preachers that I have presented so far. Mazinge had opened the sermon by presenting the books through which God speaks to humanity. He showed, however, that based on the Bible, the accounts of the crucifiction in the New Testament were not reliable. The Qur'an emerged as a "proof" for the true position. Mazinge resorted to various rhetorical devices to make his point. He repeated various texts as they were read. He also used singing hymns to dismiss Christian teaching.

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4.3.7 "Men and Women in Public Spaces"

In the next two sermons, Mazinge turns again to the Bible to show that Christians should follow Islam. This time, he turns away from the nature of Jesus to the practice of religion in Mumias. This sermon was presented on the 20th March, 2010 at *Nabongo* Market. This was a well-attended event with an average attendance of about 1000 people. The sermon involved an engagement between Mazinge and Moses Lubanga who worshipped at the Redeemed Gospel Church in Mumias and described himself as "a committed Christian who would do anything to defend Jesus".[53]

The theme of the sermon was an argument against the practice of mixing males and females in public spaces. Mazinge set the mood for the disputation by asking Muslims and Christians at the event to identify themselves:

> May I see how many Muslims are present here,
> Could I see your hands up? Only Muslims.
> Put your hands down. And the Christians who love Jesus, May I also see your hands, don't be afraid. If You are a Christian and you love Jesus, you are saved
> Raise your hand.

Mazinge was satisfied that he had an audience of Muslims and Christians in which he could present his debate. It was a powerful gesture that identified the two antagonistic parties to each other. Mazinge then requested the reader to read a text from Zachariah 12:12. The reader proceeded:

> **Reader**: Zachariah 12:12
> **Mazinge**: Eh, what does Zachariah state?
> **Reader:** And the earth shall mourn
> **Mazinge:** And the earth shall mourn, not we human beings who mourn in funerals?
> **Reader:** Every person on his own ...
> **Mazinge**: Every person on his own ...
> **Reader**: The households of David on their own
> **Mazinge:** The household of David on their own
> **Reader:** And women alone
> **Mazinge:** [with emphasis] And women alone! Not in the company with men as theChristians do. When you sit next to a femaleand your thighs are close to hers, shall we have a funeral there?
> When God established boundaries between males and females did he not have a reason for that?

[53] Interview with Moses Lubanga, 23rd March 2010.

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Mazinge challenged Christians to "give evidence" that allowed the mixing of men and women in public places. He stated that God had commanded males and females to be seated separately during worship, funerals and other public occasions. Mazinge argued that because of the natural attraction to sex that men and women have towards each other, it was necessary that they sit separate so as to worship God. Mazinge argued that to fail to adhere to this command by God would invite his wrath on the day of judgement.

At this point of the debate, Lubanga stepped forward and told Mazinge that according to the New Testament, all the ritual laws found in the Old Testament were null and void. He elaborated further that with the coming of Jesus there was no distinction between Male and female, Jew and Greek, circumcised and uncircumcised. Mazinge asked for a specific biblical text to back his argument. Lubanga who was clearly unprepared to quote a text answered that he needed more time to find one. In turn, Mazinge offered to assist him find the appropriate text which elicited laughter from the audience. "*Takbīr*", shouted Mazinge. The crowd shouted back "Allah Akbar!" to the utter embarrassment of Lubanga. Mazinge asked him to strive to acquire enough "*elimu*" (knowledge) before attempting to engage with him.

Mazinge now turned his address to fellow Muslims. He stated that some of them were worse than Christians as they flouted Islamic teachings. For Mazinge, Christians could be forgiven because they lacked knowledge, but not the Muslims who already knew the truth. Mazinge described such Muslims as "Muslims by name". They did not attend daily worship and drank alcohol. Such Muslims were lost and doomed for hell unless they returned to the true religion.

It is possible to identify the distinctive approach that Mazinge brought in to this second engagement. In the first sermon, he had indicated the Biblical witness of crucifiction were not reliable. But he always supported his arguments by turning to other Biblical verses. He had turned to Deutoronomy to support his rejection ofNew Testament books. Now, he turns to the Bibleto support his argument for proper public ritual. The Bible, in his account, was showing that the Muslim practice of separating men and women in places of workshop was correct. In his use of the Bible, Mazinge's goal was to discredit

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Christianity and persuade Christians to follow Islam. But he always presented Biblical texts to make his argument. No doubt, the effectiveness of Mazinge's presentation relied equally on the drama that he brought to the presentation. He identified Muslims and Christians in the audience, setting up the audience to join his debate. This distinction was necessary in providing him support as he shouted "Takbīr," and trumped Christians with his "evidence". Mazinge also repeated the Biblical verses as they were read out loud,adding more effect to them. In the end, however, Mazinge showed also that the Bible was the justification for Christians to be good Muslims.

4.3.8 "How to worship"

The next sermon by Mazinge was similar to the previous one in terms of its focus on ritual. It was preached on 19thMarch, 2010 at Nabongo market. Mazinge's interlocutor was David Manya.

In this sermon Mazinge again began his sermon by quoting from the Bible. He quoted Matthew 4:10: "Jesus said, Away from me Satan, It is written, worship the Lord your God and serve him alone". He then argued that the term worship gave the notion of prostrating which Christians do not do. Mazinge continued:

> Those who prostrate bear a mark on their faces
> Because of touching the ground daily.
> Where is your mark, if you worship in the correct way?
> You are opposing God. Jesus says people should prostrate beforeGod.

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In addition to the use of the Bible, Mazinge also presented evidence from the Qur'ān. He requested the reader to read Qur'an 48:26. As the reader proceeded to read, Mazinge in his usual style interjected to emphasize certain aspects of the text:

> **Reader:** Muhammed is a prophet of God and together
> With him are those with good hearts before...
> They come together among themselves and you
> Will see them prostrate before God together
> Looking for the blessing of God and his promise. Their marks...
> **Mazinge:** The person who prostrates has a mark, listen
> **Reader:** ... are on their faces

Mazinge challenged Christians to convert to Islam in order to learn how to worship God properly. David Manya intervened at this point and objected to Mazinge's emphasis on the need for prostrating while praying. Manya observed that what was important in worship was the internal disposition of the worshipper and not his external action. He further criticized Mazinge for preaching about the need for one to have a sign on his forehead as evidence that he prostrated. David Manya did not stop there, but turned to the preacher: "Mazinge, show me you mark!" The crowd burst out in laughter.

This semon showed thet Mazinge continued to prove his point by quoting from the Bible, then leading with the Qur'an. He also paid attention to good rhetorical skills in presenting his sermon. The interlocutor's point was equally valid, and unseated the confidence of Mazinge in public. The crowd, including the Muslims, appreciated that Mazinge did not have a mark to show his devotion. Nevertheless, Mazinge's sermon demonstrates the debate and the Biblical foundation on which Muslim preachers were entering the public sphere.

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I would like to summarise my discussion on the nature of the sermons by highlighting their salient features. From their Christian past, all the preachers extensively used the Bible in varied ways. All the preachers used the Bible to support their arguments. Such preachers interpreted the Bible from Qur'anic perspectives. In the first sermon, Wangulu used evidence from the Bible to support his argument that Jesus was human, not divine. The Bible was also used by Kariuki in his argument about the identity of the "comforter". However in this case, Kariuki also relied on a historical argument and the Qur'an to support the truth of Islam. Mazinge's approach to the Bible was a variation from all the previous preachers. He began by rejecting the reliability of the Bible thereby demolishing it as a source of evidence. Interestingly, however, Mazinge kept on coming back to the Bible for evidence on other points and in other preaching locations.

Second, in their attempts to use the Bible, the preachers' plans were disrupted by Christian interlocutors who presented objections to the preachers' use of textual sources and offered alternative interpretations. Sometimes the interlocutors demanded for "evidence" from different textual sources. At other times they completely rejected the interpretations given. They also challenged the preachers' positions citing historical

evidence. Most of these engagements ended without a clear "winner" in the debate. However, it is important to recognize that Muslim public preaching was a staged debate, reflected in the setting of the scene, the placing of interlocutors, and the call by Muslims to argue, debate and prove themselves.

The preachers also used various rhetorical approaches. This is not surprising given the very long duration of these public encounters. They repeated verses of the Bible and the Qur'an as they were read in public. Through using such repetitions, the preachers were able to emphasize certain points that they wished to make. They also sang Christian songs to match their appeal to Biblical texts. While singing, they changed their voices and body movement to emphasize certain points. The preachers engaged with the audience, asking them to argue. The preachers also relied on the audience for support as they publicly called out "*Takbīr*" and the Muslim audience responded "Allah Akbar".

4.4 Conclusion

Public preachers and their sermons represent new religious authorities. All the preachers I interviewed are former Christians who strive to occupy a position of authority in society. Their claim to authority is based on their religious experiences. The preachers' religious encounters were varied but all impacted on their decisions to begin preaching. The preachers used their knowledge and experience of Christianity to make a claim for the superiority of Islam on the basis of the Bible. While more orthodox Islamic preachers would support their arguments by relying on an authoritative discursive tradition where their sources would be the Qur'an and *hadith,* the sermons demonstrate how these preachers were attempting to find a foundation on the Bible for Islamic arguments. As former Christians, they used the Bible easily to support their positions, with liberal references to the Qur'an. The main foundation is the Bible, even though the theology was Islamic. Mazinge was the most voiceferous opponent of the Biblical narratives relating to Jesus, but he repeatedly returned to it to support his Islamic arguments. In their attempts to achieve this goal, the public preachers encountered Christian interlocutors who asked questions and challenged their use of textual sources. However the Muslim preachers overcame this challenge through staged events using various rhetorical means. In their staging of their sermons, they used the

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Bible, Christian beliefs and songs. This approach proved effective in their work even though their Christian interlocutors and many in the audience remained unconvinced.
Finally, the public sermons in the public were staged as debate and contestations. They set up the public preaching places as debating rooms, where preachers, supporters and opponents took their place. They then framed questions for debate, and then produced evidence to prove their point. Irrespective of the merits of their argument, it is important to recognize how *daʿwah* in this manifestation was a form of public dual. We have seen in a previous chapter that *daʿwah* had been adopted for Islamic self-renewal from al-Banna and other modern Islamic movements. There were elements of self-renewal evident, especially in Mazinge, but the dominant approach was marked by debate, competition and contestation.

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CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC PREACHING BY PENTECOSTAL PREACHERS IN MUMIAS, WESTERN KENYA

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined Muslim public preachers and their sermons. Various Christian groups in Western Kenya are also engaged in public preaching. This chapter focuses on how this practice was exemplified among Pentecostal preachers in Mumias. Using this set of preaching events, this chapter examines the meaning of mission in the public sphere of Mumias.

The preaching events were staged in various public places such as open markets, besides roads, in soccer grounds and in halls. The chapter first interrogates the preachers' life stories with the goal of establishing their formative influences. It examines when and where the preacher's were born, their family, religious and educational backgrounds. Secondly, the chapter discusses the nature of their sermons by focussing on various aspects such as the venues, time, and themes and how the sermons were approached.

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An important finding of the research was that all the Pentecostal preachers had converted from mainline Churches[54] to various Pentecostal traditions. Their conversion was occasioned by varied religious encounters that impacted on their public engagements. The family and schooling contexts of the preachers also impacted on their conversion. It was within the contexts of their families that the preachers first came into contact with Christianity. Upon joining schools and colleges, the preachers were also impacted by the Christian associations there, turning them into active preachers. They believed that God had called them to mission, and started moving from place to place preaching Christianity and calling upon fellow Christians to re-join their Church.

Unlike the debate and polemics of Muslim preachers, all the Pentecostal preachers recruited new converts from within the Christian tradition. They were not directly

[54] By "mainline" Churches, I am referring to large historic denominations such as Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Christian groups.

addressing Muslims. They appealed to Christians to renew their acceptance of Jesus in their lives and allow themselves to "being saved" or "being born again". The sermons were an extension of established Churches. The preachers called the new converts to join their own churches where their newly found faith would be nurtured.

This chapter is based on field-work conducted in Mumias, Western Kenya between November 2009 and November 2012. During this period, I attended 18 Christian preaching events. Although my data is more extensive, the chapter focuses on 5 biographies of preachers and their sermons. These preachers were the most active in the period of my research.

5.2 The Preachers

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It is important that we provide some general information about all the eighteen preachers before narrowing down the discussion to only five. All the preachers were youthful males between thirty and fifty five years old. They were all married with children. The preachers also had varied levels of education, ranging from those with only secondary school certificates to those with university degrees. The preachers had varied religious experiences that they said led them to convert from mainline churches to various Pentecostal groups. Following their religious encounters, the preachers desired to join new churches where they believed the Holy Spirit was at work and mission was undertaken. In their new Churches, they were heavily involved in various outreach activities. All the preachers attended some form of formal Christian theological training at colleges and schools, as part of their ministerial formation. It is in these educational institutions that they developed their preaching skills. Amongst all the preachers, only two had acquired extensive theological education.

5.2.1 Pastor Daniel Mandila[55]

[55] Interview with Pastor Daniel Mandila, 16th March 2010, Mumias

I now turn to the first preacher whom I interviewed. Daniel Mandila was the most articulate of the preachers I encountered. His spoken English and general outlook was polished. Mandila was very receptive when I requested to interview him. He ushered me into his office and asked his office assistant to offer me a cup of *chai* (tea) as we began our discussion. Mandila is from the Tachoni sub-tribe of the Luhya tribe. He was born in the former Kakamega District (Present Matete District) of Western Province, Kenya. His parents were members of Friends Church (Quakers). Mandila's local pastor at Friends Church (also called Daniel) baptised the young boy prophesying that he would grow to become a great preacher like the Biblical Daniel. Following his parent's footsteps, Mandila became a devoted member of Friends Church and was actively involved in various youth activities such as drama and singing. He was also a member of the worship team, using that opportunity to perfect his singing skills. Mandila could easily remember some of the songs they used to sing when they were young at his local Church. He also remembered various people who exercised pastoral roles at his Church.

As a young person, Mandila contemplated about his future and wondered about the best vocation for him when he completed school: "Like every young person I was ambitious and wanted to become a famous politician". It was in this state of reflection that Mandila heard a voice asking him to make a choice between becoming a preacher or a politician. Initially he was hesitant to become a preacher. He explained that Pastors in his village had a bad name as they were viewed as poor and worldly. Mandila remembered several occasions when his parents had to support their local pastor to enable him buy food for his family.

Mandila said he was "saved" after listening to a powerful sermon at a local open-air preaching event. He felt remorseful for his "sins" and gave his life to Jesus. After this experience, Mandila left the Friends Church and joined the Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa Church (PEFA) in Kitale town. He explained the reason for joining of the new church: "I was looking for a Church that was full of the spirit of God and actively in involved in outreach activities". As time went on, Mandila became an active member of his newly found PEFA Church participating in singing and giving of testimonies.

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Mandila attended basic education near his village leading to the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) in 1979. He then joined Kivaywa High School where he subsequently sat for his Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE). For his advanced secondary education, Mandila joined Kabarnet High School where he qualified to join Egerton University. As he waited to join University, Mandila was actively involved in various mission activities such as youth fellowships, prayer meetings and preaching:

> I was away from home during most weekends planting the goodseed of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I witnessed many young peopleCome to the Lord during these events[56]

While at Egerton University, Mandila studied for a degree in Education with a specialization in Religious Studies and History. Apart from his university studies, he was actively involved in the Christian Union at the university. With each passing day, Mandila's call to full-time ministry became clearer: "I was appointed treasurer in the University Christian Union and the calling became clearer as many people turned to me for counselling".

In 1992, Mandila graduated from university and immediately joined Deliverance Church. He explained that this decision to move on from Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa Chuch (PEFA) was necessitated by the fact that this Church was becoming more and more hierarchical: "I love working in a spirit of freedom where the only obedience is to the Lord Jesus". In 1995, Mandila and his parents established a congregation of Deliverance Church in his village. Soon this Church attracted a big following of about one thousand five hundred members. Mandila stated that the church had since evolved into one of the most thriving Pentecostal Churches in the region. Mandila continued to work as secondary school teacher and a part time pastor.

In 1996, Mandila had a second religious experience. This experience convinced him that God was calling him into fulltime ministry. Coincidentally, this second experience happened in Malindi, where Mazinge the Muslim preacher (Chapter4) also had a religious encounter:

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[56] Interview with Daniel Mandila, 16th February 2010, Mumias

While inside my house in Malindi, I heard a clear voice.
This voice told me not to fear but to go ahead and quitteaching and become a preacher of God's word. I did nothesitate to hearken to the Lord's voice. I resigned.[57]

Today, Mandila is the Pastor of Deliverance Church in Mumias town. Since taking over the leadership of this Church less than ten years ago, the Church has evolved into one of the most vibrant Pentecostal Churches in Mumias. The Church attracts an attendance of over 1000 each Sunday. Mandila enjoys preaching at his church and calls people to accept Jesus in each of his sermons. As a result of his outreach activities, Mandila reported that "many people have come to know the Lord."Others who had backslidden had now returned to the Lord. Apart from Mumias, Mandila also preaches in various parts of Kenya especially in towns near Mumias such as Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega and Kisumu. His Church has set aside one week in every month for outreach in which members go into Mumias town to preach. The aim of these activities is to invite those who have not yet come to the Lord to "come to his saving knowledge".

During my research period, Mandila was in the process of studying for a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (now African International University) in Karen, Nairobi. This is an advanced theological training at an evangelical school. He stated that his wife, Anne, was a huge encouragement to his work and is currently enrolled for a post-graduate course at Masinde Muliro University in Kakamega town.

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5.2.2 Joseph Kwoma Ngolla[58]

Our second Christian preacher was born in 1977 at Esaba village in Vihiga District. Joseph Kwoma Ngolla's biography is unique in one respect; his engagement with Muslims. Ngolla belonged to the Banyore Sub-tribe of the Luhya tribe. Unlike all the other Christian preachers, Ngolla's calling and formation as a preacher prepared him for

[57] Interview with Daniel Mandila, 16th February 2010, Mumias
[58] Interview with Joseph Ngolla, 30th March 2010

public debates with Muslims. In this process, Ngolla read some works by well-known Christian apologists.

Ngola attended primary schooling at Esirabe Primary School. Later he enrolled at Ebunangwe Secondary school. Ngolla "gave his life" to Jesus in 1982 at 15. This religious experience took place following an emotional sermon given at the Church of God at Esiraba. Ngolla spoke of having "felt in his heart" that God was calling him to be a preacher.

Ngolla began preaching to his close relatives and friends about the advantages of "knowing Christ". Later, while working at a pharmaceutical firm in the industrial area of Nairobi, he regularly debated with Indian Muslims, and Christians from mainstream Churches on aspects of Christian belief and practice. Ngolla recollected how his supervisor at the firm, a certain Dr. Sheikh, called him to his office and asked him many questions about the Christian tradition. Later Ngolla encountered a Muslim preacher in the industrial area of Nairobi whose criticism of Christianity "struck" him. The Muslim preacher argued that Christianity was a false religious tradition "manufactured by *Mzungu* (white person)". From that time, Ngolla decided to do research on the differences and similarities between Christianity and Islam. Ngolla stated that "most of the arguments put forward by Muslims had no substance as they touched on minor things such as cloth, food and rituals". In order to "combat" Muslim preachers, Ngolla spent time reading books written by David Shenk, a Christian apologist. Later, Ngolla began debating with Muslims in open-air events in Mumias, Bungoma, Busia and Eldoret. He recounted two violent incidents during his engagements with Muslims. These incidents took place while Ngolla was involved in a public preaching event in Nasu Village near Mumias. He explained that the theme of the sermon on that day was on whether Jesus was God or not. Ngolla explained that during the first occasion of this event, his interlocutor was Hasan Nyanje, a Muslim. He further stated that on that day he had prepared thoroughly to engage in the debate which enabled him to counter every objection that Nyanje was bringing about the nature of Christ. It was while they were still debating that one of the Muslim members of the audience walked to where Ngolla was and beat him:

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> He hit me so hard on my back. The Muslimspresent did not approve of his action. When I Stood to leave the *mhadhara* they came to me and urged me to overlook what happened. I remember Ali Gitonga, one of the Somali participants urging me to stay.

During the violent incident, Ngolla reported having posed a question to Sheikh Ibrahim:

> Instead of answering it, he began to state how much I had spoiled the name of Islam. On hearing that, the Muslims present began to move closer to where I was sitting in order to beat me up. I took off.

Despite the violent incidents emerging from open-air preaching, Ngolla was persuaded that his was a divine calling that had to continue until the whole of Kenya was brought to Christ.

Today, Ngolla is actively involved in debating with Muslims in open-air meetings. He boasts of his knowledge of the Qur'an and the common themes that Muslim preachers explore in their events. Ngolla views his engagements with Muslims as a "calling" by God to stop the advance of Islam in Western Kenya.

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5.2.3 Pastor Joseck Anekeya[59]

The third preacher whom I interviewed was Pastor Anekeya. He was born in Mumias in 1955 and comes from the Wanga sub-tribe of the Luhya tribe. Anekeya's parents died while he was young. His family background was poor; hence his secondary education was funded by his elder brothers. This support enabled him to study up to secondary level of education at Ekambuli secondary school.

Anekeya said that we was "saved" at the age of seventeen while in Form Two of secondary schooling: "Having no parents and entirely depending on the good will of my siblings, I felt that God had been so good to me and I needed to commit the rest of my life to him", he explained. Anekeya spoke of having engaged in serious *"Zinaa"*

[59] Interview with Joseck Anekeya on 30th February 2010, Mumias

(fornication) prior to his transformative religious experience. After getting saved, Anekeya had a second experience of receiving the Holy Spirit. This took place within his village at a night vigil service of praise. This experience provided him with new energy to start engaging in numerous evangelical activities. After this experience, he left the Anglican Church and joined a Pentecostal Church known as Christian Discipleship Centre (CDC).

When he joined secondary school, Anekeya became an active member of the Christian Union of his school engaging in many outreach activities. Through these activities, Anekeya invited many people to accept Jesus in their lives. Later, he was elected Chairperson of the Christian Union, a position he held for six years of his secondary learning. During this period, Anekeya received encouragement from the Patron of the Christian Union. It was during this period that he also began to experience an "inward feeling" of having been called to full-time ministry. The pastors at his church identified Anekeya's "commitment to God" and appointed him leader of all youth in his Church.

Anekeya was stationed at Matungu Christian Discipleship Centre where he served as a Pastor. He also opened more branches of his Church at Makale, Koyonzo, and Mumias. Anekeya is engaged in numerous open-air preaching in many towns of Western Kenya. He stated that preaching inside churches is not enough, as many people do not attend such services. As a result of his preaching, he believed, many people had come to know the Lord.

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5.2.4 Simon Kinyanjui[60]

The fourth preacher also had an unfortunate background. Simon Kinyanjui was born in 1965 in Shibinga village in Mumias. He came from the Kikuyu tribe of Kiambu District. Kinyanjui's family migrated from Central Kenya to Mumias to work at the sugar factory. His parents separated while he was twelve years old, and young Kinyanjui was supported by his maternal uncle who ensured that he received food and went to school. Kinyanjui's father disappeared into one of the informal settlements in Nairobi and

[60] Interview with Simon Kinyanjui, 23rd May 2010

became an alcoholic. While under the care of his maternal uncle, Kinyanjui was encouraged to attend Sunday school at Gospel Pentecostal Church in Mumias. He stated that this practice was the beginning of his journey. In the course of attending Sunday school, Kinyanjui exhibited great skill at singing and leading fellow Sunday school children.

At the age of fourteen, Kinyanjui "felt an intense desire for communion with God". Arising from this experience, he was convinced that his Church attendance was nothing if his walk with God was not "personal". It is against this background that one day in April 1985, while attending an annual youth conference in Gilgil Nairobi, Kinyanjui responded to the "altar call" by surrendering his life to Jesus. Later Kinyanjui joined the Baptist Church of Kenya where he was made a youth pastor. Since being "saved", Kinyanjui testified of having experienced many changes in his life including a re-union with his parents. Currently, Kinyanjui visits various parts of the country preachingin open-air events. He explained how numerous people had come to accept Jesus in their lives following his sermons. Kinyanjui expressed his desire to continue preaching the message of Christ in various parts of the country until the end of his life when he would receive a "prize" from God.

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5.2.5 Hezekiah Anziya[61]

The final preacher that we will examine is Hezekiah Anziya. He was born in 1974 at Etenje Location of Mumias District. Anzinya belonged to the Batsotso sub-tribe of the Luhya people. His parents were ardent worshippers at the local Roman Catholic Church. Pastor Anziya recollected that while still young he used to walk for about ten kilometres in order to attend catechism classes in preparation for confirmation. For his primary schooling, Anziya went to Etenje primary school. Later he joined Lubinu Secondary school where he was actively involved in the activities of the Christian Union: "I was influenced by the sermons every Sunday," he stated.

[61] Interview with Hezekiah Anziya, 10th May 2010

It was during this early period in school that Anziya started “feeling” that he needed to give his life to Jesus. Although his Roman Catholic tradition did not emphasis the idea of “being saved,” Anziya gave his life to Christ during a big revival meeting organized at Kakamega High Schoolon 17th March 1988. Later, he joined a regular fellowship of new believers where his new-found faith was nurtured. Because of his new religious experiences, the local Catechist at the Roman Catholic Church became critical of Anziya and discouraged him from “those strange commitments”.

During his involvement in the fellowship of new believers, his preaching and leadership abilities were identified. Anziya’s close friends began to encourage him to consider taking up a full time preaching role in a Church. Today, Anziya is a fulltime Pastor at Pentecostal Church known as Four Square Church based in Mumias. In addition to his regular pastoral work, he spends a considerable amount of time preaching at open-air meetings throughout Western Kenya. His preaching activities have taken him to various towns such as Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia, Malakisi and Vihiga.

The biographies of the five Pentecostal preachers point to important features that merit emphasizing. First, like the five Muslim preachers, all the preachers experienced what they called a spiritual transformation. For the Christians, it was a “call”. The religious experiences of the preachers were their “crisis moment” when they had to make a choice between remaining where they were and moving on to other churches. At the time of their calling they were not “pagans” or non-Christians. They were already members of various mainline Christian traditions. But like the Muslim preachers, they also “converted” in some way. After their religious experiences, the preachers joined various Pentecostal Churches for a variety of reasons. Some desired a Church where they would experience the “spirit of God” at work. Others were looking for “a deeper communion” with God, while others wanted a Church where “outreach” was practiced.

Although all the preachers presided over organized churches, they felt that it was not enough for them to preach inside Churches. They moved out of the Churches and visited town after town, calling out to everyone to give their lives to Jesus. Their messages focused on the need for be people to undergo religious transformations. Such religious experiences were conveyed as “getting saved”, “being born again” and “accepting Jesus”.

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Equally important, the new converts were asked to join their churches. The preachers boasted about how many churches they had "planted" in various parts of Mumias, Western Kenya. To them that was also a sign that God was blessing their ministries.

The second significant influence upon the preacher's formation was their family and schooling contexts which provided the initial foundation in their formation. Mandila's family members were committed Quakers while Kinyanjui was encouraged to attend Sunday school without fail. As a Catholic, Anziya underwent the ritual of preparing for confirmation. Although later the preachers moved to other Christian traditions, they no doubt still drew support from them. In their sermons, they used Biblical texts that they had learned in the early period of their Christian formation. But now they interpreted these texts in new ways. The preachers also employed songs which they learned in their former mainline religious traditions. The preachers were not simply Christians; they were calling to everybody to a new commitment to Christianity.

There is yet another significant influence of the preacher's backgrounds on their present activities. Some of the preachers spoke of having come from a deprived background where they lost parents at an early age. This background, as we will see in their sermons, was reflected in their themes in which they assured the audience about the ability of God to intervene in various circumstances.

Unlike the Muslim preachers, the Christian preachers were all well educated. This was evident in the educational biographies and their mastery of the English language which they easily used in preaching. All the preachers had some sort of formal training, some even up to University level of education. This was very different from the Muslim preachers who were informally trained, or being trained at the preaching event. Furthermore, most of the preachers narrated to me how they were influenced by the Christian Union Associations in secondary schools and University. They also received moral support from the Patrons of Christian Associations in those institutions. It was also within the schools that the preachers attended regular fellowships with fellow Christians. It was also during their time in secondary school that the preachers began to extensively practice to study the Bible, preach and engage in mission. All the preachers thus had extensive formal and informal training in Christianity. Because of this early

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exposure to mission all the preachers were now engaged in preaching in open-air events.

The preacher's educational levels equipped them with the necessary skills to engage in the competitive local job market. Some like Mandila and Ngolla worked in secular contexts before taking up full time preaching roles. Unlike the Muslim preachers, Christian preachers seemed to be doing better than the Muslim preacher in terms of their socio-economic status.

5.3 The Sermons

I attended eighteen preaching events in Mumias and recorded all the sermons. The chapter focuses on only five sermons selected on the basis of the preacher's active preaching in Mumias. Although some of the sermons share some features, they were selected in order to have a variety of approaches and themes represented. These sermons were given at various periods between 2009 and 2012.

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Before beginning to discuss the specific sermons, it is important to point out some general features about all of the sermons. Nabongo open-air market in Mumias was a common venue for the "crusades" as they were commonly referred to. The sermons also took place in towns neighbouring Mumias such as Mayoni, Shianda, Shibale, Harambee and Musanda.

Most of the events began at around 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Some events lasted until much later at around 6:00 p.m. However, the actual sermons lasted only between twenty to thirty minutes, given any time between 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The rest of the time was spent undertaking various activities such as listening to music during the "praise and worship" session. There was a lot of singing and dancing before the sermons. These sessions served as a form of preparation, diversion and entertainment for the actual preaching. The use of public address systems was an important feature at the preaching grounds. During the preaching, young people sold their wares including Gospel music compact disks. Others sold drinks and snacks.

Public sermons were well publicized events in Mumias town. As one walked around the shops in Mumias, the sight of colourful posters pasted on wall, backs of trees, Matatu (taxi) terminuses was common. The posters were also found inside the walls of most Pentecostal Churches. They were meant to encourage the faithful to attend the events.[62] An important feature on most posters was the picture of a preacher raising his Bible high, as if addressing an audience. Some of the posters contained pictures of people allegedly healed miraculously at previous public meetings, while others contained Biblical texts. Such texts included: "Jesus is the only way" (John 14:6), "Man shall not live on bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Some posters had additional non-Biblical expressions such as "Welcome, Jesus is able!"; "Come expecting your miracle!" and "Come and witness the power of the Gospel". The posters also sought to convey the events as extra-ordinary, where all the people's needs would be fulfilled. The posters promised that the Bible and Jesus would transform people's lives physically and spiritually.

In most of the preaching events, a special podium was built. This was a raised place where the preachers would stand as they preached. The various podiums were built in different ways. Some were built in a simple way while others were constructed more elaborately. The more elaborate ones were made of timber and had colourful cloths around them. The podiums served as the "altar," a place that was holy and which was the centre of the events. The use of the term "altar" usually employed in religious groups of a more sacramental character was significant. It pointed to the influence of mainline traditions especially those who emphasise the sacraments such as the Roman Catholic Church upon the language and theology of Pentecostal churches. The "altar" was at the front of the Church facing the preacher. It was a place for people to respond to the "word". The "altar" was also a place for people to bring their needs to God. It was at the "altar" that the unholy encountered the holy. It was not everybody that was allowed to climb the altar. Only the preacher, his translator and the master of ceremony were allowed at the altar. Whenever there was a singing group, however, it was also allowed to sing from the podium. In many events, the climax of the srmon was an invitation to the podium to testify to "what God had done in their lives". Some of them spoke of having been healed while others testified of financial breakthroughs of some kind.

[62] Interview with Peter Oginga, June 2010, Mumias

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The ushers were located at various strategic corners of the preaching grounds way before the sermons started. They were wearing white shirts such that one could easily identify them. The role of the ushers was to look out for arriving guests and direct them to various places to sit or stand. They also had the task of ensuring that security was maintained at the grounds and that nobody was causing undue disturbance to members of the audience or the various electronic gadgets in the field.

In some preaching events, chairs were provided while in others people remained standing or sat on the grass. Whenever seats were provided, priority was given to the elderly and guests from far away places. Women who were accompanied by babies were also provided with seats, but in a separate area away from male members of the audience. The person presiding over the event instructed the ushers to request the more youthful people to vacate their seating places for older people. However, most members of the audience remained standing, only sitting down when tired.

Most of attendees were members of the Pentecostal Churches that had organized the events. However, there were always listeners from mainstream churches. Unlike Muslim open-air preaching which would attract the presence of Christians; there was no Muslim ever present. Muslims in Mumias followed the proceedings only from the sidelines. I overheard one Muslim selling his wares near the market complaining:

> They are always holding their crusades here, which we do not interfere with these meetings are a ploy to make money out of "*sadaka*" (offering). Why can't they go preaching in places where Christianity has not reached?[63]

The statement by the Muslim on-looker pointed to the tension and suspicion accompanying public preaching by Pentecostals in Mumias by Muslims.

The sermons had a variety of themes but all ending with a call to salvation and how this experience would contribute towards making the lives of the audience better. The preachers used Biblical texts to show how they were speaking to the conditions of the audience. In their sermons, the preachers gave various examples of the problems people

[63] Comments by an unnamed member of the audience, 17th June 2010, Mumias

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faced. They climaxed with a call for people to convert to Christianity and to join the church to be successful.

5.3.1"The Lord Understands You" - Mandila

I now turn to the first sermon preached on 19th November, 2009 by Daniel Mandila at Nabongo market. The sermon took place during a "lunch hour" service organized by Deliverance Church of Mumias. It was a continuation from the previous day. These kinds of services were held between 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. before the Muslim preachers. Their aim was to meet the needs of the worshippers during their lunch hour break, away from offices and businesses. The worshippers explained that they attended these events to "meet with God" through prayer, praise and listening to the word of God.[64] The preachers also used these services for outreach purposes to those not saved or had lapsed in their Christian commitment. Pastor Kalerwa explained:

> ...there are many people out there who once upon a time were active Christians but who no longer care to attend worship".[65]I was told by one of the attendees that the timing of the event suited those who could not afford buying lunch. They chose to attend the services as a way of keeping themselves busy.[66]

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At the venue of this event, loud music was blazing from a sound system as the worshippers gathered. Two young people were busy testing the public address system, a sound equalizer and microphones to ensure they were in good working condition. The music continued:

> *Ni nani kama wewe, Yahweh*? [Who is like you, Jehovah?]
> *Ni nani kama wewe, Yahweh*? [Who is like you, Jehovah?]
> *wa maskini? Hakuna kama wewe... Bwana wa Mabwana*
> [For the poor? There is none like you, Lord of Lords].
> *Kwa wagonjwa? Hakuna kama wewe... Bwana.....*
> [To the sick? There is none like you, Lord of Lords]

The members of the audience lifted up their hands as they continued singing. Pastor Mandila emerged from the background where he had been engrossed in prayer and

[64] Interview with Rebecca Omondi, 24th September 2010, Mumias
[65] Interview with Rev John Kalerwa, 24th September 2010, Mumias
[66] Interview with Barrack Muluka, 26th September 2010, Mumias

climbed up the podium. He was dressed in a dark blue suit with a matching tie. Lifting up his hands, he joined the congregation in a loud prayer. He then took the microphone and continued to pray in English. A middle-aged man simultaneously translated the prayer into Kiswahili:

> Lord we thank you: we praise your name Jesus.
> Because of this special time, Jesus we worship you
> There is no other name except your name, Lord
> We invite you to take control of this ground
> Take captive of every rebellious spirit and make it
> Submit to you.

This singing and prayer was a preparation for the sermons.[67] The music touched on the existential problems that people faced in their lives. Issues such poverty, unemployment and disease were mentioned in the songs as matters that God would deal with. The prayer that was given also affirmed the power of God in dealing with any spiritual challenges that would prevent people from listening to the sermon.

Having affirmed the power of God to attend to people's situations, the mood was now right for the actual sermon. "The Lord is so good to us. We want to begin listening to the word of God", began Mandila. Mandila prayed again, and introduced his church:

> We are called Deliverance Church, Mumias. We gather to bring good news,
> Our Father we give you praise, there is no God apart from you
> As we share your word at this time, it is our prayer that you speak to us
> You change our lives, you will touch someone today
> At this hour so that we move from one glory to another

The above prayer prepared the audience for the sermon that was to follow. It pointed to the theme of Mandila's sermon on social issues, which he based on the book of Ruth 1:1-19. In this text, Naomi, an Israelite woman, had gone with her family to live in the country of Moab during a famine. Her husband Elkana and her two sons died and she decided to return to her home in Bethlehem. Naomi had two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah. All the three women were now widowed. Orpah decided to return to her people, the Moabites, while Ruth stayed with her mother-in-law, Naomi. When her mother-in-law asked her to depart from her, she answered "Don't urge me to leave you or turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will

[67] Interview with Paul Otieno, 24th September 2010.

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be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16). Eventually, Naomi took Ruth with her back to Bethlehem where she married a rich man. The main point in this sermon was that the Ruth and Naomi were "delivered" from their situations of lostness to situations of hope and fulfilment. Mandila used this text to focus his sermon on the "disappointments" experienced by people:

> … the Lord understands you.
> He cares for you, wherever you are, in whatever situation
> Disappointments are real... Educated people have been disappointed
> Men and women have been disappointed
> Rich people are disappointed

Mandila reminded the audience that God could directly intervene in solving people's "disappointments". Mandila assured the audience that God had a solution to their disappointments. He gave examples of various disappointments that people went through in life. He compared these disappointments with the story of Elkana in the book of Ruth. He explained that Elkana had a challenge in Judah because he had no food in the land of Moab. The Lord intervened and provided food. After God had solved this problem, another emerged. Elkana died leaving behind a widow. "Elkana has died, Naomi is a widow," Mandila emphasized. He re-told the story of Elkana and Naomi, using it is a model for challenges faced by members of his audience. Mandila enumerated the challenges people in Mumias faced such as barrenness, the death of members of their families and lack of jobs. Mandila encouraged the audience that challenges in life did not signal the end of life: "You don't have anybody else to run to. I have good news for you, despite your loss, God knows you...*Halleluiah!*" In this sermon, Mandila used the predicament of Elkana, Naomi and Ruth as a model narrative for all his listeners' problems. They could see their problems, but now in relation to the help that God offered. They were promised that their problems would be solved.

Mandila then asked the audience to reflect on the way they handled their problems. "How do you handle the various issues that confront you"? He presented the example of Naomi as one who remained positive and acted:

> Naomi never stayed there. She decided to go back to Judah because God was visiting there. Ruth similarly did not kill herself. Instead; she followed her mother in-law Naomi.

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For Mandila, Ruth was exemplified what it meant to remain with a positive attitude amidst adversity. He quoted again the words of Ruth to Naomi when she was asked to return to the land of her birth:

> Don't urge me to leave you or turn back from you. Where you go, I will go,
> and where you stay, I will stay
> Your people will be my people and your God my God

Mandila invited members of the audience to consider their vocabulary in the context of adversity. He repeatedly announced to the audience that adversity was part of life. He urged them to imitate Ruth and speak "the language of God" which, he argued, was the language of faith. According to Mandila, the language of faith left no space for dejection or doubt. By speaking the language of "faith", God would intervene in people's adverse situations, Mandila urged. He promised that that was only a "delay" in God's intervention, as it was with Ruth.

The preacher engaged directly with the audience, walking around the podium and posing questions at them. He also frequently urged members of the audience to tell "the person next to you" this or that. Mandila also recounted the life experiences of his friends who were in problems, but for whom "God intervened".

The climax of Mandila's sermon was a call to those who had never given their lives to Jesus to do so: "God wants you to welcome him into your life, so that he can become your friend and deal with your problems". In making this call, Mandila made a condition for God's intervention. He emphasized that this was "God's condition". At this point of his sermon, a group climbed on the podium and began to sing, accompanied by the organist. They repeated the song they sang earlier about God being incomparable. Mandila urged those who had various needs to walk to the front of the preaching venue towards the podium. The moving forward symbolized that that they had heard the sermon and were responding to the preacher's call. Some members of the audience began to move forward towards the podium as the singing continued. A woman wept as she walked to the podium. Others who moved forward knelt down in front of the podium and immersed themselves in spontaneous prayer. Mandila began to pray, touching on the forehead each of the members who had come forward.

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There are several aspects that stand out in Mandila's sermon. The use of the Bible was central to this sermon. Mandila used various characters in the Biblical text to demonstrate that God was able to intervene in people's circumstances. The preacher explained that such divine intervention also depended on the people's acceptance of Jesus in their lives by getting saved. Second, the sermon made use of various rhetorical devices to obtain maximum emotional impact. Before and after the sermon, music was played to arouse the attention of the audience. Mandila also facilitated the audience's participation in his sermon by employing various rhetorical means. He engaged in a "dialogue" with the audience and also asked them to engage with each other. It is also important, though, to note that this sermon was closely linked to a Church. The sermon was specifically designed as a missionary event for the Church. Mandila was asking people to accept to be saved by God, but he was also focussed on what his Church was offering listeners. Mission, for Mandila, was increasing his fold.

5.3.2"I walk with the Lord" - Anekeya

A sermon was given by Pastor Joseck Anekeya on the 23rd December, 2009 at Maraba market, 30 kilometres East of Mumias. The preaching began at 4:00 p.m., and ended shortly before 7:00 p.m. The preacher spoke mainly in Swahili with occasional use of "*Wanga*"inthe local vernacular, whenever he wanted to emphasize a point. Like the previous sermon, this sermon also addressed a social theme. But the rhetoric of this sermon was distinctive, and deserves special attention. Mandila's sermon above was based on a metaphorical reading of the Bible, while Anekeya's sermon below turned attention to his own special role. This sermon was also unique in that it was jointly organized by the Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa (PEFA), the Christian Discipleship Centre (CDC) and the local Anglican Church. The other Christian preaching that I observed were always organized by one church with a distinctive identity. I was told that that goal of the combined organizational efforts among the three Churches was to make a bigger impact in the public.[68]
Pastor Anekeya used various rhetorical means to make his point. He paced from one corner of the preaching site to the other. He varied his tones to emphasise certain points

[68] Interview with Rev John Masitsa, Maraba Market, Mumias, 23rd December 2009.

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and asked the audience to speak to one another, repeating phrases of sentences he had just used. At some points he asked the audience to clap for Jesus. The sermon was based on the Book of Luke 16:19-31. Its main theme was on the need for Christians to use their God-given wealth to assist the poor. The sermon began with a re-telling of the story of Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31, and its application to the immediate context of Mumias. Based on this text, Anekeya recounted how there was once a rich man who had everything he desired in life. The preacher then mentioned poor Lazarus, who used to visit the rich man every day with the hope of receiving some food that fell from his table. After Lazarus died, he was taken to heaven. When the rich man died, he experienced great pain in hell because of his treatment of the poor, including Lazarus. Although he cried out aloud asking for help from Lazarus, who was now enjoying in heaven, such help was not forthcoming and indeed not even possible.

Having recounted the Biblical text, Anekeya began to apply it to the context of his audience. He warned that the rich in the village of Maraba faced the threat of punishment in hell unless they assisted the poor:

> You have a position, you have authority in government
> You have a vehicle, you have a motorcycle
> You have several bags of maize in your house and yet
> Your neighbour is starving ...you risk getting into hell.

Anekeyah did not just address the question of material inequalities in the Kenya society. He also addressed inequalities in the domestic sphere as avenues for oppressive tendencies. He condemned men who oppressed their wives by not attending to their needs. He also criticised women who oppressed their co-wives in polygamous families:

> I know that here in Maraba, people like marrying many women
> You are the elder wife; your work is to oppress your junior with
> Your *miti shamba* (aherbal medicine)

Anekeya explained that as a result of the oppression of women by their husbands and fellow women, God had heard their prayers. He was now going to intervene and punish their oppressors: “A day is coming, when this sun you see will turn into blood”. Anekeya claimed that he had special knowledge of the “things” of God. Anekeya was confident of his place with God: “You don’t read the Bible; I walk with the Lord and therefore know

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these things". It seems that he was creating a strong impression of his special place with God. Like the Biblical prophets, he began to foretell the end time: "The stars you see here will fall down; I want to announce to you that next year might not come to an end before the return of the Lord. Jesus can return before the next harvest!"

The sermon ended with a call to those who wanted to receive Jesus to come forward. Anekeya invited the rich to receive Jesus in their lives so as to be more responsive to the needs of the poor. The preacher repeatedly made it clear that wealth in itself was not a bad thing, as it was an indication of God's glory. He warned that living without Jesus was foolishness, as all shall stand before him on the day of Judgement. Several people responded to his call by moving forward to receive Jesus into their lives. The preacher also offered to pray for people with various needs: lack of money, illnesses, domestic conflict and joblessness. He emphasised that God would intervene in people's circumstances if only they yielded to his call. Several people walking towards the podium for prayer.

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Anekeya's sermon also focused on a social theme but his mode of appealing Biblical text was remarkably different. The preacher used various rhetorical means to make his sermon effective. More importantly, Anekeya turned prophetic at times, making claim to be in direct communion with God and knowing much about the last day. Unlike Mandila who used the Bible as metaphor for the lives of people in Western Kenya, Anekeya focussed on his special position with God, through which he could predict the dire retribution of God. He took a special position between the audience and God.

It should also be remembered that this was a joint sermon by several Churches outside the central town of Mumias. This combined approach to the organization of the sermons points out the effort by Christian groups to try and Christianize the public sphere of Kenya. Although these Christian groups were different in terms of their leadership and to some extent teachings and practices, they all understood and approached the task of mission in a similar manner. They practiced Christian mission and evangelism as recruiting new members into Churches.

5.3.3. "The Lost Son of the Father" - Kinyanjui

This sermon made a repeated appeal to the audience to get saved in order to recover from their state of "lostness"exemplified in the Biblical story in LukeLuke (15:11-32). It was a story of a son who walked out on his father in search of a better life, but which he afterwards regretted. The sermon was also remarkable for the preacher's use of personal testimony to convince the audience to convert.

This sermon was presented by Simon Kinyanjui on 17th April, 2010 at Mayoni, near Mumias. The elaborate planning of the event was evident in the colourful podium that was put in place. There were several ushers standing at various points of the venue to welcome members of the audience. Two youths stood near the entrance selling Bibles and other religious literature. Kinyanjui climbed the podium and began his sermon in English with a simultaneous translation into Kiswahili by a translator. Occasionally the translator made errors in the process, but was quickly corrected by the preacher himself. At other times, the translator failed to get an appropriate word for translator, and asked Kinyanjui to repeat the sentence. The translator imitated the preacher by making gestures while the sermon was underway. Some members of the audience were clearly entertained by this presentation on the stage.

"Today is the first of the many days we are going to be here. A new season is coming in this place. In the name of Jesus," Kinyanjui announced. In response, the audience clapped their hands. Kinyanjui continued: "And on this day, I want you to be among the first to come and receive Jesus as your Lord and saviour".

Kinyanjui began by narrating the story of the lost son in the Biblical text. "This son thought that he could manage to face life alone, that he had become of age and asked for his share of wealth from his father," explained Kinyanjui. The son thought that he was able to shape his own destiny; that he did not need God. Kinyanjui emphasized the fact that the son in the biblical narrative eventually had to return to his father. When he was away, he was lost. Kinyanjui applied the gospel story to the life circumstance of the audience: "Some people here have an inflated sense of what they can achieve on their own. Such people think that they do not need God." He continue, "It does not matter in what ways, you may have moved away from God, your Father, he is willing to receive

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you back home". Kinyanjui illustrated his sermon with various ways in which people moved away from God, the father: "some are lost in alcohol, some in prostitution, others in crime; God is waiting for you to return home". Kinyanjui explained that by returning to God, all the people would get back what they had lost. God would grant them peace, healing and prosperity if they returned to him. He stated that that the preaching event was a good opportunity for people to make up their mind and return to God: "Today is your day for you to say, enough is enough. I am going back to Jesus. I am coming back home. I am coming back to my father's home".

Kinyanjui then narrated how his personal life had changed upon returning back to God. He explained how his parents had separated, bringing him much sorrow. However, after he got saved and started praying for them they were now re-united:

> Instead of killing my father for deserting me, I was able to turn round his life in the name of Jesus. After some time I reached out to my mother, who at that time was livingAt *soko mjinga* (a slum area). Through the power of prayerMum and Dad are re-united. My siblings were all scattered everywhere, Uganda, Tanzania, one by one, they received Jesusinto their lives.

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The personal testimony was a powerful rhetorical device as it related to the audience in their experience of marital discord, living in a slum and being generally desperate. In this state of "lostness", Kinyanjui invited the audience to accept Jesus lives. A singing group climbed the podium as Kinyanjui implored people to return to Jesus. Initially there were no responses to this invitation. However, when the preacher extended the invitation to those "who may have relapsed in faith or had specific needs in their lives," several people raised their hands. Kinyanjui requested those with raised hands to walk to the podium: "Take a step of faith and come here. Don't worry about anybody who is here. This is about your life. It is about eternity," he urged. He posed questions to the audience to challenge them to respond to his invitation: "Where will you be on that day when Jesus will return? Do you think your friends will be there to help you? I do not believe that, make an independent decision". The ushses standing at strategic points of the venue led those who raised their hands up to the podium. Kinyanjui then proceeded to pray for both those who came to the podium. Those who had come forward were led to a particular point for "counselling". They were also invited to consider joining Deliverance Church for further support in their spiritual lives.

He was, however, aware that there were many who did not approach the podium. He included them in his prayer:

> Father, I bless you. Because all power and authority resides in you
> There is nothing impossible with you. Father, I pray for somebody here
> who has heard this message of salvation and was quickened from inside, but
> was shy to raise his hand. My God, I pray that after this meeting, you will
> will cause him not to leave this meeting until they have talked to one of us and
> have received you. I also pray for these ones, who have come forward,
> that you accept them back home.

The prayer appealed to those who did not approach the podium. It was also a subtle play on those who may have hesitated to respond to the preacher's call. Moving to the podium was a clear declaration of commitment to the preacher and his Church, but the prayer was a subtle attempt to keep the door open to those who hesitated. There was a clear sense of separation between those who accepted this offer, and those who vacillated. Kinyanjui did not forget the latter, however, and kept the door open.

This sermon, like the previous ones, ended with a strong call for people to be saved, and to join the Church. The preacher related Biblical characters to the life of his listeners, and urged them to convert to Jesus. The sermon was also remarkable for its use of various rhetorical approaches. Kinyanjui repeated certain words for emphasis and walked around the podium. The most important rhetorical element in the sermon, however, seemed to be the preacher'spersonal testimony of hopelessness. Kinyanjui's story seemed to touch those in similar predicaments. Like the others discussed so far, the preaching was identifying with the social and economic challenges facing the people of Kenya. Kinyanjui's personal testimony was doing what others did with the story of Ruth and Lazarus, or the prophetic position of Anekeya. It created a close sense of identification with the problems facing most Kenyans. However, like the others, Kinyanjui too was calling for conversion in the form of joining his Church. The setting of the sermon facilitated entry into the Church: a podium was set up and ushers positioned, ready to receive those ready for further "counselling".

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5.3.5 "Commit to Jesus" - Anziya

We now turn to the next sermon of Pastor Caleb Anziya on 21st October, 2010, which followed by the now familiar rhetorical strategies, the approach to the podium and stage, and the prayers. This sermon was a part of a series that Anziya gave at Nabongo market.

There was considerable singing before the sermon commenced followed by a prayer led by the person leading the event. The key sermon text was taken from Philippians 2:9-11. The preacher invited his translator to read the text:

> Therefore God has also highly exalted him,
> and given him a name which is above
> Every name that at the name of Jesus everyone
> should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth,
> and things under the earth. And that every tongue
> should confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

In this sermon, Anziya sought to present Jesus as the only person deserving commitment. He asked the audience to try and imagine earthly Kings seated on their thrones. He gave the example of the President of Kenya who resides in State house where all symbols of power are located. Anziya then countered that not even the President's power could rival that of Jesus.

Anziya further said that "religion without Jesus" was a waste of time. He also explained that regular Church attendance and generous financial donations (*sadaka*) was of no value without Jesus in their lives: "You could be here and you are a good worshipper but you are not saved. Maybe you even fast every month but you have no personal relationship with Jesus. All this will take you nowhere". Having dismissed the various religious practices as being in vain without Christ, Anziya resumed his invitation to those willing to give their lives to Jesus to come forward. There was a singing group on the stage that began performing as three female adults moved forward to "accept Jesus". Anziya thanked God for their "step of faith": "Lord, I thank you because of these dear ones who have heard my message and hearkened to your spirit". He asked everybody in that event to stretch their hands pointing at the three participants as he now prayed for

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them. Later, the three converts were led to private part of the venue for further ministry and counselling by the ushers.

This sermon focussed on the idea that loyalty belongs only to Jesus. It contrasted the heavenly kingdom of Jesus with the worldly kingdom of presidents. This was still no outright rejection of the worldly kingdom. Most importantly, though, it was another call to join the Church.

5.3.6"Come to me all ye who are tired" - Anziya

On 22nd October, 2010, Pastor Anziya continued with his preaching at Nabongo Market Mumias. At this event, there was a visiting choir from Tanzania who sang before and after the sermon. Anziya then approached the stage and began giving his address by first praying:

> Those of you, who are listening to me,
> God bless you. We want to begin listening to the word of God
> Let us pray. We have come again Lord before you Lord.
> We have realised our need of you. We want to hear the word of life
> That can change our lives and make it beautiful. We want to hear
> What you have for us today, so that at the end of the meeting
> We will be able to say it was good I went there. In the name of Christ, we say Amen.

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Anziya then went on with the sermon by explaining the importance of "the word of God". He stated that when everything else failed people, the only "person" they could turn to was God. The preacher mentioned various items that could let people down as friends, family, parents, politicians and the Church. Anziya emphasized that it was only God that people could run to when everything else failed. The preacher stated that God had revealed himself through the Bible hence the importance of listening to the word of God preached:

> Remember, I told you yesterday, if you have the word of God,
> Make it a habit to read. Because in the word of *God* (his emphasis), you find life.
> You find meaning for living. If you do not have, I challenge you

> Before you buy your next shoe, think of buying the Bible.
> Before you buy your next dress, buy the Bible.
> Because it answers all the questions you may have.
> It is the only book that gives us hope for living now with the promise of heaven.
> It is the only book that helps you to know where you have come from,
> Why you are here and what is ahead of you

Anziya stated that the only person they could run to in times of need was Jesus Christ: "The person you can go to when you are in trouble. The person you can go to for counsel. He is your God, he is your creator, and we talked about Jesus Christ who died for your sins". Anziya now introduced the main text that he was reflecting upon as "Come to me all ye who are tired of carrying your heavy loads and I will give you rest" (Matthew11:28). He explained that many people were facing various challenges in life but did not know whom to run to. Anziya gave examples of the places that people run to when faced with problems such as alcoholism, women, politics and homes. All these, he argued, could be of no consequence because only Jesus had power to restore people back to their normal lives.

The preacher explained why Jesus could be trusted when he invited people to run to him:

> And you know Jesus Christ; the Bible calls him the image of the invisible God.
> He has to represent God; he has come to show us the character of God.
> This is what Jesus came to do. That is why he lived among us.
> And when we follow him we will not make a mistake.
> He is our example, he is our saviour. He died that we might live
> because the wages of sin is death. Jesus had to die.
> Each of us has to die but he volunteered. He died in our place.

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The preacher urged the audience to imitate Jesus if they hoped to qualify to join heaven. If you love me, do what you have heard from me, my father will be happy with you. The preacher also urged the audience to emulate Jesus in spreading the word of God. He quoted Mathew 28:19 which stated that "Go ye, teach and as many as believe, baptise them, in the name of the father and of the son of the Holy Spirit".

Like all sermons, this sermon framed his theological solution in the context of the challenges facing the people of Kenya in general, and the people of Western Kenya in particular. Jesus, his redemption, and the Bible were cited to support the preacher's "solution". He promised them a home in which all these problems would be solved.

I would like to summarise the preceding discussion by identifying four salient main trends in the public sermons presented by the Christian preacherss. First, I examine the theme of conversion as exemplified through the sermons. Secondly, I look at the role of the established Church in the sermons. Third, I interrogate the use of the Bible and finally, the preachers' use of various rhetorical strategies to convey their message.

All the sermons without exception were geared towards the "conversion" of the hearers. The sermons were aimed at recruiting new members into the Church. The preachers presented recruitment as a sure path to Jesus and to redemption. Pastor Mandila's sermon entitled "The Lord understands You" ended with a call for those who had never accepted Jesus in their lives to do so. Although the preacher addressed the various challenges that people faced in life, his ultimate solution was that it was necessary for people to turn to Jesus in order to experience real transformation. The invitation to conversion was also evident in the sermon by Anekeya based on Luke 16:19-31. Anekeya went further in his appeal to people to convert. He claimed to be a prophet whose walk with God gave him a privileged access God's will. Similar to the Hebrew prophets, he warned people of dire consequences if they did not respond. Kinyanjui repeatedly pleaded with those who did not respond to his call to do so, indicating that the door was still open for them to make a re-commitment to God. In his closing prayer, Kinyanjui appeared to acknowledge that not everybody who listened to his sermon would convert publicly. The same theme of conversion was exemplified in the sermon by Anziya on the theme of loyalty to Jesus. From the above, it is clear that all the sermons were aimed at recruiting members to Christianity. Although most of the people present were already Christians, the sermons called them to a new form of Christianity in which people recommitted their lives to Jesus. A transformational encounter in all aspects of their lives would ensure from such a re-commitment or conversion.
Unlike the five Muslim preachers who did not emerge from Mosques, all the Pentecostal sermons were organized by preachers already presiding over established churches. The sermons, therefore, were an extension of the preaching inside these churches aimed at reaching out to others. The invitation of the sermon for people to "convert" went hand in hand with an invitation to them to join any of these churches. Mandila began his sermon by identifying his Church (Deliverance Church). He then stated that this Church was bringing good news to the people. Those who responded to his call to salvation

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were encouraged to join the Deliverance church. The second sermon by Anekeya was organized by various Churches in Maraba near Mumias. The various representatives from these churches were present at the venue of the preaching. Members of the audience were invited to join any of these Churches. Other preachers like Kinyanjui and Anziya also explicitly invited the new converts to join their own Churches. Clearly, all the sermons given were supported by a Church establishment and intended to persuade people to join it.

The preachers employed the Bible as metaphors to convince the audience that God would intervene in their circumstances. The preachers used Biblical characters such as Ruth, Naomi and the lost son, with whom the listeners could identify in their predicaments. Mandila persuaded his audience that God would intervene in their problems just as he did for Naomi, the widow, by providing her with anotherhusband. Mandila repeatedly recited the words of Naomi to her mother in-law Ruth, after Naomi had asked her to go back to her people upon her husband's death. Similarly, Kinyanjui paralled the story of the lost son and his father from the gospel of Luke 15:11.32 to the various challenges people faced and how they need to return to God their Father for assistance/relief for their similar suffering.

Typically the preachers started their sermons by re-telling a biblical passage in their own words. Unlike preachers who had been trained in classical biblical interpretation and who went into interrogating the historical settings ofa particular passage, the meaning of words and phrases before then applying the text to contemporary contexts, these preachers simply re-told the same story in their own simple language. The preachers then related the passages to the existential realities of their listeners. Sometimes the preachers reverted back to re-telling the story again before getting back to its relevance for the listeners. The above approach to the interpretation of the text was characteristic of Mandila's sermons. The same approach was employed by Anekeya but with a less text-audience back and forth as explained above. In terms of his hermeneutics, Anekeya'sapproach was distinctive for his claim of prophetic status. This claim, therefore, put him at an altogether different plane in terms of his interpretation of the text. Through this prophetic status, Anekeya seemed to claim certain experiential insights into the Bible beyond just mere textual interpretation.

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Kinyanjui and Anziya, in addition to repeating the Biblical passage before relating it to the listeners, also added different aspects to the hermeneutical task. While Kinyanjui in his sermon entitled "the lost son" used personal testimony to demonstrate how he was lost before the intervention of God, Anziya started his sermon by making promises about what God was going to do in people's lives. All these similar but at the same time varied approaches to the Biblical texts contributed to the uniqueness of each sermon and its impact on the audience.

It is known that Pentecostal sermons are highly rhetorical discourses. The preachers employed various rhetorical means to influence the response of the audience. These included music, dance, and personal testimony and so on. Unlike Muslim preachers, all the preachers made use of music either through live performances or delivered them through electronic gadgets. Mandila had loud music played through loudspeakers to attract the attention of the audience. On the other hand, Kinyanjui had live performances of music on the podium. Like their audience, the preachers responded to the music by dancing or simply repeating the lyrics. At some point Mandila joined the audience in dancing to the music before beginning to preach. Anekeya similarly danced to the music being played to capture the interest of the audience.

The use of personal testimony was common to several of the preachers such Mandila, and Kinyanjui during their sermons. This was not present in Muslim sermons, even though they occasionally employed this method. After giving their own stories, they then turned to the audience and told them that they, too, may be undergoing related circumstances and that God would intervene if they turned to him. The preachers also often walked around the podium engaging the audience in a dialogue even if the audience responses were limited to affirmations like "Amen" and "Praise God". The preachers also used tone variations to put emphasis on important points that they wished to make.

The use of physical contact was evident during the sermons. The preachers invited members of the audience to physically move towards the podium as a symbol of their conversion. Some preachers like Mandila touched the foreheads of members of the audience during prayers to bring effect to their message and prayers. At other times, it

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was the ushers who touched the foreheads of the members of the audience during the prayer. The sermons were designed to make an emotional impact and lead to equally emotional responses. This style of preaching must have taken the view that instruction is best imparted in an entertaining way. The speakers made use of what was familiar and pleasurable in their effort to communicate.

5.4 Conclusion

I would like to conclude the discussion on sermons by Pentecostal preachers by pointing out some of their central aspects. First, all the preachers underwent conversion experiences which ushered them into their public engagements. These encounters took place within the Christian tradition itself, making the preachers re-commit themselves to Christianity. The conversion of Pentecostal preachers ushered them into public preaching.

For the Christians, public preaching was extension of Churches with features such as podiums in place. The podiums served as sacred places where the holy encountered with the unholy. The main goal of the public preaching was to gain converts, even if most of them came from competing or rival churches. In the one joint event organized outside Mumias, the idea was to increase the presence of Christianity as such.

The Pentecostal preachers employed the Bible to show how it addressed people's problems. The sermons demonstrated an awareness of the problems people within the community were grappling with. The preachers used various Biblical hermeneutics strategies to affect this recognition. They used various characters in the Bible likening them to members of the audience and promising God's intervention into their problems.

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CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to examine the practice of public preaching by Muslim and Pentecostal preachers. Public preaching dominates the religious landscape of the two traditions in the East African region leading to heated public debates, tension and violence. The engagements between Muslim and Pentecostal public preachers points to the differentiated place of members of the two traditions in Kenyan public life.

Such a study could not be carried out in isolation, so it examined closely the biographies and sermons of selected preachers in Mumias, Western Kenya. The research is presented in five chapters. In order to be able to assess what conclusions can be drawn from the research, it is important to summarise the main findings in each chapter. An interpretation and discussion of the major findings of the research in relation to the general theoretical framework is also given.

The overall context of the research discussed in Chapter One demonstrated that public preaching is now part of the fabric of the society in Kenya in general and Mumias in particular. Drawing from the narratives from my fieldwork, the Chapter demonstrated that the activities of the public Muslim preachers sometimes, but not always, led to tension and violence among followers of the two traditions, and also sometimes with state officials (DC and the police) responsible for maintaining law and order. The public preachers and their sermons are an expression of increasing discursive battles that are taking place between members of the two traditions on the question of religious "truth". The nature of the discourses is that they seek to portray each religious tradition as conveying the legitimate truth, and the only way to salvation, over against the other tradition. This approach impacts significantly on both inter-faith social relations and state policy.

The activities of the public preachers were approached from the framework of religion in the public sphere. This approach is a departure from previous discussions on the public sphere that have not given sufficient attention to the role of religion qua religion in public life. Previous scholarship on the public sphere has yielded good data by showing the role of the new media and howthis has opened up access to religious texts and increased the role of non-specialists in widening the scope of participation in public

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Islam (Salvatore and Eickelman, 2004). Through the liberalization of the mass media, it has become possible to share ideas based on religious texts across countries and even all over the world. Such open accessibility to religious textshas enabled people who have not studied religious sciences to also participate in public inter-religious debate. There have also been various studies on the political and social contexts of various religious practices. Benjamin Soures has demonstrated how the colonial policies in West Africa shaped spaces for Muslim political and social activities and how Islam lost out on its independent political capital (Soares, 2005). In the same frame, Haynes in his study of Islamand Politics in East Africa confined himself to the ''political significance of domestic and transnational Islamic militancy in East African countries'' (Haynes, 2006:490). Within the immediate context of this research, Mwakimako has studied the engagements of Muslims in political debate especially on the contestation over the appointment of a *Kadhi* in Mumias. In the conclusion to his study Mwakimako states ''the ultimate power that accorded authority to the *Kadhi* during the colonial period was the colonial state...'' (Mwakimako, 2008:440).

The impact of modern mass media and technology on religious debates cannot be dismissed, nor can the effects of modern liberal political trends on accessing information and engaging in public debate. These perspectives make an important contribution towards understanding the conditions under which public religious discourses are now taking place and how these conditions further contestation. However, these perspetives do not enable scholars to analyse a variety of religious expressions. Although this research has taken cognisance of the political and social contexts of the sermons; this was not its focus. The research is more concerned with identifying clearly what is going on inside these religious practices. In relation to this thesis, this has been a study of public sermons. The research approached both Muslim and Pentecostal preachers as religious actors in the public sphere. By closely examining the biographies of the preachers and their sermons, this research has managed to reveal very distinct religious debates that are taking place in the public domain. In this way, the research has complimented previous reflectionson religion in the public sphere. By focussing on one particular activity, this study has revealed the religious dynamics played out in public life in public sermons. The study has shown that the public preaching activities are perfomative religious events engaged in *daʿwah* and mission for

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Muslims and Christians respectively. However, both *daʿwah* and mission take on specific form at the hands of these new preachers that dominate religion in public life in Kenya.

In order to locate contemporary public sermons in a historical perspective, Chapter Two of this study examined the history of Christianity and Islam in Western Kenya. Various factors impacted the introduction and development of each of the two traditions in the region. These included politics, trade and the desire for mission (especially for Christians). A significant finding in this research was that the prevailing political interests at the time played a dominant role in the introduction of the two traditions. The research has demonstrated that the leadership of Nabongo Mumia, a traditional monarch in Mumias, was instrumental in the establishment of both Islam and Christianity. Mumia faced strong opposition from the neighbouring tribes and was interested in securing his Kingdom with the help of Muslims and Christians. It is in this context that he welcomed first Muslim traders to Mumias around the second half of the nineteenth century. Later, in the first half of the 20th century when the first Europeans arrived, Mumia also extended hospitality to Christians with the expectation that they would assist him fight his local enemies in the neighbourhood. The presence of Islam and Christianity in Mumias has been marked by suspicion and competition. The early Christian missionaries were concerned about the strong presence of Muslims in Mumias. Therefore, they laid out plans to counteract the Islamic presence in the region. It is within this context that relations between Muslims and Christians in Mumias and the wider region took a competitive and even adversarial shape.

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The above historical overview of Christianity and Islam in Western Kenya prepared the ground for a discussion on the emergence and development of public preaching in Chapter Three. That Chapter gave a broad outline of the emergence and development of preaching in Christianity and Islam from the period of their inception up to the contemporary period. In some cases, the sermon remained in continuity with tradition while at other times paved way for new developments. Depending on the events at a particular period, the sermon had distinctive characteristics. Modern public sermons emerged as part of a continuously evolving tradition. The Chapter showed that sermons in the modern period were found to focus on mission and *daʿwah* for Christians and Muslims respectively. The Chapter set the scene and raised the question: What are

public sermons in Western Kenya in general, and Mumias in particular? What kind of mission and *daʿwah* were these sermons respectively, of Christian and Muslim public preaching?

The main contribution of this research lies in its answer to these questions, which was the focus of Chapters Four and Five. Muslim Public preachers represent new religious authoritieswithin Islam. The Muslim preachers were all former Christians whose goal was to occupy a place of authority in society. Without any formal training in Islamic religious sciences, these preachers based their claim to religious authority on their own experiential encounters. The preachers also went through a period of apprenticeship before beginning to preach. Interestingly this training process involved a more extensive study of the Bible, and not the Qur'an. They demonstrated the expectation in the literature discussed above that the new public spheres would facilitate the emergence of new authorities. Chapter Four showed how this new leadership was constructed in Mumias and Kenya on the basis of religious experience and Biblical knowledge. It was not, as argued elsewhere, based on a new interpretation of Islamic texts. The Muslim preachers were not proposing alternative Muslim theologies, but employing various forms of Biblical "hermeneutics" in public life. They based their arguments for the supremacy of Islam on the basis of Biblical texts. They used Biblical texts to support an Islamic theology. This is one of the novel findings of the thesis.

The religious backgrounds of the Muslims preachers impacted heavily on their public engagements. They relied on their knowledge and previous experience of Christianity to claim that Islam was in fact a superior tradition. The preachers mostly employed the Bible in varied ways. Some preachers used the Bible (with support from the Qur'an) to support the truth of Islam. Others used the Bible only to demonstrate its unreliability. The Muslim sermons pointed to how the preachers worked hard at establishing a firm foundation on the basis of the Bible to prove the truth of the Islamic tradition. They seemed to heavily criticize the Bible, but they repeatedly returned to it for support.

In their endeavour to use the Bible in varied ways, the Muslim preachers came face to face with Christian interlocutors who posed questions challenging their use of textual sources. However, the preachers overcame this challenge by carefully staging events

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through various rhetorical means. Such strategies included repetition of sacred texts as they were read, songs, body movement, and dialogue with the listeners. Although this approach proved effective in responding to their competitors, their Christian interlocutors and audience remained unconvinced. The ineffectiveness of this approach was evident in the fact that no conversions to Islam were evident, at least not publicly. Upon being challenged to realise the illogicality of their tradition and convert to Islam, the Christian interlocutors and their followers did not respond to these invitations.

As indicated in Chapter One, on many occasions, the sermons ended in tension and violence forcing the intervention of the police. The intervention of the state did not go unchallenged as the Muslim preachers challenged the impartiality of the state in a Christian dominated political order. These forms of engagements between the Muslim public preachers and the state pointed to the historical discourses on the marginalization of Muslims in a region dominated by Christians. The nature of public engagements between Muslim preachers and their interlocutors pointed to a fractious relationship between the public preachers and their followers with local Christians, and also their relationship with the statewhich intervened on many occasions to restore order.

One may conclude with the observation that Muslim public preaching as *daʿwah* was a debate and a demonstration more than it was a call to join Islam. I did not see a single conversion to Islam during my research, and the preaching rituals, rhetorics and arguments were not designed to entice or invite the audience. The aim of a public preaching was a demonstration that Islam was the truth. And the truth of Islam was founded on the Bible and rhetorical strategies. The foundational role of the Bible for Muslims, or perhaps its anti-foundational but still dominant role, underlined the marginality felt by these preachers and their audiences.

Through an examination of the preacher's biographies, Chapter Five demonstrated that like Muslim preachers, these Pentecostal preachers were also converts. But they had converted from mainline Churches to various Pentecostal groups. Like Muslim preachers, the conversion narratives of the Pentecostals pointed to the role of religious experience in forming new religious leadership. Moreover, like the Muslim preachers,

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the family and educational contexts of Pentecostal preachers impacted on their religious formation and subsequent engagement in public preaching. Such encounters made the preachers more convinced that they had a divine calling into public preaching. They moved from place to place, calling upon people to join their churches so as to overcome the various social challenges that they face.

Chapter Five identified key features of Christian public preaching. Firstly, the preachers in their sermons demonstrated a critical awareness and engagement with people's socio-economic problems. In their sermons, they repeatedly referred to poverty, domestic quarrels, unemployment and disease. Some of the preachers even gave extensive testimonials about how they too faced problems in their past lives. Pentecostal preachers offered Christian salvation as the panacea to these problems. The roads to salvation was led by various strategies: biblical hermeneutics, the prophetic presence of the preacher and incessant and vigorous promises of salvation. The preachers employed Biblical characters, and showed how they were role models for dealing with the adversities of life in Kenya. Biblical stories were metaphors for the adversities facing Kenyna. In some semons, however, the powerful presence of the preacher played a more dominant role than the Bible. Like the Muslim preachers, these preachers also used various rhetorical strategies such as songs, movement and questions to lead people into conversion.

Most importantly, however, Christian public preaching was distinctive in one important respect. For the Christians, public preaching was an extension of churches to which the preachers belonged. Mission in Pentecostal preaching was a desire to convert the public square into a church. It was not a debate or contestation for a place in public life like the Muslims, but a confident presence and a desire to include the public square into the Church.

Christian preaching was above all also a missionary practice directed at other Christians. This was evident in the way the events were arranged, the sacred podium, the ushers, and the call to come forward at the end of every preaching event. The preachers were converts from these churches, and they called on other Kenyan Christians to do the same. Their entire focus rested on joining their churches,

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demonstrated by calling respondents to come to the holy ground represented by the podia. There were hardly any Muslims present, even if they could not ignore the events. The preaching was directed at other Christians to convert, to renew their commitment to Jesus.

The engagement of both Muslims and Pentecostals in public preaching clearly demonstrates the increasing presence of religion in the public sphere. Muslim preachers stood firm upon the argument that their tradition was the real/only truth even though they were in the minority. On the other hand the Christians believed, and through their sermons, exemplified that their Churches were part of the public sphere. They thus called on their listeners to convert to Christianity by being saved/born again. However, both Muslims and Christians were not engaged in dialogue. They were not talking to each other, but past each other. These forms of engagements point to their differentiated place in Kenyan Public life.

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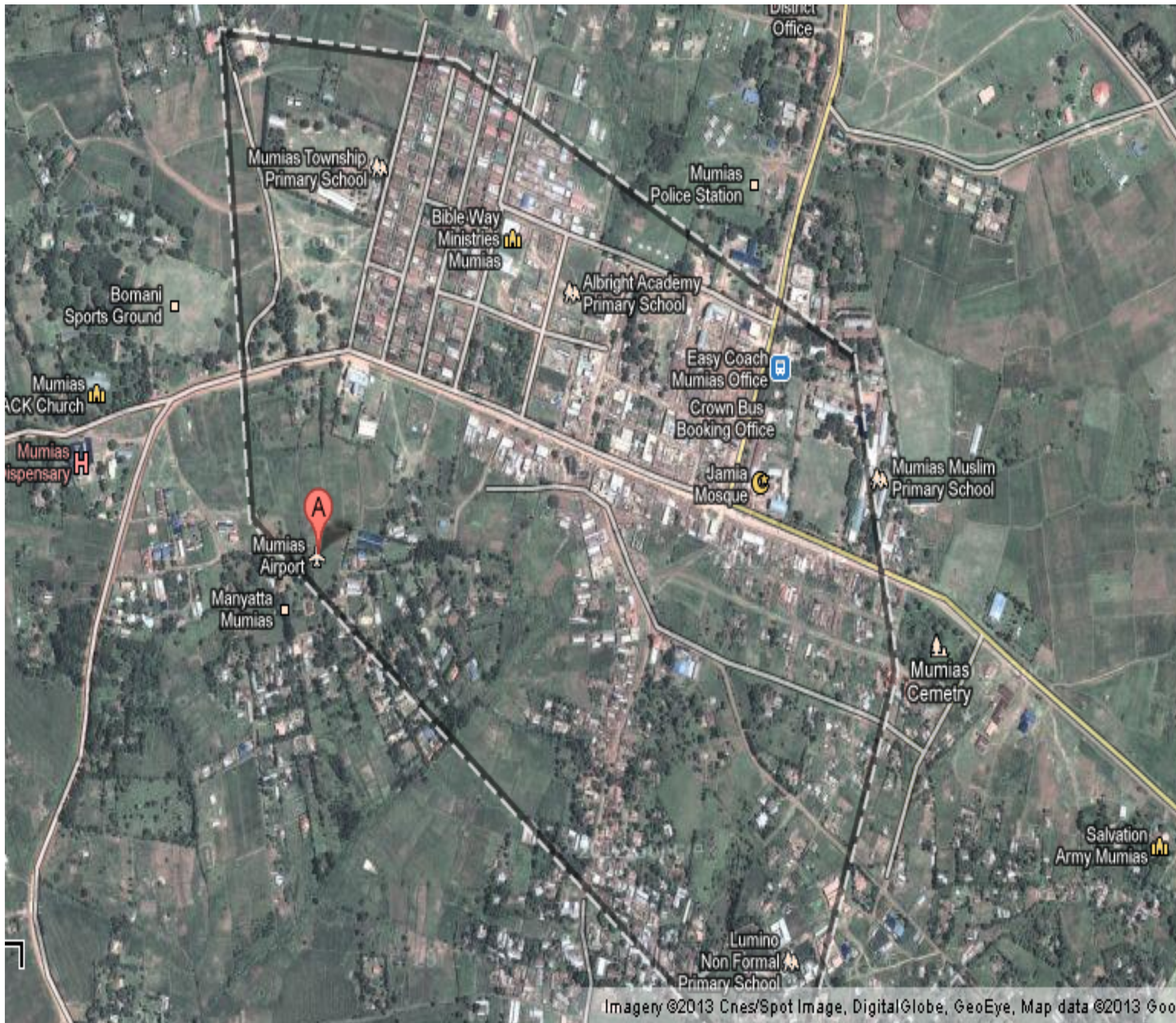
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Photos of Mumias and the environs commonly used for Da'wah and Crusades



a. A Google spot image of Mumias and its environs: The influence of religion can easily be noted from the naming of institutions

b. Jamia Mosque Mumias

c. Nabongo Open-air Market, Mumias. Notice this inter-religious project sponsored by USAID, an effort to create cooperation between religions in a plural public space.

Appendix II: Photos of Muslim *da'wah* in Mumias

a. Mhadhara by Suleiman Mazinge (holding microphone) Mumias 26th Feb 2010

b. Mhadhara February 27th 2010, Mumias

d. Mhadhara in March, 2010, Mayoni. The man holding the microphone is a Christian attempting to engage with a Muslim preacher.

ity of Ca

e. Salim Ndeeda preaching at Uhuru Park Nairobi,Kenya 2011

f. Salim Ndeeda preaching in Busia, 2010

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Appendix III: Photos of Pentecostal Missions (Crusades)

a. Publicity for Pentecostal preaching in Mumias town

b. Open Air Seventh Day Adventist Crusade, Mumias, Easter 2010. Notice the altar/podium as "separated space".

c. Crusade by Neno Evangelism, Nabongo Market Mumias, 23rd February, 2010. (The researcher was barred from taking a photo of the crusade for unknown reasons)

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