‘Problematizing Partnership:

the Experience, Perceptions, and Insights of Ugandan Church Leaders in Church Partnership with Christians Overseas, in Juxtaposition with the Western Literature.’

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the experience and perceptions of church leaders in Mbale, Uganda engaged in ‘local-to-local’ relationships: direct, cross-continental, missional partnerships without mediation by traditional gatekeepers (typically Christian missionaries or ministries). Its findings are then compared to the literature, most of which originates in and adheres to global-north perspectives.

A quantitative survey of church leaders found the incidence of these partnerships, gathered preliminary descriptive data, and uncovered specific cases for qualitative interviewing. Interviews with leaders and lay ministers followed, and lastly a review of secondary, historical literature was undertaken.

This research shows that just under one-third of all churches are engaged in a local-to-local partnership with Christians outside of Africa; furthermore, that these same churches are more likely to be engaged in two or three overseas relationships rather than only one. Partners function as alien, ancillary patrons whose patronage supplements that of local patron-pastors, the new gatekeepers in overseas partnership. Church leaders engage in instrumental friendships with overseas partners as a means of production for their clients in the religious marketplace. They must weigh the helpful products of partnership against its risks, including that partners can be stolen and are often agents of division, financial temptation, and doctrinal compromise.

These results enable more open, profitable conversation in the literature by showing that local-to-local partnerships are more a product of history than a break with it, are sustained more by instrumental friendship than by relational solidarity, are more hierarchical than they are egalitarian, and are frequently contributors to division locally even as they build community trans-nationally.

Lastly, this study commends the model and practice of covenant in the Biblical literature as a means of purposeful friendship across great geographic and cultural distances, building solidarity from distrust and difference, gifting growth to each other, and harnessing hierarchy to bring inclusive blessing.

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by

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in Middlesex University

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Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

DECLARATION [*In absentia, sign, date, scan (preferably into .pdf), and e-mail; or post or fax*]

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed .... (Candidate)

Date 28 September 2021

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Date 28 September 2021

STATEMENT 2

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DEDICATION

To my bride

For your great understanding, long-suffering sacrifice and willingness to devote so much of our limited resources to this enterprise. Most of all, for your love. Thank you for walking with me. 'Wherever we may wander, it's your face I'll long to see…'

To our children

I love each of you and thank you for your forgiveness for those times when I was distracted or you heard me say 'I can't right now.' I am so proud of each of you.

To The Source

For encouraging and forgiving this absent pastor, and for knitting my heart to the Pearl of Africa. I am so privileged to be your friend. Thank you, each of you.

And least of all, to my little B&W printer

You have endured much, far more than most. Dust, ant colonies, power cuts and surges, endless knock-off and refilled cartridges. Yet, tens of thousands of pages later, you have endured to the very end.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANE	Ancient Near East
CBO	Community Based Organization
CMS	Church Mission Society
CoU	Church of Uganda
FBO	Faith Based Organization
BAFFE	Born Again Faith Federation
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organization
NFBPC	National Fellowship of Born Again Pentecostal Churches
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PONT	Partnerships Overseas Networking Trust
STM	Short-Term Mission(s)
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

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Chapter 1 – Eglises Sans Frontières

INTRODUCTION

I still remember my shock when I saw my first real "tourist" in the small Cambodian town where we lived. A taxi was taking a foreign couple from the capital city down to the Gulf of Thailand, and had stopped in town for lunch. "Tourists? Here? Wow – that's crazy...and a bit unnerving!" I thought. Not long after, teams of foreign motorcyclists or adventure cyclists started to passed by, some even staying overnight. An Australian couple who were bicycling around Cambodia for their holiday came through town over a Sunday. I happened upon them at a local eatery, and they invited me to sit down and chat. They had gone to a local church and met the pastor, who spoke some English, and had heard about the church-based, micro-savings groups that this pastor was leading. The husband told me they were going to be in the country for only a few more days, and he wanted to work with this local church to "seed" a micro-credit venture that was scales of magnitude larger than the micro-savings initiative the church was leading presently.

I learned that back in Australia the man was a successful venture capitalist who provided seed money to business start-ups and consultancy services to entrepreneurs bent on building the future before their competitors beat them to it. He came from a world of fast action and adrenaline rushes. And here we were, sitting together in a dirt floored eatery with more flies than customers.

This man wanted to "do it right" and asked if I had any forms he could review with the local pastor and use to establish his scheme. I tried to explain that such a complicated venture required capacities and aims beyond those of the local church in question (which was employing micro-savings, very different from the micro-credit he proposed). But I failed to bridge the gulf of understanding between us, which was simply too big to span in one conversation. We parted ways amicably, never to see each other again, though I

have often wondered what became of them and their plans. This encounter, as it turned out, was the first of many more to come.

When my family and I had moved to rural Cambodia in 2002 to work with local pastors, we were virtually cut off from the outside world. But that isolation did not last. Within a few years, two dirt-floor shops had opened up with computers and internet service, and soon after that a few wealthier pastors and Christian leaders acquired smart phones. Short-term teams from places like Canada and Finland began to appear seemingly out of nowhere. By the time I left that beautiful land, things had changed dramatically: by then, it was not unusual for a single local Christian leader to have multiple relationships and ongoing projects through partnership with local Christians in places like Korea, Northern Europe, North America, Singapore and Australia. What was going on, I wondered? I was curious but also, in some ways, in denial about this new world springing up around me. It was not a world which I instinctively welcomed. Many things about these partnerships seemed, from my perspective, to be problematic. Even though I had years of experience in mission and in Cambodia, no one was asking my advice. Being outside of my control, I could do little to 'fix' them. What was going on? Was something conspiring to wreak havoc on my missionary model?[1]

My initial combination of discontent and curiosity at the changes I observed in rural Cambodia was the springboard for my research, though this research is now a decade and a continent removed from the story above. In this study, I seek to problematize what I term local-to-local relationships, those partnerships in which lay Christians and local congregations engage directly with each other across oceans, bypassing the agencies and vocational missionaries that have been central to the Western missionary enterprise for the last two hundred years.

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[1] Some of this material has been reworked and condensed from an article published in 2012. See bibliography (Tuggy, John 2012) for details.

PROBLEMATIZING PARTNERSHIP

Problematization, as a word and a concept, has grown both in popularity and in diversity of meaning. My use of this term in the title of this research thus requires some brief explication. I ascribe three shades of meaning to the word problematize, as descriptive of this research.

Firstly, I am problematizing partnership in that I am analytically interrogating the phenomenon of local-to-local, missional partnerships in order to shed light on the Ugandan experience of these relationships. I seek to bring partnership complexity to light for open examination and increased understanding.

Secondly, I am problematizing partnership by pointing out that there is, in fact, a problem. As the literature and this research show, local-to-local practitioners outside Africa and their Ugandan partners are broadly happy to be in relationship with each other. So where is the problem? I argue that sister churches are similar to sister cities in that they tend to 'join a relationship for different reasons and thereby seek different outcomes' (Laguerre 2019:8). Partnership sustained by mutual ignorance of divergent aims is, in fact, a problem. Thus I seek to highlight problems in partnership which are easily overlooked through unquestioned assumptions and unexamined dissonance.

Thirdly, I am problematizing partnership by questioning the assumed moral and ethical meeting space of partnership. I seek to call into question the moral status quo both by highlighting moral ambiguities and shortcomings among Mbale partners, and by casting doubt on the moral presuppositions of overseas partners around shared power and mutuality. By prioritizing Ugandan stories, understandings, victories and failures in all their complexities, I invite practitioners on each side to re-examine their own motivations and moral assumptions in partnership.

THE LOCAL CHURCH IN MISSION – THREE TRADITIONS

I begin this problematization of missional partnership at the beginning; that is, the beginning of the Christian church's missionary efforts. From A.D. 33 to A.D. 311, during the era of missionary activity which Camp terms the epoch of 'spontaneous expansion' (2003:207), the missionary enterprise was 'characterized by spontaneous witnessing by laymen and laywomen as well as intentional missionary efforts by local churches.... Mission agency structures had not yet come on the scene. Missions was the duty of every Christian' (Camp 2003:208). A'radical sense of Christian community' was the driver and the local church was the domain of mission (Gager 1975:140).

Over subsequent centuries, the local church gradually moved from the centre to the periphery of mission, as the locus of missionary activity shifted from 'spontaneous expansion' to expansion through the power of the state (Camp 2003:203).[2]

When the Great Schism splintered the faith into Eastern and Western branches in 1054 A.D., and when the Reformation birthed the Protestant branch almost 500 year later, each of the new churches diverged in their missionary practice, and in the place of the local communion in that mission. The Protestant missionary enterprise did not develop a strong tradition of 'communion' or 'partnership' in mission vis-à-vis the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

In the Eastern Church, the whole missionary enterprise has been centred on the local congregation and the liturgy – the Eucharist event is the starting point of mission, and mission itself is a 'manifestation of the life and worship of the church' (Bosch 1991:208). Thus the link between mission and community, or more precisely the notion of mission as the outworking of the community of the Eucharist, is deeply embedded in the Eastern

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[2] Adapted from a five part historical division suggested by Camp. Winter, among others, contended that the agency structure has always existed alongside local congregations as one of 'two structures' of mission. Camp does not take up this discussion, but rather he names his historical divisions based upon the mode of mission which predominates during that period. He traces the current age, one of the re-awakening of local congregations in mission, to the 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh.

mission tradition: ‘An Orthodox Christian parish…must understand itself to be an apostolic *community* with a *missionary* purpose [emphasis mine]’ (Hopko 2004:88).

It is the Eastern Church which gave birth to Christian monasticism, which was, interestingly, practiced in a solitary way (Bosch 1991:231). In contrast, the monasticism which the Roman church adapted from their Eastern brothers was very much a monasticism practiced in community (1991:231). Bosch argues that these Western monastic communities, though not founded for the purpose of centripetal mission, nonetheless were the greatest agents of Roman Christian mission for over 700 years during the ‘dark ages’, and had a profound impact upon the modern, western world through their re-constitution of Europe after the ravages of repeated invasions by non-Christian peoples (1991:230–238). Bosch further contends that it was precisely the communal structure and witness of these orders that made them such effective agents of mission (Bosch 1991:232).[3] The Roman Catholic Church, seeing itself as the universal catholic church, has communion at the core of the missionary enterprise.

The Protestant missionary tradition, on the other hand, has not featured ‘community’ in mission very prominently. Bosch argues that when the Reformers emphasized the principle of the priesthood of all believers, they also unwittingly laid the ‘seeds of division’ in the infant Protestant tradition. This correction to the existing church structures subsequently led to the proliferation of division and church groups in the Protestant tradition (1991:243), and thus for the felt need of each group to carefully define their doctrines over and against other groups (1991:248). This spilled over into the practice of mission across time and continues into the present, to the point where today Blincoe names the divide between denominational and mission structures a ‘breach’

[3] Bosch makes almost no mention of the missionary impact of Eastern monasticism. Such impact was likely limited precisely because Orthodox mission is ecclesially centred, and thus solitary Eastern monastics could in no way see themselves as having (nor church authorities tolerate) any missionary dimension to their existence.

requiring healing (2011:163). Fiedler contends that any expression of unity across denominations in the faith missions[4] movement in Africa has been 'basically individual, not corporate.... not of churches, but of individuals belonging to different churches' (Fiedler 1994:177).

The overall historical experience and current practice in the Protestant mission tradition, albeit when painted with a broad stroke, might then be said to be one of *differentiation* rather than *communion.*

In today's shrinking world, however, whether by choice or necessity, diverse Protestant congregations are increasingly practicing mission through a deeper level of communion with one another. The re-engagement of local congregations in mission is, in many ways, a recovery of the practice of the early church, when the missionary arm of the Church was the church. As Aano observes, 'Mission as a dimension of being church, is back' (2011:195).

There are, of course, significant differences between mission in the early church vis-à-vis what has come 'back' to local churches today. Missionary activity in and through local faith communities in the early church was largely local and monocultural (Camp 2003:208). Today the 'glocal' church, where diverse local faith communities are mutually connected and impacted by global processes of integration, is upon us. In many ways, we are in a new era of *Eglises sans Frontières*.[5]

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[4] Klaus Fiedler defines a faith mission as 'a mission which traces its origins or (more often) the origin of its principles directly or indirectly back to the China Inland Mission' (p. 11). The hallmark of such missions is their interdenominational structure, and the progeny of this pioneering mission model include organizations such as African Inland Mission (AIM), Serving In Mission (SIM), Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA), and Youth with a Mission (YWAM), among many others.

[5] The famous French-founded NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) started with an expressed desire to transcend national borders. Similarly, today local churches are increasingly operating as *Eglises sans Frontières* (Churches without Borders) in transcending national borders to form international partnerships overseas.

A SHRINKING, POST-COLONIAL MISSION WORLD

Immigration-induced demographic shifts in the Global North, when combined with two other streams of innovation, have created powerful currents of change in mission practice. The first stream of innovation originates in globalization, while the other has its headwaters in the cultural innovation of postmodernism. We first look at the impact of immigration in the Global North before turning to the effects of globalization and postmodernism.

Immigration

In the United States, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 abolished the national quota system that favoured immigration from northern European nations. In doing so, it has had a profound effect on the demographic makeup of America:

> Seven out of every eight immigrants in 1960 were from Europe; by 2010, nine out of ten were coming from other parts of the world. The 1965 Immigration Act was largely responsible for that shift. No law passed in the 20th century altered the country's demographic character quite so thoroughly. (Gjelten 2015)

Walking through this newly opened door to America, peoples from majority-world countries came and put down roots in unprecedented numbers, bringing both their religious convictions, affiliations, and community ties with them. The same patterns took place across Europe, with 'exponential growth of diaspora neighbourhoods in places of settlement' (Laguerre 2019:2). This 'migration explosion' was 'spurred by globalization's marginalization of third-world economies and sophisticated developments in communication and transport technology' in which 'more and more people today move from place to place at an increasingly faster pace' (Cruz 2010:71).

Bringing their Christian faith with them, immigrants from the global South started ethnic churches or joined existing congregations. In each case, they naturally kept ties to churches and denominational bodies in their countries of origin (Cruz 2010:60), enabling both churches to broaden the horizon of their mission endeavours (Wang 2013:32). The

increased diversity of immigrants and their global ties contributed to the growing wave of Short Term Mission (STM) from America to the world. Adler and Ruiz found that 'about 30% of STM travel is a form of civic remittance in which recent immigrants and their U.S. congregations aid foreign communities' (Adler & Ruiz 2018).

Globalization

Short term missions and other mission innovations were further enabled by the stream of globalization, which is both characterized and powered by instantaneous, decentralized global communications. This 'digital dimension' of transnational, civic partnership

> provides virtual platforms … to engage in cross-border cyberspacial interactions, transactions, and exchanges. The internet accelerates cross-border communication, regularly updates the status of projects, and facilitates telepresence, providing a nifty alternative to physical presence. Face-to-face interactions that cannot be done physically are executed in the virtual world, through Skype of other forms of social media and digital devices. (Laguerre 2019:4)

Achieving physical presence across borders is also more possible than ever before. The uncertainties of post-COVID-19 travel trajectories does not undo more than three decades where global air travel grow at approximately twice the rate of global GDP (Messe Berlin GmbH 2020; Massachusetts Institute of Technology n.d.). This has

> opened up ways of doing mission that would have been impossible earlier. Short-term mission became possible.... Other new forms of mission became possible as well, most notably, the 'twinning' of parishes or congregations in meaningful exchanges. One no longer had to make a commitment to becoming a lifelong 'professional' missionary. (Schreiter 2015:7–8)[6]

Immigration and globalization have in turn merged cultural rise of two *posts*: postmodern culture more generally and postcolonial academia and missiology more specifically. Scheitle alludes to this confluence between immigration, globalization and postmodernism when he writes

> The impact of easier travel and digital communication not only compressed time and space, but it blurred perceived boundaries.... Mass migration of peoples led to many societies becoming much more pluralist in both ethnicity and religion than they had been in the past. Digital communication

[6] Another form of mission arising recently is that of 'international accompaniment, or international protective accompaniment' which involves the placement of nonviolent teams of trained outsiders... into an unarmed community at risk of violence and/or displacement.' See (Lamberty 2014:297). Another form of international mission involvement was that of redeeming, or purchasing the freedom of, slaves during the Sudanese Conflict, see (McAlister 2014).

> allowed images and ideas to move quickly around the world, most evident perhaps in an emerging youth culture. These developments allowed social waves to move rapidly across cultures.... (2015:7)

<u>Postmodernism</u>

The cultural wave of postmodernism, spreading through the jet stream of globalization and increasingly manifest in globally-oriented urban centres, is characterized by a distrust of authority, including religious authority, and emphasises micro-groups over macro-communities, and relationship over authority (Río 1993; Scheitle 2010). As attitudes to external religious authorities change, the nature of people's involvement with and giving towards mission changes and tends to become at once more local and relational. Scott Moreau writes that

> growing distrust of institutions and of centralized models of governance have impacted the status of mission agencies, just as they have other institutions in society where relationships and choice, rather than authority and institutional loyalty, now rule the day. (2004:281)

Thus the locus of mission activity is dispersing from centralized agencies towards smaller, more localized agents. Top down approaches to mission are being revisited as 'global/local interactions are pressing on church leadership from the bottom up' (Robert 2013:245–6). In North America, for example, one survey of large or mega-churches in the US found 'a strong increase in total financial expenditures of all ministries outside the United States,' even while the number of sent full-time missionaries sent through mission agencies is stagnant (Priest et al. 2010:98). This is explained in part by Haney's observation that 'a relatively new phenomenon has... emerged - that of U.S. congregations (especially mega churches) bypassing denominational systems and providing support directly to specific African congregations and/or mission projects of their own selection and choice' (Haney 2006). Agreeing with Camp (2003), Haney (2006) and Wuthnow (2009), Priest notes that 'the locus of agency and decision making' in mission work is 'shifting back toward the sending congregation and its leadership' (2010:102).

Impact on Mission Practice

The combined forces of immigration, globalization and postmodern cultural innovations have created powerful new currents which are steadily eroding the binary mission partnership between local churches on the one hand, and the 'voluntary structure of the mission society' on the other, an arrangement that has dominated Protestant missions efforts for over two centuries (Jorgensen 2011:14).[7] Just as electricity and the steam engine helped to unleash a new wave of missions activity more than a century ago, so today new global realities are once again breaking down old barriers and old roles in the church's global mission.

In the place of traditional mission societies, 'new forms of transnational engagement have emerged' built upon new methods of collaboration, connection, and partnership (Bakker 2014:4). The result is that 'congregations increasingly rely on personal contacts as they initiate transcultural missionary activities' (Wuthnow 2009:153). Schreiter (2015:6) heralds these changes as a 'third wave' of missions, starting in the 1980s.[8] Some missiologists lament these changes as leading to a historic 'amateurization' of the missionary enterprise (Winter 1996), a 'populist phenomenon almost completely divorced from scholarship, from missiology, and from seminary

[7] See also (Fiedler 1994:13) There is considerable variation in terms and definitions for what Jorgensen names as a "mission society" – i.e. Christians collectively engaged in God's work in structures other than the local church. Winter labels his "mission society" structure as a "sodal" agency, borrowing an anthropological term. Many in North America call this the "parachurch" structure. Klaus Fiedler differentiated between "mission societies," "parachurch organizations," and "specialized Christian service organizations" *(see Fiedler, 1994, p. 394 and the accompanying endnote)*. For my purposes, I look at the *intermediary* role that these entities play between local churches, regardless of what term one assigns them. There is also some disagreement over the biblical and theological grounding for, and role of, the mission society structure within the life & work of the universal and local church. While I acknowledge the existence of this structure, I do not make an argument for or against its existence or the contours of its role – such a discussion is outside the purpose of this research.

[8] Schreiter indentifies the first wave during the age of exploration in 1450 to 1750, and a second wave initiated by colonization and effectively terminated by the First World War. Schreiter, writing about the Roman Catholic tradition, is careful not to confuse his 'third wave' mission, a term common in Catholic circles, with the 'Third wave' of Pentecostal/Holy Spirit movements (2015:5–6).

education' (Zehner 2006:434) and a 'deprofessionalization of economic development' through local-to-local partnerships (Hefferan 2006).

In contrast, other researchers laud what they see as a great 'democratization' of mission (Fanning 2009:4). This new era is opening new and complimentary avenues of mission which should be embraced (Schreiter 2015).

Whatever one's perspective, all agree that the ground has shifted in missions engagement. A new set of vocabulary is being employed to articulate the values that undergird these new modes of engagement. Words and phrases such as 'solidarity' (Bakker 2014:132), 'friendship' (Presbyterian Church in Ireland 2014:4), 'mutuality in Christian mission' (Haney 2006:207), 'reciprocity' (Smith 2006:8), 'relationships premised on mutual respect' (Smith 2006:226) and familial terms such as 'sisters and brothers' (Priest et al. 2010:102) are increasingly pressed into service by both practitioners and researchers of mission. Taken together these terms broadly connote the ideal of *partnership* as an explanatory and motivational frame for mission engagement today.

Partnership has in fact become something of a buzz word in Christian mission circles. The increasing popularity of the concept itself must surely account for Scott Monroe's finding that partnership as a primary method of mission among US Protestant congregations and agencies increased nearly 70 fold from 1998 to 2005 (Lederleitner 2010:206). Overhyped or not, there is little doubt that a broad increase in mission as partnership has taken place in Protestant circles.

Within that wider increase, Kenneth Ross identifies an 'upsurge of presbytery-to-presbytery and congregation-to-congregation links' (2008a:2), even while career missionaries sent through U.S. agencies has stagnated (Moreau 2011; Priest et al. 2010). Local-to-local, grassroots relationships across political and cultural borders are clearly a growing phenomenon, though few figures exist to quantify that growth in a broadly

meaningful way. In a study limited to very large American churches,[9] 85 percent reported having a congregational partnership overseas (Priest et al. 2010:100).

The historic *middleman* or *gatekeeper*[10] in the missionary enterprise – usually a para-church or 'sodal' organization – is no longer in a mediating role in many cross-cultural missional engagements. These intermediaries were once vital, Camp reports, in 'interpret[ing] the world to churches. Their expertise was required to send people to the field, keep them there, and ensure their effectiveness. As we look to the future, these roles diminish in importance given technological advances' (Camp 2003:242).

The Literature: A Conversation with One Voice

Many have taken notice of this shift in missions practice. Anthropologists (Moodie 2013; Hesselgrave et. al. 2010), sociologists (Bakker 2014; Moreau 2011; Wuthnow 2009; Miller 2003) and many practitioners and missiologists (Engelsviken 2011; Jorgensen 2011; Walls 2008; Ross 2008a; Cline 2006; Vincelette 2004; Camp 2003) have pointed out how globalization is increasing the direct engagement of lay Christians and local congregations with each other across oceans. Wuthnow (2009) gives a brief birds-eye view of the de-concentration or democratization of mission from a North American perspective, and suggests that it will continue and increase.

Jorgensen (2011) brings some causal explanation to this trend in his chapter contribution to the Edinburg 2010 series. Gary Vincelette's thesis (2004) examined the partnership between an American and a Russian Baptist Church. Maria Scheffler (2008)

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[9] Defined by a membership of 2,000 or more, sometimes called 'Megachurches.'
[10] A *gatekeeper* essentially manages the major aspects of the cross-cultural relationship - funds, communications, project plans, and personnel. These are channelled through the gatekeeper as they flow between partners. For instance, a *gatekeeper* organization may be a mission society which receives funds from a North American congregation and then channels those into projects though a congregation in Uganda. The Ugandan congregation, in turn, may send reports back to the mission society, who in turn uses these reports in its communication with the North American congregation.

studies the direct relationship between a Canadian and a Zimbabwean church, offering up several ways of structuring a 'church-church' partnership. Wuthnow's extensive work provides a quantitative account of only one side of partnership – that of the American church (2009). Scheffler looks to structure an equal partnership between southern and northern congregation, but the primary voices are exclusively Canadian (2008). Rowell's and Lederleitner's contributions are similarly from a North American perspective (Rowell 2006; Lederleitner 2010) and written for a Western readership.

An honest and self-critical article by Moodie on the 20 year relationship between a Salvadorian and an American congregation leaves her questioning the very notion that the cultural and financial chasm between the partners can be or even should be bridged (Moodie 2013). Samuel Bloomfield Reeves Jr. offers a single case study of a relationship between a Liberian church and her counterpart in Michigan, USA (Reeves 2004). Two helpful articles by Kenneth Ross (2008a; 2008b) briefly trace the emergence of, Pauline basis for, and challenges facing the emerging paradigm of local-to-local relationships as a basis for mission. Ross' works stand in positive contrast to a book length, but rather shallow 'how to' treatment of the subject by Dennis O'Connor (O'Connor 2007).

Voices from global southern congregations are not common in this literature. Holslag's study of congregations across the iron curtain during the Cold War is a fine study, though limited to European voices. Antoinette Marie Mensah examines 'parishioner motivations and propensity for engagement … between global twinning parishes.' The parishioners she studies, however, are those belonging to a Midwestern American parish who travel repeatedly to a 'sister parish' in the Dominican Republic. The 'transformation' she illuminates is almost exclusively among her American subjects, and all 'encounter' or 'impact' that takes place in Haiti is mediated through their testimony (Mensah 2019:ii).

David Livermore's dissertation moves the research closer to majority world voices. He examines the understandings and statements of American pastors with regard to the teaching/training they do overseas, and points to some foundational assumptions which colour their reportage; nonetheless, the emphasis remains on the American experience and voice (2002).

Brown's (2007) case studies of three church-to-church relationships between Ukrainian and American Protestant churches gives extensive attention to the three Ukrainian churches. Alongside two other major recommendations Brown makes, he advises that sister church relationships retain the services of an objective 'bi-cultural mediator' who is bi-lingual, possesses 'deep cultural understandings of the people involved', and has 'deep … ecclesial and theological understandings of both congregations and their ministry contexts[sic]' (2007:256). Brown goes so far as to say that 'congregations should enter into partnerships only if a suitable bi-cultural mediator can be found' (2007:253). One can argue that a real-world interpretation of Brown's recommendation is indistinguishable from a trained, professional missionary from either America or Ukraine. Given the material wealth and missionary tradition in America, such a neutral, bi-cultural mediator would likely be an American missionary. In my own experience, traditional missionaries certainly see themselves as neutral (and bi-cultural) mediators, even if, as this research shows, their hosts may perceive them differently.

Bauerochse (1996) seems to have pioneered research into church-to-church relationships when he wrote in German about four German Lutheran congregations in partnership with African counterparts; according to Holslag's summary, the piece is written from a German perspective (2013).

Holslag's research (2013) of congregational fellowships across the Iron Curtain was motivated, he says, by his desire to address the absence of East German voices in the literature. This 'partner silence' from East Germany, as Holslag calls it, is all the more

conspicuous when it comes to local-to-local relationships between Western Christians and Christians from Africa.[11]

For example, Madden's 2019 dissertation concerns 'a framework for mutual transformation' yet his data and analysis are limited to American respondents sent on mission trips from his church to a partnering district in Malawi. The logistical and financial constraints of research on multiple continents confined his research, understandably, to America. Nevertheless, Madden implicitly believes, without cited evidence, that transformational impact is being achieved among sponsored students in the project in Malawi when he recommends 'further study of transformation in the lives of sponsored students' and that it 'would be interesting to see how their lives are transformed' (Madden 2019:171).

Bakker (2014) zeroed in on the 'sister church' phenomenon, setting this type of relationships in its historical and mission context and providing colour and depth via case studies in twelve North American congregations. Her study is the best treatment of this major segment of local-to-local partnerships that I have found. As Bakker readily admits, her study 'leaves much to be told by other voices,' in that by researching Washington D.C. churches she necessarily 'leaves at least half of the story of each of the profiled relationships largely untold' (Bakker 2014:10).

This half of the story remains largely unheard, these stories untold. As Holslag explains,

> In many cases, studies primarily consider the effects and transformations for the American or Western partners.... There seem to be very few missional studies or research projects (if any) focused on the 'voice' of the partners, much less *from* the voice of the partners. (Holslag 2013:47–48)

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[11] Asian views and voices are also thin in the literature, though Barber Jr. (2015) and Zehner (2013) write with Asian voices about the Asian experience of receiving Short Term Mission teams. Latin American perspectives are better represented. See, for instance, the Latin American perspectives and voices of authors such as Fenske, Eitzen, Escobar, Cerrón, Palmatier, Padilla, Guerrero, and Priest.

Edwin Zehner reluctantly agrees. Writing about short term mission, he notes that 'largely missing from the work to date has been attention to the attitudes and opinions of the recipients of short-term missions' (2013:131).

Recent developments have opened unprecedented, new possibilities in mission and partnership. New models of mission and methods of partnership are being built. But any model will inevitably be as skewed as the conversations which engender it. This research, then, begins to build a more balanced conversation in the literature. I seek to raise the voices and tell the stories that have not yet been heard.

My ethic and cultural otherness limit the degree to which I can claim to speak *from* Ugandan partners; nonetheless I believe I have moved beyond solely focussing *on* these voices, doing so through the use of narrative and dialogic research methodologies undergirded by my hermeneutic of commitment. In doing so, I set the stage for other studies to build upon my own offering with research coming more directly *from* African local-to-local mission partners, so that a more vibrant conversation can emerge.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND ARGUMENT

The main question addressed in this research is: 'When Ugandan churches are engaged in a local-to-local, cross-continental, missional relationship what are their experiences and perceptions of the relationship?' The subsequent research question is 'How do these compare to the local-to-local literature presenting the perspective of Western partners?'

Much of what has been written in the West about this mission shift has argued that it is a new and post-colonial break with the past, is marked by mutuality and egality, and is sustained by relational solidarity. When brought into a conversation with the voices of Ugandan partners, however, much of this literature is shown to be incomplete and therefore misleading. Based on the experience and perspective of church leaders presented in this study, I argue that the local-to-local mission phenomenon is more tied

to history than it is a break with the past, is more hierarchical and clientistic than it is egalitarian and mutual, is sustained more by instrumental friendship than by relational solidarity, and contributes to division and distrust locally even as it builds community and common purpose trans-nationally.

The tone of this argument, at first reading, may seem overwhelmingly negative. I hope that is not borne out as the argument progresses. My argument may well appear to be negative relative to much of the existent literature on local-to-local relationships. Set against both historical precedent and other forms of cross-cultural partnership, however, the local-to-local phenomenon can be understood much more positively. Local church leaders are certainly see it positively. The voices and stories of local church leaders in chapters three through six, and quantitative data in the same, are, on balance, quite positive. I then give voice to my own learned optimism in chapter seven.

Whatever the relative tone of my argument, I trust that any results of this study will be positive. When the experience and perspective of church leaders in Mbale is brought into dialogue with our own understandings, the resultant dissonance is overwhelmingly positive in that it opens new space for a truer conversation to take place.

Definitions

Key terms in this research include *local-to-local* and *traditional* relationships, *gatekeepers,* and lastly *mission* and *missional* relationships.

The term *local-to-local* is used to describe direct partnerships between local Christian entities in the global North and South. In the overseas side of local-to-local relationships, the *local* partner may be a single congregation, a diocese, a small NGO or voluntary association, a Sunday school class in a large church, or even a Christian family or church pastor. This overseas *local* group, then, is in direct contact and cooperation

with a *local* partner in Mbale. That local partner in Mbale is a Christian church,[12] though the boundaries between a local church, its leader and associated Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are often blurry.

The definition of local-to-local relationships above is in contrast to what I call *traditional* relationships. Traditional relationships are those which are mediated by a third party, mission professional. This third party can be a cross-cultural missionary, often sent from the West, or less often from Asia or Latin America, through a mission agency. Equally, it can also be a local professional, for example a hired staff of a Christian Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as World Vision, Compassion, or any number of the better-funded local NGOs (LNGO). In either case, the relationship is managed by a *gatekeeper* who is centrally stationed between the two partnering entities and through whom information, funds, reports and visitors flow back and forth.

For the purposes of this research, *mission* is defined in holistic terms. Holistic mission confesses the integrity of God's purposes and actions in the world, rather than separating redemptive history, and God's mission, into 'sacred' and 'secular' domains (Samuel & Sugden 2009:177). Mission is not, for our purposes, necessarily cross-cultural. From the perspective of one local partner, the mission will be cross-cultural while for the other partner that same mission may be towards their local community. Thus it is the partnership itself rather than the mission that is cross-cultural.

Missional is used to express the purpose and posture of both God and His church. Relating to God Himself, mission theology starts with the *Missio Dei* - the purpose of God to redeem His creation, and His posture of engagement with creation as exemplified in the sending of the Son and the Spirit. The purpose and posture of the church, then, reflect the *Missio Dei.* The purpose of the church itself is mission, rather than mission

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[12] In a few cases, that local partner is a group of churches, for example in a diocese-to-diocese relationship.

existing to serve the church. The posture of the church, like that of God incarnated, is one of centrifugal engagement with the world, rather than limiting itself to a centripetal drawing-in of individuals out from the world. In this thesis, *missional* is used to describe partnerships which exist primarily for the furtherance of centripetal mission, as opposed to a church partnership which explicitly aims at, for example, learning about the culture of Christians in another part of the world. One could use the term 'missionary partnership' to describe this relationship; however, I have intentionally used the term *missional* because it frees us somewhat from some of the unfortunate baggage of the word 'missionary' and 'mission,' which in Western popular imagination is often narrowly associated with the sending or receiving of professional, full-time 'missionaries.' In fact, a singular feature of many of local-to-local partnerships is the absence of traditional 'professionals,' be they either expatriate missionaries or locals employed by Christian aid agencies.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

Epistemology - Knowing as Faithful Co-Creation

In accordance with Meek's 'submit to its reality' (2003:13) and Palmer's 'space in which obedience to truth is practiced' (1993:69) I believe that *knowing* comes from submission to the covenant Lord, flowing out into an epistemic approach of relational dialogue, done in self-giving love, sympathetic with Friere's concern for the oppressed, and resulting in Marx's concern for action. While I incorporate Marx's knowing-as-action and Friere's knowing-as-transformation, I contend that an epistemology informed by the Christian scripture takes us beyond their essentially class-based approach (Kitching 1988; Freire 2000).

The apostle Paul demonstrates such an approach in his letter to Philemon, who was the 'rightful' owner of a runaway slave, Onesimus. Rather than submit to an easy

diagnosis of the oppressor/land-and-slave-owner (Philemon) versus the oppressed/landless-slave (Onesimus), Paul instead instructs both men – and the church of which they were both a part – that their new, covenantal relationship undermines previous divisions between them. Because of this, these men must now come to know each other afresh, as brothers under their common Covenant Lord.

I summarize human knowing as *Faithful Co-creation*. Advancing knowledge is done in service to the covenant Lord, through mutual commitments and a multiplicity of dialogues, in accordance with His eternal character & design (*faithful*, past-oriented), while creatively advancing both human knowledge and ultimately reality itself (*faithful*, future-oriented).

Theoretical Perspective

In turning from more positivist approaches to research, Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) content that a researcher must undergo four 'turns' in order to practice narrative inquiry. These 'turns' are first a rethinking of the researcher-researched relationships towards one that acknowledges that the researcher is not 'bound, static, atemporal, and decontextualized' (2007:11). A second turn involves moving from numbers towards words, from a numerical and 'sterile discourse' towards 'ways that represent the experience of the researchers and the researched and allow evidence of the quality of the interaction and relationship' (2007:20–21). The third turn is a turn towards the particularity of experiences and the value thereof, away from 'constructing grand narratives' which 'apply universally, regardless of particular circumstances'. The fourth and last turn involves a move from a positivistic understanding of knowing towards an acceptance of the 'relational and iterative nature of human science research' (2007:25).

With this understanding, I came to my research with a theory-development, rather than theory-testing, approach.

Positionality

I also come to my research with a particular vantage point informed by my personal and familiar history. My personal history started with my birth and pre-university years spent in Venezuela as the son of evangelical Christian missionaries or – as I call them in this research – traditional gatekeepers. Cross-cultural Christian mission had deep roots in my family, and I myself was the third (paternal) and second (maternal) generation of my family to be born and/or grow up in Venezuela. Extended family members have been and continue to be involved in mission on various continents; indeed, the first of my paternal ancestors to come to America arrived from England as a disciple of C.H. Spurgeon and started a Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) in Colorado. Despite historical ties to this reformed theologian and my advocacy of covenant as a useful paradigm for local-to-local partnership, I do not come from a Reformed background nor do I hold a number of those theological convictions.

After university and marriage in the United States, I moved with my young family to Cambodia, when I took various positions within an international, Christian non-profit. The field research in this thesis has taken place over the past eight years while I and my family have been living in Uganda, where I presently pastor a cross-cultural, mission-sending church in Kampala. I do this as an independent contractor for an American-registered non-profit that raises funds from Christian churches (exclusively American) and individuals (mostly American) to fund the ministry, including my salary. The Kampala church is not affiliated or partnering with any of the congregations in this research.

Methodology

My methods in this research are mixed. The primary tools of data collection were qualitative, but this has been supplemented with data from a quantitative survey. The purpose of the survey was to answer some questions about partnership which are well-suited to quantitative methods. These questions are fundamental to both this research, and to establishing the significance of the research itself: 'How prevalent are external Christian relationships among local churches in Mbale?' and, as a sub-set of those relationships, 'How prevalent are local-to-local relationships in Mbale?'

Additionally, I bring supportive secondary data to my argument when I survey the literature of Ugandan history for particularly formative events and eras which build local conceptions and practices of overseas partnership today. The core of this research, however, is built around qualitative interviews of church leaders in Mbale district. My interview technique flowed from my epistemic stance of 'faithful co-creation,' guided by Kvale's understanding of an interview as a construction of a new 'inter-view' through the exchange of views by participants in the conversation (Kvale 1996). In our exchanging of views, I have been guided by Meek (2011) and Palmer (1993) in approaching my counterparts with a hermeneutic of commitment. Wijsen warns against becoming 'too committed' and thus 'no longer capable of critical reflection on the practice' (2005:122). Though I agree with his assessment of the dangers of a problematic outcome, I would frame the core problem not as over-commitment *per se*, but rather as the narrow, restrictive scope of and, in more extreme cases, the co-dependent nature of that commitment. While I approached interviewees with a hermeneutic of commitment, my own otherness helps ensure that my commitment is not so narrow and restrictive that I cannot engage in critical reflection. More broadly, my commitment to problematizing the partnerships of Mbale churches and my Judeo-Christian understanding of our 'fallen'

natures counterbalances the commitment and trust with which I approached my research inter-views.

In seeking to avoid the dangers of slipping into Marx's class-based dialectic, I adopt a methodology of multiple dialogues between different perspectives. Thus, for instance, I interviewed a number of Ugandan 'gatekeepers' working in mission, church leaders who do not have overseas partnerships, and those involved in local-to-local partnerships at different levels – from church elders, to rural pastors, to urban and senior church leaders.

Methodological Notes

I opened my data collection with a survey, conducted with the leaders of 394 local churches in Mbale district, asking them as many as 23 questions about their current or former church partnerships (or lack thereof). Over the telephone, these responses were obtained from a sample of 445 units/churches which had been randomly selected from a comprehensive sampling frame of 594 units/churches.

The telephone survey was conducted by five trained research assistants, who were compensated at market rates for their time (during the days of training, survey preparation and translation, and re-dialling/follow-up) and for each interview conducted and duly recorded. The survey methodology, including explanations of framing, sampling, dealing with non-response and response bias, survey translation, research assistant training, etc., are laid out in detail in Addendum A. The survey instrument itself is attached as Addendum B.[13] The survey was limited to closed, prompted, and pre-coded questions. While limiting the richness of the data, this enabled a simpler survey design, interviewing technique, coding and analysis. By bringing a different methodology of data collection

[13] The standard prompt, English version. A reverse prompt version was also used, as well as Lugisu translations of both the standard and reverse prompt versions.

and analysis into that research, the survey makes the overall research more robust, adding validity and reliability to the findings.

Initial face-to-face interviews were chosen from and informed by the results of the telephone survey. Those results which led me to a set of 41 churches for these interviews and helped inform the initial lines of inquiry I pursued during those interviews. One of these 41 responses came from a Catholic parish which, as explained in chapter two, has been set aside together with other Catholic parishes due to the unavoidable problem of unrepresentativeness. I was then left with 40 churches, which in turn are represented by 28 church leaders. The difference between 40 churches and 28 leaders is due entirely to the fact that one rural Anglican parish represented 13 distinct congregations in the sample. Apart from this Anglican parish with 13 congregations, there was a one-to-one correspondence between leaders and a local churches.[14] Of the 28 leaders I originally sought to interview, I was successful in securing a face-to-face interview with twenty-five. Two of the 28 leaders never made themselves available to me (i.e. did not respond to my repeated and varied overtures, to the extent they were clearly declining through their silence), and one pastor initially agreed but then declined to be interviewed, citing her husband's disapproval. In two instances, the person who completed the telephone-administered survey for the church was not the leader I later interviewed from the church. In both cases the original leaders had moved away, so in the first case I interviewed the new pastor (in his seventh month at the church) alongside a church elder with a longer history in the church, while in the second case I interviewed the new pastor who had previously been a long-serving elder in that church.

[14] Some church leaders had authority of some sort over more than one local church, but those churches did not make the research cut for inclusion into either the initial survey sample or the interviewing sample.

These 25 interviewees represented ten different denominations or independent congregations, in addition to the Church of Uganda, and included churches from the two main umbrella organizations for Born Again churches in Uganda, the Born Again Faith Federation (BAFFE) and the National Fellowship of Born Again Pentecostal Churches (NFBPC). In keeping with the promise of confidentiality in the interview process, I am not here naming those congregations and denominations. Taken together, however, these churches span a wide spectrum of Protestant Christianity, from conservative branches of Western, mainline churches, to African Independent Churches birthed from both Catholic and Anglican traditions, and from independent 'prosperity-gospel' churches to more recognizably 'evangelical' denominations with varying degrees of Western mission influence in their doctrine and practice.

Among these were numerous mission-planted churches with instantly recognizable names, variously birthed from British (Church of Uganda), Canadian (Pentecostal Assemblies of God), and American (Baptist, Presbyterian, Adventist, Four Square Gospel, Church of Christ/Christian Church) mission activity. Without exception, each of these churches, was now indigenously led. At least one church was a member of a Kenyan-founded Pentecostal denomination started in the early 1970s, while another was a member of Deliverance Church Uganda, a locally-initiated denomination which has spread internationally since its founding in 1967. At least four other churches were members of smaller, more recently birthed, Ugandan indigenous denominations. These churches haves clearer governance structures, national hierarchies and identities. This is in contrast to nine churches which were independent or the mother church of small, local groups. Though each would fall within the Born-Again or Pentecostal label, there was still a great deal of diversity in this group. Some were urban churches with impressive permanent structures, while another urban church met under a tin-and-wooden-pole structure in a poorer part of the city. Others were in rural locations, including one rural

church which put a great deal of emphasis on the particular calling and doctrine of their break-away founder, while retaining some trappings of their Catholic heritage such as the use of the Rosary for prayer.

In these initial interviews, these 28 churches were represented by their leaders. Three interviewees described themselves as church Elders, one held the title of Acting Pastor, while seventeen identified as Pastors and two as Reverends. Higher up in terms of clerical hierarchy, one interviewee was a Senior Pastor and three identified themselves as Bishops. Given the nature of this research, as reflected in the telephone survey results, Born-Again interviewees are overrepresented compared to Anglican interviewees, particularly in terms of the Christian population of Mbale,[15] and to a lesser extent in terms of local congregations. While their voices are present (three Anglican Church leaders and two organizational leaders working with the Church of Uganda were interviewed in this research) the Church of Uganda's practice of local-to-local generally represents the more-centralized end of the spectrum, with local Presbyterian traditions taking a somewhat similar, but more active, approach to partnership. This can be kept in mind when extending the validity of this research to the 32% of Ugandans who identify as Anglican.

Only one among my initial interviewees was a woman, though in one case only the husband of a husband-and-wife pastoral team sat for the interview. I met and interacted with a number of church leaders' wives, but only in one case did the wife participate in the actual interview alongside her husband. In a later interview with an East African missionary couple, the wife and husband were interviewed together.

The underrepresentation of women's voices in this research is regrettable. One reason is because women are underrepresented in senior church leadership in Uganda,

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[15] The religious traditions of Mbale's Christian adherents are estimated in chapter two, under 'An Introduction to Mbale.'

even among Born-Again churches where women often operate more actively as compared to their Anglican and of course Catholic peers. Another reason was that I myself am male, and a relatively unknown, foreign male at that. Gender norms constrain the places and ways in which I interact with women generally and with wives more specifically. For example, the one female church leader who I did interview was, probably not coincidentally, unmarried; on the other hand, a second female pastor who was in our first-round target group of 28 initially agreed to sit for an interview, but later called me back to rescinding her offer after her husband did not agree.

One church changed denominational affiliation between the telephone survey and the interview. One pastor declined permission to be recorded during the interview and seemed uncomfortable, despite his consent, with my taking notes during the interview, so all my observation and recollections of that interview were recorded shortly thereafter.

As chance had it, one of the churches which was randomly selected for inclusion into the telephone survey, and whose survey results then fell within the 40 for inclusion in the interview sample, was also the church planted and pastored by my research assistant, Wambedde Nicholas Abraham. As such, he was interviewed as a part of this research. As with all others, Wambedde's statements as an interviewee are anonymized in this research. In his role as a research assistant, Wambedde provided on-the-spot translation in parts of three interviews of other church leaders (the amount of translation required or requested was intermittent and varied somewhat) and, after co-interviewing with and being trained by me, he interviewed six church leaders from the telephone survey sample who had reported *not* having outside relationships. Three of these six interviews were conducted in English, and three in Lugisu. I also conducted seven historical and context-focused interviews, as well as two interviews with leaders of traditional 'gatekeeper' organizations (in this case, Christian NGOs operating in Mbale), two

interviews with senior pastors in Kampala, and lastly I interviewed two directors of a Ugandan-founded Protestant mission organization.

In the interviews themselves, my technique was to engage in a focused but relaxed conversation with the interviewees, usually ending in prayer together. I generally meet and interview church leaders at their home, fields, or church and thus entering their relational sphere. I frequently met their parishioners, friends, and family members. These interactions helped in some way to establish a small 'space where obedience to truth is practiced' (Palmer 1993), a space in which the inter-view conversation then took place. Meeting in their space also meant that I was able to observe their physical contexts, giving more context to my analysis.

In these pre-interview conversations, I self-disclosed about my family, background and ministry, and the reasons for my studies, before guiding the conversation towards the interview itself and attendant issues of confidentiality and gaining permissions. It was not unusual for pre-interview interactions to last as long as, or longer than, the interview itself; however, I estimate that perhaps 25-30 minutes would approximate the average length of these pre-interview discussions.

Through sometimes-direct, often-obsequious questions and comments that came my way, I came to understand that perspectives on human sexuality and conceptions of marriage were determinative, in the minds of Christian leaders in Mbale, of whether I could be trusted and talked to.

Within the historical, religious and political context as outlined in chapter six,[16] it became my standard practice to briefly disclose my own views which, while often divergent from those of my hosts on pastoral and policy levels, are nonetheless sufficiently orthodox that this disclosure generally helped put my conversation partners

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[16] See the discussion of the historical and current views around human sexuality in Uganda in the section *Mistrust of Whites over Perceptions of Non-traditional Sexual Mores.*

at ease. In a number of cases, I could tell that my self-disclosure was what 'broke the ice' and opened up the relational space for a genuine conversation to take place.

My research assistant Wambedde was a co-interviewer, alongside myself, in interviews with 13 church leaders. Any conflict of interest concerns were mitigated in that my research assistant did not select the interview subjects, nor was he embedded within the same ecclesial hierarchies alongside these interviewees. In these interviews, Wambedde's role, often and to good effect, moved from that of a distanced interviewer into a more active participant in the conversation, relating his own stories and adding his perspective and understanding to the topic under discussion. His participation in many interview conversations was valuable in that it further moved these conversations away from formal interviews and towards a conversational exchange between new acquaintances (in my case) or, in a number of instances, friends and fellow church leaders (in the case of my research assistant). Wambedde was compensated at a market rate for each interview which he conducted or co-conducted alongside myself.[17]

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The overall structure for this thesis is arranged according to the descriptive facets of social phenomena as put forward by Lofland and Lofland (2006). A somewhat similar organizational approach is taken by Bakker in her counterpart study among churches in Washington, D.C. (2010).

I pose Lofland and Lofland's eight questions to local-to-local relationships in chapters two through six of this thesis. Chapter two deals with the *Frequency* and *Magnitude* of local-to-local relationships in Mbale churches, using quantitative data to examine the frequency of these relationships, then retelling a story to illustrate the

[17] See Bibliography, Primary Sources. The six interviews conducted solely by my research assistant are numbers C001-003 and L001-003.

magnitude or impact of the local-to-local phenomenon upon the lives of people in Mbale. Chapter three examines the local-to-local relationship *Type*, asking and answering the question of 'what is it?' from the vantage point of history. Chapter three also begins to examine the *Causes* facet of these relationships, querying church history to ask 'why' these relationships have come about. In chapter four, I examine its *Structures*, using interview data and the metaphor of the religious marketplace to provide insight into some of the key players and their relationships which give structure to the local-to-local phenomenon. I then use chapter five to continue discussing *Causes* of partnership, looking at the barriers and opportunities which give birth to these relationships. Chapter five also addresses *Processes*, specifically asking what processes often contribute to either the death or maturation of these relationships (into more complex forms of partnership). In looking at causes and processes, this chapter helps answer the question of *Agency* in partnership. My descriptive work ends in chapter six, where I analyse the local *Consequences,* or fruits, of local-to-local relationships. In my last chapter (seven) I offer up my recommendations for local-to-local practitioners, and present the biblical concept of covenant as a helpful meeting ground for parties to engage with each other.

The Marketplace: an Interpretive Metaphor

The Loflands' identify a tendency for social science research – and indeed their own schema – to treat research subjects 'as more or less neutral media through which social forces operate and out of which social forms and organizations are composed' (2006:166). By adopting a marketplace metaphor in this study, I push back against this tendency by placing the primary voices in this research – those of church leaders - at the centre of our script, as founders and CEOs of their religious firms. Using marketplace as an analytical

metaphor allows me to vest church leaders with the agency of managers and owners of their respective churches.

For many people in faith-based occupations, those engaged in 'ministry' or 'mission,' the language of business economics is a foreign tongue. Phrases like marketplace, competition, customers, products and marketing do not often slip out from people whose vocations and passions are bound up with spiritual realities. Sociologists of religion, on the other hand, increasingly have no such qualms. Stark and Finke, in their classic study of American religion in terms of marketplace competition, trace the origins of the social scientific study of religion (rather than social scientific scepticism of religion) to the years following World War II (Stark & Finke 2000).[18] Numerous scholars (Smith 2008; Scheitle 2015; Stark & Finke 2000) point to the last two or three decades as a time of great fruitfulness in the sociology of religion at both the micro (e.g. (Ammerman et al. 1998) and macro levels (e.g. (Wuthnow 2009). As this era progressed, sociologists increasingly turned to the vocabulary and tools of economics in order to study religious activity and religious institutions. As Scheitle writes:

> The social scientists… drew upon economic thinking not only to challenge the existing model of religious decline but also to propose numerous hypotheses of their own concerning religious behavior. The guiding principle of this economics of religion is that there is a market for religion that functions in a way quite similar to that for any other product or service. (2010:5)

This study does not examine the overall religious marketplace in Mbale, but rather looks into the specific roles of local-to-local relationships within that marketplace. Other scholars have taken a similar approach to religious studies in East Africa. Yonatan N. Gez finds that the urban Kenyan religious landscape bears the hallmarks of a marketplace, where there is intense competition between religious institutions for adherents among people whose individual religious affiliation is multi-layered and fluid (2018). In a study of Charismatic churches in Kampala, Valois uses the rubric of marketplace competition

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[18] Stark and Finke do point out that Adam Smith, most clearly among early social scientists, put religion inside of a marketplace, but that as religion fell out of fashion other sociologists such an Engles and Marx used economic though to attack or dismiss religion, rather than to study it.

to analysis the interactions of two urban churches the at the intersection of politics, public morality and scandal (2016).

Leaving the Ugandan capital city for the countryside, Jones (2008) finds that Christian religious institutions are ‘central to village life’ and play a central role in life beyond the reach of state institutions, one of the ‘main avenues through which people’s … economic concerns were expressed and organized’ (2008:91). He observed that the three Christians churches present in a rural Teso village – the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Catholic and Church of Uganda – operated in marketplace in the political parish (2008). In the town of Mbale itself, Wiegratz & Cesnulyte conducted a study of local marketplace traders to see how the marketplace economy was shaping the local moral economy (2016).

In this study, I adopt religious marketplace as an analytical metaphor, which holds that local church leaders are supplying goods and services to the religious marketplace; it is they, as leaders of their church firms, who have primary agency in the market. It is their agencies and voices which this research seeks to understand and share. The external partners are supporting actors whose roles enhance the agency of these local firms.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I briefly touched on the historical involvement of local congregations in mission, starting from the early church up through the modern day. I then examined the main drivers of the changes in mission today. These changes in patterns of migration, technology, and culture are ushering in new opportunities at the junction of Christian mission and partnership. The globe may be shrinking, but it is still the perspective of Christians from the North which dominate the local-to-local mission conversation. I offer this research as a modest contribution to rebalancing the conversation towards the silent partner, by bringing in the experiences and perspectives of churches and their leaders in

Mbale, Uganda. It is to the town and district of Mbale, and to the church which calls Mbale home, that I now turn.

Chapter 2 – Local-to-Local in the Religious Marketplace: Setting, Size and Significance

INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter, I sketch a picture of Mbale District and her Christian community. I explain my choice of Mbale as a location for my research, and then sketch some of the major contours of the religious marketplace in Mbale. This chapter shows that local-to-local relationships are pervasive among churches in Mbale district, and that they have played a significant role in the religious, economic and community development arenas in Mbale and the wider Mt. Elgorn region.

I then set out the significance of this research in two ways: first, based on the frequency of local-to-local relationships in Mbale churches and second, on the significance of these relationships within the wider social fabric of present-day Mbale. The findings on the frequency of these relationships is based upon the results of a telephone survey conducted with the leaders of local churches in Mbale, while my argument for the significance of these relationships is grounded in an illustrative story showing that these local-to-local relationships have a very significant footprint in the spiritual, society and indeed the physical ecology of Mbale District.

THE CHOICE OF RESEARCH SETTING

Uganda is today a significant player in terms of links between national and overseas Christian communities, with good reason: she is relatively safe and accessible, highly Christianized, visitor-friendly, and English-speaking. In 2007 Uganda was among the top ten global destinations for short-term teams from American mega-churches. Outside of Latin America (the most popular destination for American STMs) Uganda was the third most common destination behind the more populous, prosperous, and accessible Kenya and South Africa (Priest et al. 2010).

Having relocated to Uganda,[1] I chose to situate my research in Mbale District in eastern Uganda, which held several advantages:

- In addition to Anglican and Catholic churches, Mbale District has churches from most of the major non-Anglican, Protestant denominations present in Uganda.
- Mbale contains both rural (up on the mountainous foothills of Mt Elgorn) and urbanized sub-districts (the municipality of Mbale).
- Mbale is both relatively accessible yet also removed from the central, urbanized corridor of Entebbe-Kampala-Jinja. I wished to avoid this corridor because it is widely perceived to be significantly more globalized and thus less representative.
- Mbale, in Eastern region, is in neither the richest nor the poorest region in Uganda (Central and Western are generally considered wealthier, while the Northern region is considered poorer).

I meet a local pastor through a mutual contact, and thereby gained initial access to some key church leaders in town as well as wider the district. From there, I was able to begin the research process in earnest.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MBALE

Founding & Development of Mbale

The Protestant faith and British rule were both brought to Mbale by an ambitious Muganda named Semei Kakungulu. Employed by the British as a means of pacifying and consolidating control of eastern Uganda, Kakungulu was a keen military strategist and avid Protestant.

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[1] I relocated to Uganda in 2013 to support the continental ministry of a group of African colleagues. I had shared my general research interest with my African colleagues and they then invited my family to relocate to Uganda, in part, because of this research. In my view, and doubtless those of my colleagues as well, many of the features of Uganda that made it a good base for international Christian ministry also made it a good site to conduct this research.

In return for his years of service and to ensure that their retired-but-powerful client did not start a rebellion, the colonial authorities granted Kakungulu twenty square miles of land, his choice of a 'small deserted areas of land', on which to settle himself and his 2500 men and their families (Twaddle 1993:183).[2] He chose to settle in 'a region of waste land, uninhabited and unoccupied, a place not only disputed by Bugwere and Bagisu, but by the Iteso and Karamojong' (Twaddle 1966:27).

The new town was strategically located on a strip of land between the difficult and high terrain above the Nkokonjeru escarpment and the impassable Namatala swamp below, in a position to benefit from the flow of trade between the vast Lake Victoria (and later railroad) to the south and all the territories of peoples to the north (Twaddle 1966).

By the time of his retirement from British employment, Kakungulu's military conquests and longstanding, mutually-advantageous employment by the British meant that he and his chiefs were wealthy men. For example, Kakungulu ordered beads from Asian traders to use as payment for food and materials from the locals. The beads required 600 porters to transport the load up from Lake Victoria, some 130 kilometres to the south (Twaddle 1966:31).

This wealth brought an influx of Baganda, Somali, Swahili and South Asian traders, the latter facilitated by the railroad having reached the shores of Lake Victoria (Twaddle 1966:30–33). The town very quickly became a market centre for the ivory trade, and growth was so rapid that within two years the trading centre at Mbale was the biggest in Uganda, barring only Kampala and Entebbe, where the British administration sat (Twaddle 1966:33–34). In 1906 Mbale was gazetted as a town by the protectorate

[2] To this day, in the area where Kakungulu and his followers settled, the local population continue to speak Luganda, the language of their ancestors, in the midst of the Lugisu speakers surrounding them. In keeping with their adoptive Conservative Judaism they identify as the Abayudaya Community (Luganda for Jewish). Their Rabbi Gashom Sizomu conducts Shabbat from a synagogue built with the help of the American Jewish community, and was elected as an MP for the area in the most recent elections for national parliament.

government, and shortly after they relocated their regional administration to Mbale (Mafabi 2017).

This in turn brought more jobs and visibility, and the development of an administrative elite which, as was common under British indirect rule, was heavily staffed by Baganda from central region. Some sixty years later, following independence and statehood, the administrative elite in Mbale had diversified but was still skewed towards the Baganda (the *Ganda)*:

> The elite Africans are ethnically heterogeneous. They include Ganda, Gwere, Padhola, Teso, Gisu, Soga, Acholi, Kiga, and Ankole. Although the Ganda are the largest single category, comprising about 30% of the elite Africans in town, each of the other ethnic categories represents between 5% and 15% of the elite population. (Jacobson 1968:125)

Today, the urban elite population in Mbale town continues to be very diverse. Indian residents gather to play cricket on the designated cricket grounds in town. The new Sino-Uganda Industrial Park is beginning to attract Chinese investment and nationals to the district. At a Kenyan run café, one might come across a European coffee buyer meeting with his Ugandan colleague from a different region of Uganda. At a nearby table, a American grad student could be consulting with her professor via a video chat.

Like many quickly developing municipalities in Africa, Mbale is a study in contrasts. Outside the sleek café, one might encounter a young, pregnant Karamojong girl or homeless boy waiting on the dusty sidewalk to ask for money from café patrons.

Students from the local universities crowd into one of the local internet cafés, using the café's computers to study and write coding for cutting-edge mobile phone apps. Much of the older infrastructure, however, has not kept pace with the digital revolution. The café walls display dusty print-outs showing two sets of prices for different services- one price for when the city electrical grid is up and running, and a second, much higher set of prices for when the café is running on its own generator power. Very few if any of the students writing code will reach a level of proficiency that would lead to a job, most likely located in Nairobi or even further afield.

The town recently completed a spacious four lane carriageway which bypasses the bustling, congested, and dusty downtown. This new road boasts the town's first traffic light, a sleek solar-powered design. Just off the road, cows rummage through rubbish piles at night under the illumination of the new solar street lamps.

Statistical and Religious Picture of Present-day Mbale

Outside of town, the vast majority of homes are not connected to the electrical grid, much less to roads illuminated by solar lights. Few businesses operate in the rural areas, where 76% of the estimated half million people in the district live.[3]

The rural population is overwhelmingly engaged in small-scale agriculture, often a mix of subsistence and cash cropping. A populous and agriculturally fertile region, with rich, volcanic soils on the slopes of Mt. Elgorn, the region is known for growing and exporting Arabica coffee all over the world.

The town of Mbale itself together with its semi-urban population are the largest municipality in Eastern region (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016). In 2021 Mbale was included among the second tranche of fifteen municipalities given the honour (and importantly, the accompanying upgrades in government representation, services, funding, and salaried employment) of city status by the national government.

A significant Muslim presence in the district centres on the town of Mbale, where many are engaged in trade and business. At the time of the research, a Muslim businessman was serving at the town's Mayor. Furthur from the urban core, a thriving community of Ugandan Jews (Abayudaya), a legacy of Kakungulu's conversion (see chapter three) and led by an ordained Conservative Judaism Rabbi and former Member of Parliament, have built a lovely synagogue in a village northeast of Mbale town.

[3] As mathematically extrapolated from the Uganda National Population and Housing Census 2014.

Like their Christian counterparts, the Islamic and Jewish communities of Mbale have extensive links overseas. While such links are beyond the scope of this study, people in the Mbale area can see the impressive main campus of Islamic University In Uganda (IUIU). This campus was renovated, study programmes were expanded and new student dormitories built with a loan from the Islamic Development Bank and donations from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Abayudaya synagogue was built with support from donations from Conservative Judaism synagogues and adherents in America, particularly in the New York City area in the United States.

Significant Christian NGOs, Seminaries & Universities in Mbale

Because of its prominence in Eastern Region, Mbale is the headquarters for a number of significant International or well-established Local NGOs who base their operations for the wider region from their offices here. International and Local Christian NGO's with significant international financial backing include:

- World Vision
- Compassion International
- Food for Hungry
- Caritas Archdiocese of Tororo (Archdiocese of Tororo/Catholic)
- Ugandan Women Concern Ministry
- Jenga
- Christian Child Care Project
- Harpenden Spotlight on Africa Uganda Foundation
- Oasis Uganda, including Beersheba Football Club (Beersheba FC).

Notably, many of these NGOs become more local-to-local in the nature of their operations. Compassion International, for example, does less than many NGOs to promote church-to-church or other local-to-local relationships in the child development centres which operate through Church of Uganda and Deliverance congregations. Nevertheless, a church leader reported participating in an evangelism crusade with a group of Compassion child sponsors from America, hosted by the local Deliverance

Church. Other visitors come on an annual basis, but he was not confident to differentiate between those connected to Compassion or to Deliverance Church (333).

In comparison with Compassion, the operations of some other international NGOs in Mbale are either conceived or reconstituted with more local-to-local aims. Harpenden Spotlight on Africa (HSoA) Uganda Foundation, the Ugandan branch of HSoA as founded in the UK, was started for the purpose of 'creating links between communities in the UK and Africa.' At this point, it appears that all African connections of HSoA UK are confined to communities around Mbale (HSoA 2019). While the town of Harpenden (30,000+ residents) itself is not officially engaged with Mbale or its environs,[4] HSoA is building bridges between their town and Bukasakya subcounty in Mbale District for the purpose of advancing development projects in education, water & sanitation, health, and economic development (HSoA 2019).

Food for the Hungry/Uganda, a Christian NGO whose work in Uganda pre-dates the upsurge in local-to-local forms of mission, has now 'linked' two of their project communities in Mbale (Nashisha and Marare) with two Canadian churches (Northgate church in Edmonton and CapChurch in Vancouver). Catholic Relief Services operates a 'Farmer-to-Farmer' volunteer programme in Uganda, linking farmers from overseas to bring specific technical expertise and work alongside local farmers for two to four weeks (CRS staff 2019).

Being the largest municipality of Eastern Uganda, Mbale has at least three accredited, Christian institutes of higher learning that are licenced with the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE), including local branches of Uganda Martyrs University (Catholic/Uganda Province) and Uganda Christian University (Anglican/Church of Uganda). LivingStone International University (Non-

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[4] Harpenden is officially 'twinned' with one small town in both Germany and France (Harpenden Town Council 2019).

denominational with strong ties to Churches of Christ/Christian Churches) operates exclusively out of Mbale, and is currently shifting to a purpose-built campus on 50 acres of land off the road to Jinja and Kampala.

Christians higher-education institutions concentrating exclusively on theological, and Christian ministry vocations include the Covenant Bible Institute of Theology (Evangelical Presbyterian Church), The Knox Theological College (Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Uganda), and the smaller Pentecostal Theological College (Pentecostal Assemblies of Uganda). As a vibrant religious community, there are many other smaller, non NCHE-registered, specialized religious training institutes which spring up and just as often close down based on the perceived needs and opportunities of the moment.

Christian Traditions, Congregations, and Adherents in Mbale

Ugandans themselves broadly divide their Christian churches into three categories. Colloquially, these categories are referred to as the Catholics, the Protestants (Church of Uganda/Anglican), and the Born Again Christians or churches (less commonly referred to as 'Pentecostal' churches).

The Church of Uganda and Catholic churches are clearly identifiable as distinct Christian traditions, with clearly-established and governed local congregations. The Born Again category of churches is much more amorphous, encompassing virtually all other Protestant groups in popular typology. The 'Born Agains' includes mission founded groups like the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG)-Uganda, originally started by Canadian missionaries in Mbale in 1930 before growing to some 5000 churches nationally. Also included are African independent churches such as the Deliverance church, which was also birthed in Mbale by students of the mission-founded Nabumali High School in 1967 and is to today likewise spread across the whole of Uganda (333).

Born Again churches include many individual churches or small associations of churches operating independently, though often aligned with one of two main national umbrella associations for Born Again churches.

Building an exhaustive sampling frame yielded a total of 594 local, self-identifying Christian churches in the district for possible selection and inclusion in a telephone survey. In addition to the Catholic and Church of Uganda traditions, the larger Pentecostal denominations and traditions identified in Mbale[5] include the Baptists, Chosen Church, Church of Christ (and Christian Church, Disciples of Christ), Church of God, City Church, Deliverance, Four Square, Holy Mountain, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Presbyterian (and Orthodox Presbyterian, Reformed Presbyterian), Revival Mission, Revival Tabernacle, Redeemed Church, and Seventh Day Adventists. Additionally, there were approximately 240 Born Again churches which were either independent, part of smaller affiliations, or otherwise not identified as belonging to one of the above denominations in Mbale.

Altogether, Mbale's Christian population may be estimated at around 404,000 people or 82 percent of the population in 2016. Broken down by the three main branches, there are approximately 205,000 Catholic Christians, 176,000 Church of Uganda/Anglican Christians, and 23,000 Pentecostal Christians in Mbale.[6] Starting with the number of Christians in Mbale and dividing by number of churches in the district (from this survey frame) yields approximately 680 self-identifying Christians per church in Mbale district.

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[5] By number of congregations, not by membership, which this study could not verify.

[6] Extrapolated from national statistics on religious affiliation in Uganda, (based on the 2002 census) and more current population figures (based on the 2014 census). Starting with the 2002 national data, I adjusted the growth figures slightly down (Church of Uganda and Catholic) or up (Pentecostal and Muslim) based on rates of change in adherence percentages between from the 1991 to 2002 census. Nevertheless, these figures may (if the rates of change have accelerated in the last 15 years) overstate somewhat the percentage of the population identifying as Catholic and Church of Uganda, while underestimating the Pentecostal and Muslim adherents.

This ratio, however, varies widely according to each Christian tradition. The Catholic Church has 4 parishes and 75 local parish churches in Mbale district, equating to approximately 2,700 identifying Catholics per local parish church. The Church of Uganda has 134 parish churches, or one per 1,300 self-identifying Anglicans (aka 'Protestants' in the religious vernacular). Born-again or Pentecostal churches, on the other hand, collectively have one local church for every 60 self-identifying 'Pentecostal' Christian (excluding certain groups which identify as 'other Christian').

There are other differences as well. When considering the presence of overseas relationships in local congregations, the Catholic Church in Mbale is distinct from other Christian traditions. The Catholic parish churches and the Tororo Diocese to which they belong have a rich history of mission partnership, particularly with the Mill Hill Mission. The form that Catholic local-to-local relationships take, however, was somewhat problematic for this study. Catholic local-to-local relationships are managed at the diocesan level rather than the congregational level. According to one priest, there is limited sustained interaction at the level of parish congregations, because these relationships are 'more in the office of the Archbishop' and 'formal, but not open to all'. Rather than relationships with longer-term vitality, Father Lucas observes that 'it's only at the opening of the new parish, *[that]* it's connected…' and in general 'not all people know it, they may not understand' (B006). This presented a problem in that the unit of analysis for both the survey and later the interview research was the congregation, rather than the diocese or higher level of the church.

A second factor further undermined the representativeness of Catholic churches for purposes of this study, specifically with regard to the telephone survey of church leaders. Because of the high number of local parish churches represented by relatively few priests, in combination with the overall small sample size of Catholic churches, the results for the catholic church were rendered unrepresentative, simply too small to undergo meaningful

statistical analysis. Thus, the telephone survey sample and results for the Catholic Church have been set aside in all statistical analysis of the telephone survey in this research.

Nevertheless, there are certainly aspects of the local-to-local phenomenon taking place inside the local Catholic Church. In Mbale, the church-sanctioned local-to-local relationships are part of through an ongoing partnership with Catholic Christians in Holland, through the Mill Hill Fathers. Dutch Catholics who were connected to the late priest Hans Smeets, who was born and raised in Holland before coming to Mbale, continue to support the construction of the Father Hans Smeets Centre. Father Smeets, a ‘very jolly man’ and ‘a man of the people on the ground’, passed on in 2014 and was buried in Budaka outside Mbale, the original parish in the whole of Tororo diocese (B006). He was the last Mill Hill Father to serve as a priest in the diocese. The funds and most other aspects of this relationship between the Mbale and Holland faithful, however, are channelled through the Mill Hill Regional Superior in Jinja, a city on the banks of the Nile River some 145 kilometres to the southeast (B006).

Given these higher levels of centralization in the Catholic Church, and with the encouragement of my studies supervisor, who observed that the Protestant denominations ‘is where all the action is’ in local-to-local relationships, I elected to concentrate my research within the Protestant (Church of Uganda) and Born Again branches of the Christian faith in Mbale District (Getui 2015).

THE INCIDENCE AND DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCHES’ PARTNERSHIPS

A logical place to begin this inquiry into local-to-local relationships in Mbale churches is to inquire into how pervasive these relationships are. The main tool employed to help answer this fundamental question was a telephone survey of church leaders in Mbale. The results show that fully two-thirds of churches in Mbale district (66.8%) have cooperated with Christians outside of Uganda. Of these two-thirds of churches, nearly

all of them, ninety-three percent (93%), continued to have at least one such relationship at the time of the survey. This means that, overall, sixty-two percent (62%) of Christian churches in Mbale were in an ongoing relationship with at least one group of Christians outside of Uganda (95% confidence level with a 4.64 interval). The distribution of overseas relationships in the church population is illustrated in Table 2.1.

My attention and analysis now shift to these 62 percent of congregations. Because the data set for this analysis is smaller, the confidence interval for these answers will expand accordingly.

Table 2.1 Mbale Church Relationships Outside Uganda

Relationship:	Number	Percentage
No Relationship	112	33%
Only in the Past	15	4%
Subtotal - None or Only Past	**127**	**38%**
Africa Only	53	16%
At Least One Overseas	156	46%
Subtotal - Ongoing Relationship	**209**	**62%**
Total	**336**	**100%**

For those churches with continuing outside relationships, the mean number of such relationships was two and a half (2.49). The number of outside relationships varied from one to fifteen, with two being the most common (mode) response. Stated in plain English, this shows that – for those 62 percent of congregations which had current relationships with outside groups of Christians – the average number of partners was two and a half (2.49). For those churches which had relationships exclusively within Africa, the average number of partners was two (2.02), while for those churches with at least one relationship outside of Africa the average was closer to two and two-thirds (2.66).

The average of 2.66 is, I believe, closer to 2.76 in actual fact. The 2.66 figure was arrived at by coding, for example, a verbal response of ‘at least two’ as a ‘2.’ There were seven such ‘partial refusal’ responses so coded, alongside five non-responses by total

refusal. The 'total refusals' were excluded from the analysis, as is standard practice, to arrive at the figure of 2.66.

In this case, however, there is good reason to believe that, based on other data collected in the survey, these refusals came from respondents with above-average number of partners. This is evidenced by the high number of refusals from Presbyterian churches; specifically, 40% of refusals came from a denomination comprising only 5.8% of the sample. As a denominational grouping, the Presbyterians had the highest average number of partners of all denominations in the study, at 4.56 per congregation. This points to the fact that respondents were more likely to refuse responses to this question if they had many partnerships, rather than few or none. Indeed, that conclusion aligns with the understanding arrived at by the survey team when discussing the survey pre-testing results and refinements. As shown in chapters four and five, this conclusion is also well supported by qualitative data showing the high value (and thus reluctance to disclose details) of these partnerships. Thus, the actual average number of relationships is likely to be slightly higher, based on a known and measurable quality of the survey response refusals.

Taking this into account, an alternative measurement can be arrived at if one includes only the Presbyterian total refusals into the sample at the average rate for other Presbyterian churches (4.56), and counts each Presbyterian partial refusal of 2+ as a '4' and the 5+ as a '7'. This results in the mean for partnerships per church increasing slightly to 2.76, from 2.66. I believe this 2.76 figure is a more accurate reflection of the average number of partnerships among churches with at least one relationship outside of Africa. It is this figure, then, that I use in the calculations going forward.

The respondents with continuing outside relationships were asked to choose any one specific relationship with a partner, if possible, *from outside of Africa* to use in answering the remaining survey questions. Relationships outside of Africa were

prioritized because that is the central concern of this research, and thus I wanted to generate as large a sample as possible for this category of relationships, in order to build a rich array of churches for inclusion in the next phase of this study.

The necessary down side of this decision is that inter-African relationships are under-reported in the data and thus we cannot discern their prevalence in the population. Nevertheless, the reported characteristics of these inter-African relationships do provide us with a useful opportunity to do some comparison vis-à-vis those churches with relationships outside of Africa. In all, one quarter of respondents (25.4%) with ongoing relationships outside of Uganda (209) reported that these relationships were exclusively within Africa (53).

Removing those churches with relationships only within Africa leaves us with just under half (46.4%) of all churches in Mbale having a relationship with a group of Christians outside of Africa (95% confidence level with a 6.55 interval).

Moving forward, my analysis is confined to these relationships. I will henceforth confine my analysis only to *overseas* relationships, unless inter-African relationships are explicitly referenced in the text.

Having now narrowed down to overseas relationships, we see that a full 57 percent (57%) are partnerships with Christian groups from North America, followed by 29 percent (29%) from Europe, then dropping down to ten percent (10%) from Asia and three percent (3%) from Oceania. Table 2.2 shows these relationships by number and percentage for each nation and continent, while the same is illustrated graphically in Figure 2.1.

This analysis is predicated on the assumption that there was no response bias in respondents' choice of their outside partner on which to report. That is to say, for

example, that respondents did not choose to over report or underreport on European partners as compared to partners from North America, Asia, or Oceania.[7]

Table 2.2 Distribution of Overseas Relationships

		Europe	N America	Asia	Oceania	National Totals	
Country:						#	%
USA	84		84			84	54%
U.K.	26	26				26	17%
S. Korea	14			14		14	9%
Netherlands	11	11				11	7%
Australia	5				5	5	3%
Canada	5		5			5	3%
Germany	5	5				5	3%
Czech Rep.	1	1				1	1%
Philippines	1			1		1	1%
Romania	1	1				1	1%
Singapore	1			1		1	1%
Sweden	1	1				1	1%
Continental Subtotals:		45	89	16	5	155	
Continental Percentage:		29%	57%	10%	3%		100%

Fifty-four percent (54%) of churches with partnerships chose to report on a relationship from one country alone – the USA. Given that churches with overseas relationships have an average of 2.76 partnerships, these churches then average one and a half (1.49) partnerships with groups of Christians in the USA.

Standing back and looking at the bigger picture, forty-six percent of churches in Mbale have at least one partnership overseas. Among these churches, they are almost as likely to have two relationships with Americans as they are to have one such relationship.

This shows two things. Firstly, and most obviously, it points to the fact that connections to Christians from the United States are pervasive, accounting for a majority (54%) of all relationships outside of Africa. Second and less obvious is how Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1 charts the rise of Korea as a global missions force. South Korea has

[7] African relationships, which are systematically underreported, are already excluded. One way in which possible response bias was minimized was by conducting the telephone interviews in Ugandan English, Luganda and Lugisu by Ugandans, rather than by me, with my American-English accent.

slightly more than half as much mission involvement as the United Kingdom among Mbale churches, despite having no longstanding historic ties or shared language with Uganda, and despite having less than half of the UK's Gross Domestic Product.

In total, the survey results show that Mbale churches had partnerships with groups of Christians in nineteen different nations (twelve of which are overseas) on all continents except Antarctica and Latin America. Figure 2.1 shows the nationality of the overseas partners by country.

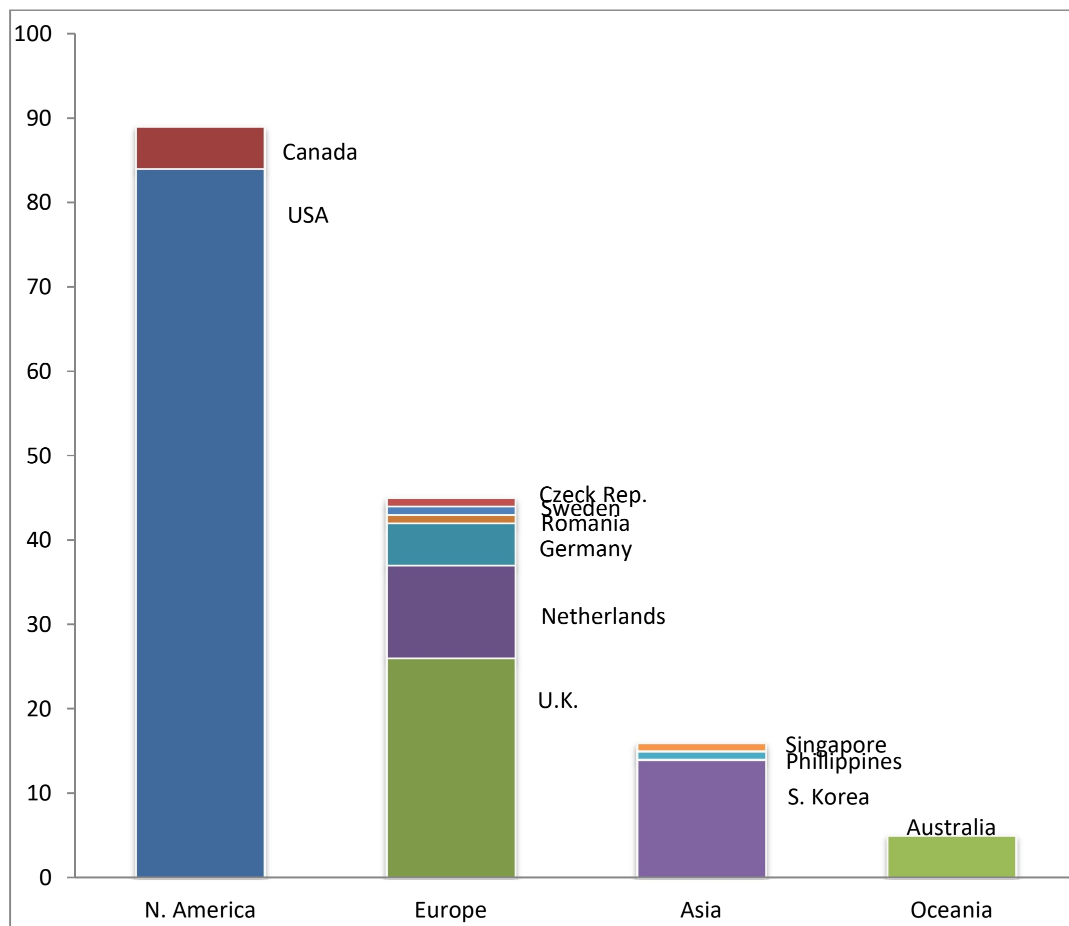

Figure 2.1 Distribution of Overseas Relationships by Country

We now know the prevalence of relationships in Mbale. Just under half (46.4%) of all churches are engaged in one or more *overseas* relationships; what, then, is the

likelihood that any given church is engaged in at least one *local-to-local* relationship with a group of *overseas* Christians? The odds of this are just under one in three, or 31.6%.[8]

Arriving at this figure was a central reason for undertaking this survey in the first place. This focusses in on the heart of this study, an examination of local-to-local relationships with overseas partners among churches in Mbale. This research seeks to understand the local-to-local phenomenon from the perspective of Mbale churches, starting with the incidence of this type of relationship among these churches. We can now say that just under one in three churches in Mbale are engaged in a relationship with Christians outside of Africa which fits the profile of a local-to-local connection.

Nevertheless, I regard this figure of 31.6% (and the 46.4% of churches engaged in any overseas relationships, whether traditional or local-to-local) as likely to be, at least to some degree, an under-measurement of the level of relationship among churches.

The reason is that among church leaders locally, there is considerable caution in revealing one's partners to other Christians. There was some reluctance by respondents to answer the question about the number of their partner(s), which is understandably sensitive in that it requires revealing a valuable asset(s) – partners – over the telephone. My primary research assistant commented to me that it had been a much easier task to secure the trust and cooperation of village elders and leaders (a task he had previously done for another researcher) as compared to securing the cooperation of the church leaders studied here. Church leaders were more guarded in general, and were particularly so when the general nature of this research was disclosed. While a variety of tested strategies were employed to mitigate partial non-response and response bias and

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[8] This figure is arrived at mathematically, rather than directly. Forty-six percent (46.4%) of the population have ongoing, overseas partnerships (95% confidence level with 6.5 interval). Twenty-five percent (24.7%) of that sub-set of churches reported on a local-to-local relationship (5.5 interval). That same sub-set reports a mean of 2.76 outside relationships. Therefore, we can calculate that any given church in the population has a 31.6% of having an ongoing, overseas relationship with local-to-local characteristics.

otherwise maximize the quality of the data, it is not unreasonable to think that some degree of under-measurement of the number of partners has nonetheless occurred. Details of the survey framing and methodology, including questions of non-response, partial or full refusals, and so on, can be found in addendum A, while the survey itself is attached as addendum B.

Regardless of the degree of precision in the finding of a slim minority of churches (46%) with overseas partnerships, it is the subset of these churches engaging in local-to-local, overseas relationships (calculated to be 31.6% of the overall population) which will occupy the remainder of this thesis.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCAL-TO-LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS IN MBALE AND THE REGION

Local-to-local partnerships – and their legacies and progeny – have had a significant impact in Mbale District. A story can show how big things can and do happen from something as small as a local-to-local partnership.

Probably no such relationship has been more influential than one who genesis dates back to events in 1997, when an Mbale Baptist pastor named Hillary started hosting and coordinating visits by teams spearheaded by various Baptist churches in Wales, UK. These teams formed and came to the Mbale area from Wales, under the Care and Share Foundation UK. In Mbale, they conducting a wide range of humanitarian activities such as distributing second hand books in local schools, bringing second hand English bicycles for Baptist pastors and Bibles for parishioners, or staging temporary health clinics in local communities. According to Hillary, teams from Welsh Baptist churches (with frequent participation from non-Baptists) came and went without establishing any ongoing relationships. As he recalls it:

> I set up communities here for *[them]* to come and then to just do those things, and go. So it's just come, mobilize it, do it, go. So there was no permanent relationship. If I *[the visitor]* come to the school, I have given you the books, there is no more follow up. Because we will come next time, we go to another school, we would go to another community to pull out the tooth, and that was it. (B002)

It was through these initial one-off contacts, pioneered through Baptist churches in Mbale and Wales, that a more enduring partnership was born. Wanting to improve the impact, in both Wales and Mbale, of these short-term efforts, a vision was birthed to foster lasting links between Mbale and Wales, building 'direct personal relationships between the two communities, facilitated through Partnerships Overseas Networking Trust (PONT) in Wales' (PONT 2009).

According to Hillary, these links began with the formal twinning of churches and schools in the two localities – the most natural step to take since it was churches that had originated and continued to drive the partnership, and a retired school teacher had joined the committee in Wales. The idea of twinning was new and faced significant logistical and cultural hurtles. Pastor Hillary recalls these early days:

Pastor Hillary: So they talked to some *[Welsh]* schools and some churches to see if they could love to have a partner. Several schools signed in and said 'We would love….' So they sent me the names, emailed me the names. Then I sat with the team of mine and we selected some schools, and we looked at the names, and we … [pause, shrug] 'This one I think!

Interviewer: [laughs]

Pastor Hillary: Because, having no idea how …

Interviewer: You just match them up, you don't know, how could you know?

Pastor Hillary: Yes, matching them up, you have no idea how they are!

Interviewer: And, there was not like the internet, that you could go find out.

Pastor Hillary: Yes, and the email I was using *[was at]* the post office, I could go to post office centrally, where they were doing emails. So I would write something, take to this lady secretary in the post office to write it, then she would send using her *[account]*.

Interviewer: Then she would send.

Pastor Hillary: Then *[later]* I go back and say 'has anything come through?'

Interviewer: Okay, so it's like mail-email [laughs].

Pastor Hillary: Exactly, so mail-email! So hardly you can't believe how things have changed in a few years. I had no mobile phone. And after having a mobile phone, could not have network. You could either go to a one corner, or the other corner, even go climb a big tree or something *[to get network signal]*..

So we got the list of eight first schools which was great, then we merged them in 2004. We also got churches which had interest, ten of them, we again merged them to start.

Then we encouraged the churches here to write to the other churches *[in Wales]*. So it was a challenge, very big challenge in the beginning. Knowing that this was a new idea, and then most of the churches, most of the schools, were still looking at a white man as a source of income.

So when we asked them to write letters, the letters were awful! They were … 'we need.' It's a long shopping list!

Interviewer: [laughs]

Pastor Hillary: You have not begun a relationship, then we get back *[to those who wrote the letters]* and said 'First of all, let the marriage work. Don't start with telling this guy, this boyfriend, "You want to marry me? Yes, a car!" It is not going to, it is going to break before it starts! So let's say, "How are you, fine, I love you, I want to be with you." Then other things can develop from there, than really starting with this one.'

So, we had to sieve off a lot of letters in the beginning. (B002)

These obstacles and misunderstandings were a strong headwind to overcome, and Hillary in fact shared that 'most of them have not worked well, because of managing the expectations' (B002). Yet with his guidance obstacles were overcome. His wisdom in facilitating these partnerships is readily apparent:

> Usually in any relationship, shattered expectations destroy relationships. That's why when I'm going to wed people I have to ask them: what are your expectations? What is this in life *[where]* you are going? You want the following things to be met. So, should they not be met that's the most frustrating relationship you have, and you're going to struggle for the rest of your life. (B022)

Despite the obstacles, some of these matches survived and birthed new links. These grew to include health centre twinnings as well. From there, it was agreed that the towns of Mbale and Pontypridd in Wales would officially link as sister towns. The member of Welsh parliament representing Pontypridd came for a visit, and was later appointed the Welsh Minister of Education and Minister of Sustainable Development, which proved a boon to growing educational and environmental twinning initiatives. The official town twinning later evolved into a larger, community-to-community twinning of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough with Mbale District (PONT 2009).

Today, this original partnership is legally registered in Uganda as the Mbale Coalition Against Poverty (MCAP), though through its outworking it draws in a number of other coalitions and NGOs. From its humble beginnings as contacts between local Baptist churches in Mbale and Wales, the partnerships have now grown in diversity and reach to include many linkages across churches, schools, hospitals, a research partnership between Mbale and the University of South Wales, a network of NGOs, and other community bodies.

These partnerships have, in fact, now grown far beyond the bounds of MCAP and PONT itself, and today involve a government-to-government relationships between the national Welsh government and the administrations in Mbale district and her two daughter districts, Manafa and Bududda, birthed from Mbale in government redistricting initiatives. Through this government-to-government partnership, a grant has been released for the planting of 10 million trees in a reforestation drive in these three districts. According to Hillary, the local-governments forums set up between the three districts and the government of Wales has helped overcome local political divisions, because 'it helped them have a forum where they keep, they meet and then talk, officers of those districts they meet, they would share on the forums' (B022).

All of these initiatives started from the pairing of local churches in Wales and Mbale approximately two decades ago. While no other local-to-local pairing has engendered another project of this size and complexity, the collective, physical impact of these relationships is readily evident around Mbale. Their impacts, in fact, are often much more visible than the partnerships themselves. For relationships which are based on metaphysical realities and couched in relational and spiritual terms, their outworking leaves a clearly discernible, and decidedly physical, impact.

Highly visible evangelism crusades and conferences are a staple activity of local-to-local relationships, with examples cited by most interviewees. Other impacts are less visible. Numbers are almost impossible to quantify, but there are many local Christians whose ambitions to pursuing higher education (or higher-quality education for their children) is enabled to various degrees through the individual financial assistance of friends overseas. An even more intangible impact of these local-to-local relationships is the greater understanding, friendship and camaraderie across cultures, which, while limited to relatively few local Christians, is very real.

While these partnerships are often relatively small, and many stay that way or even fade slowly from a lack of attention and neglect there are others of these relationships which continue and frequently give birth to other things – things big and small, good and bad. New churches are planted, and existing churches are split. Friendships between cultures flourish, and relationships within the local culture are tested and frayed. But whether laudable or regrettable, there is no denying that these relationships have left their mark in the district of Mbale, and surely across Uganda and Africa as a whole.

SUMMARY

This chapter has given us a snapshot of these partnerships in their present day form and reach. We have examined the overall distribution of external relationships among non-Catholic, Christian churches in Mbale district, Uganda. In the analysis, I broke out the numbers and percentages of *relationships* themselves, and also looked at the relationship numbers from the vantage point of *churches*, both in the population of churches in Mbale as a whole and as churches with overseas partnerships. The analysis showed that just under one-half (46%) having a relationship outside of Africa. I then zeroed in and calculated that close to a third (31.6%) of all churches are engaged in some form of *local-to-local* relationship with a group of Christians outside of Africa. Mathematically, that equals 188 churches in Mbale district alone, in a nation with 134 government districts.

The impact of local-to-local relationships upon Mbale is multifaceted, sometimes intangible and other times clearly visible. While difficult to quantify, the collective impact of both these partnerships and their progeny in Mbale is considerable. Despite the obstacles they faced, these relationships have become part of the fabric of life in Mbale and the wider Mt. Elgorn region, and their impact extends far beyond the local church into wider social, educational, environmental, and even state/governance arenas.

In chapter three, we leave the present day to explore the past, looking for answers as to the origins of overseas-local partnerships and asking how these origins continue to influence partnerships today.

Chapter 3 – A Persistent Past or a New Paradigm? Local-to-Local in Historical Context

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I look back into history to ask how these relationships came about and began to take on some of their present-day contours. I investigate two historical eras which were particularly formative for present-day interactions between Mbale Christians and their co-religionists overseas. My purpose is to bring some historical context for the remainder of this thesis, which, in later chapters, only examines interactions in the present-day. I argue in this chapter that these present-day interactions reflect deeply-rooted dynamics originating in the earliest years of encounters with Whites,[1] dynamics which were subsequently reinforced and re-imagined during a later era of great upheaval and change.

The first era is comprised of roughly three decades following the arrival of the first missionaries in 1887, ending around the conclusion of the First World War in 1918. The second era under examination also comprises roughly three decades, starting with the aftermath of the collapsed Amin regime in 1979 and picking up from the beginning of the Museveni Regime in 1986, then continuing through the first decade of the 2000s, an era covering the first decades of the Museveni regime and the HIV/AIDS crisis.

This chapter is thus organized in two sections, one for each of the two eras under examination.[2] In the first section, I bring together some key points in the history of

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[1] I adopt the term Whites in this chapter because it is a historic and current term which colloquially refers to foreigners who can be visually distinguished from South Asians and, more recently, from East Asians. While Whites and missionaries are not synonymous, there is a great deal of overlap in these terms, and I find the broader term of Whites to be more locally- accurate than the term *missionary*. This is because 'missionaries preceded traders, soldiers, administrators and settlers so that for many Africans they were indistinguishable from the other aliens who were challenging and changing their values and ways of life' (Gray 1990:59).

[2] Concentrate on two establishment-setting eras of local history necessarily means that there are things which are not covered outside those time frames. Notably, the East Africa Revival is not dealt with in this history. The revival provides some counter-examples to the general thrust of missionary-African

Christian mission and the churches in Uganda during the first decades of European mission in Uganda. I examine this time period because many of the key trajectories in how Whites interact with the Bagisu[3] (and other tribes throughout Uganda) today were entrenched within the first twenty years of the 20th century.

My approach in this first part of the chapter is thematic, rather than chronological, and I make no attempt at constructing an inclusive or balanced historical narrative. Rather, I seek only to illuminate events which help set the trajectory of interactions between local Christians and the Whites, including missionaries, living among them. I analyse the record according to four themes, namely: *political patronage and Whites*, *social advancement and missionary education*, *financial patronage and Whites,* and lastly *missionaries and issues of control*. I begin with some salient observations from the earliest days of Christian mission and the church in Uganda, starting from the central region, and then highlight some of the dynamics in the faith's eastward journey as it put down roots in the slopes of Mount Elgorn.

In the second section of this chapter, the themes developed in the first section continue, often by re-surfacing in new ways. Approximately seven decades later, however, the original four themes have become more deeply enmeshed and mutually-reinforcing, playing a subterranean role in society and the church. For that reason, I have chosen to not organize this second section of the chapter thematically, as I did the first.

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relational dynamics shown in this chapter; nevertheless it does not fundamentally alter the established relational dynamics, particularly when moving from the well-documented workings of the initial senior leadership (part of the Ruanda mission and situated in Ruanda and Kigezi) down to the local church level in Mbale (part of the Church of Uganda, and in eastern Uganda). However, there is much we can learn from the encouraging historical example of the revivial, and some relevant points are included in the recommendations in chapter seven.

[3] The Bagisu (plural form) are the dominant people/tribe in the Mbale area, are also variously referenced as the Gisu or Bamasaba. The singular form of Bagisu, used when referencing a single individual, is Mugisu, The grammatical structure, common to Bantu languages, holds true for numerous other tribes and groupings of people in this study, including the central tribe of Uganda (Baganda=plural, Muganda=singular) as well as light-skinned foreigners (Bazungu=plural, Muzungu=singular) and the adherents of the East Africa Revival, i.e. the 'saved ones' (Balokole=plural, Mulokole=singular).

Instead, I point out ways in which the major developments of this second era both reinforced the earlier foundations and built on them in new ways.

I first look, very briefly, into the Idi Amin era and its impact on the church, in order to give context to what follows: the post-Amin reconstruction and the proliferation of independent churches after Amin's fall in 1979, and the growing profile of independent churches in the first decades of the Museveni era, from 1886 to approximately 2006. In keeping with the focus of this thesis, I concentrate heavily on independent/Born Again churches, a whole new branch of churches which did not yet exist in the earlier history. With that earlier history (the first part of this chapter) as an important foundation, I look at how those same patterns of interactions between Mbale churches and overseas Christians were renewed and reimagined during this subsequent time of great change, growth, and increasing public profile in these churches.

In the second half of this chapter, I expand beyond historic literature and rely on the oral histories of some church elders and other leaders – some based in Mbale, others in Kampala - whose personal experience of the faith stretches back into the early eighties and the advent of the present Museveni Regime.

Notwithstanding the profound changes wrought over time, the interactions between Mbale churches and Christians outside of Africa continue to be shaped by nearly one hundred and fifty years of experience with foreign Christians. I conclude by contrasting this finding with the current literature, which often presents today's practice of local-to-local mission as a novel approach to, or even a paradigmatic shift away from, past mission efforts.

PART ONE: INITIAL INTERACTIONS INTO THE 1920S

Political Patronage and Whites

By the time sustained European presence reached the western shores of Lake Victoria, the longstanding rivalries between Europeans powers saw each one seeking new opportunities and territories to expand their industrial and military machines. When this race reached central Uganda in 1877, it was not, as was usual for East Africa, via explorers or traders but rather in the form of missionaries (Twaddle 1993:66).[4] Heaney writes that 'imperialists followed the expansion of Christian mission from Uganda to the coast and not from the Kenyan coast towards the interior as might have been expected' (2013:32).

These Christians missionaries did not venture forth with the guns of explorers or the goods of the traders, but with the written Word. Nonetheless, these symbols on parchment, and access to the Whites who taught them, proved themselves to be no less potent an agent of change than either guns or profits. Within a decade of the arrival of the first missionaries, a political order in central Uganda that had stood for over four centuries had been irreversibly altered by the emergence of these foreign power brokers.

When these European missionaries first set permanent foot on Ugandan soil in 1877, they brought new resources and possible alliances into the Buganda Kingdom. Kabaka (i.e. King) Mutesa I, a seasoned diplomat and ruler, was curious to learn more about Christianity, but doubtless he also sensed an opportunity with the arrival of the first resident missionaries. Arab slave traders from the Egyptian kingdom had grown in power and southern reach, resulting in recent years in incursions right up to the northern edge of his kingdom. European patronage, and the guns he would later seek, could provide the Kabaka with a useful counterweight to growing Arab influence (Gale 1959:13). The

[4] Arab traders had arrived in the 1840s bringing Islam, but they were primarily interested in trade and had not made much progress in Islamizing the Baganda (Tuma & Mutibwa 1978) (pg 5). Nevertheless, Kabaka Mutesa I expressed 'lively interest' in Islam, and the first Christian missionaries encountered a mosque among the 585 houses in the Kabaka's palace grounds (Sundkler & Steed 2000:566–567).

Kabaka invited the missionaries to live and set up in his court, offering them an opportunity to expound their Christian faith at the very apex of the hierarchy of social, religious, economic, and political power in the Buganda Kingdom. This was to prove a fateful choice, both for the place of the King in Buganda society and for the dynamics between the Baganda people and the white men living among them.

Seven years later, the king died and his son Mwanga II assumed the throne (Tuma 1978a:20). The young king's officials and courtiers, through their regular interactions with the missionaries were converting and becoming Christian *readers* (New Vision 2019; Welbourn 1978).[5] With their newfound literacy and numeracy, taught by these missionaries, chiefs and court officials who had been unquestioningly subordinate to the Kabaka's authority felt increasingly willing and able to challenge or subvert his authority.

After the arrival of the French Catholic mission in 1879, the national and religious divisions between the English Protestants and French Catholics were soon exposed. Their competition for influence in the court and for converts became so entrenched that religious identification among the Baganda became not so much religious conviction as a political label, spawning competing interest groups which were 'conceived in the missionaries' clientage'. (Sundkler & Steed 2000:597)

It was this patronage system which emboldened the chiefs to rise up and overthrow their own Kabaka. Mwanga II sensed that his grip on the throne of his father was weakening, and his fear and anger, culminating in the persecution and martyrdom of Christian 'readers' across his kingdom, only hastened his own downfall.[6] His own chiefs banded together to oust the young king and install a puppet in his place.

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[5]By 1884 the CMS missionaries had baptized 88 converts. Learning to read the portions of translated scriptures and hymns, etc., was a prerequisite for baptism; thus, the Baganda reference to coverts as "readers."

[6] 'The Martyrs', as they are colloquially known, are widely revered in Uganda, today a Christian nation. Less remembered (and at times completely left out of Christian histories like this one) are the more than 1000 Muslims put to death in 1875 by Kabaka Mutesa I to stem the earlier influence of Islam (Sundkler & Steed 2000:567). While the Christian martyrs are memorialized in both Catholic and Protestant shrines, there is no equivalent monument for the greater number of Muslim martyrs. Had Mutesa I's persecution

The year was 1887, ten years since the arrival of the Protestant missionaries. Though missionaries were militarily-irrelevant in the actual fighting, it was their presence which had shifted the balance of power in favour of a new elite.

The old order, founded on the patronage of successive Kabakas, was severely weakened, but the shape of these new political alliances and lines of patronage was not yet clear. What was clear, however, was that the winners who emerged from the upheaval had increased their status in Baganda society through their dexterity in handling numbers, letters, and the missionaries who taught them.

The new power structure took shape when a document was signed in 1900 which laid the contours of British rule of Uganda until independence in 1962. The Kabaka had already been defanged during the infighting between the Muslims, but the Baganda Agreement rendered the once-supreme Kabaka into something of a cultural icon. The Kabaka's absolute ownership of land, which 'had always been a political and economic tool in Buganda held by the Kabaka… [and] used as a tool of patronage to command the loyalty of men and chiefs' was wrested from his hands and taken over by the government of the protectorate (Monitor 2012), which now employed an increasing number of the new elite.

As the Christian faith spread and gained adherents beyond the Baganda faithful, the tie between political power and Christian piety spread apace. This was particularly true in the Protestant church, which was a more natural partner to the Protestant British Crown. Thus as Protestantism spread eastward towards Mbale, '[a]s in other parts of Uganda, Protestants and chiefs were from the beginning in close alliance' (Ward 1991). It could be said, according to Katarikawe and Wilson, that during this time it was as simple as 'no chief no church' (1975:24).

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of Muslims have failed as dramatically as did the persecution of Christian ordered by his son a decade later, Uganda and the great lakes region could well look very different today.

Nowhere is the close relationship between political power and the Christian faith better exemplified than in Semei Kakungulu, the colourful Baganda who introduced both the Protestant faith and British rule to Mbale and eastern Uganda. As a Protestant convert and military commander, Kakungulu embodied in himself the fusion between faith and power. As our history moves east towards Mbale, Kakungulu plays a pivotal role in opening the door for the European missionaries and Baganda readers to being the Christian faith to to the shadow of Mt. Elgorn.[7]

While Kakungulu himself eventually left the Christian faith to found both the Religion of Malaki and later the 'Community of Jews who Trust in the Lord' (Twaddle 1993:280),[8] his British patronage and affiliation with Christianity is responsible for the stronger presence today of the Church of Uganda (Anglican) among the Bagisu, as compared to the more strongly Catholic sub-regions of Karamoja to the north, Teso to the west, and Bukedi to the south (B009).

As Christianity spread out from the central Baganda tribe, the 'struggle between the Bafalansa [French party] and the Nangereza [English Party] for political and religious dominance increasingly became apparent' (Tuma 1980:22). The Anglican Church Mission Society (CMS) missionaries that closely followed Kakungulu's expansion eastward towards Mbale were in turn followed, within a month, by a Catholic Mill Hill missionary (Tuma 1978b).[9] Both the Protestant and Catholic churches expanded rapidly during this period, taking full advantage of the pacification brought about by their

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[7] The first known European to set foot in the Mt Elgorn region was Joseph Thompson, who briefly explored the mountain in 1883 (Twaddle 1993:135). He was followed by several others whose main interests were zoological or horticultural and consequently they spend their time and energy on the mountain itself, rather than relating the Christian gospel to the peoples on its slopes (Twaddle 1993).

[8] There are now some 700 members in five synagogues in the Mbale region, and a reported total of ____ Jewish congregations across Uganda which trace their lineage back to Kakungulu and the still-thriving Ugandan, Jewish community he founded north of Mbale town (McConnell 2007) (notes from synagogue visit 2018).

[9] 'Kakungulu, as an official of Her Majesty's government, knew to allow freedom of religion in his domains and thus gave land to both missions. As a Protestant, he let his preferences be known: 'Mill Hill missed out on the hill land, which he gave to the CMS mission, and was relegated on patch of land adjacent to a swamp' (Twaddle 1993:166).

common patron, Semei Kakungulu. Kakungulu, in turn, was able the strengthened his ties to his own patron, the Protectorate government, by enabling more missionaries/British citizens to set up mission stations in the wake of his military conquests.

Kakungulu's military conquest and iron rule over his subjects created an unusual dynamic between the Christian faith and political rule: 'Everywhere else in Uganda where Ganda catechists had gone... they had been asked for by local leaders. ...But in Bukedi Christian teaching was not requested by the people' (Pirouet 1978:179). Kakungulu himself, while bearing some level of missionary motivation, arrived among the Bagisu as a military commander, a haughty Muganda, and an agent of the British. Thus the Bagisu initially identified Christianity with their new overlords – not simply British, but British-through-Baganda; not simply missionaries, but a missionary-cum-military-commander and ruler. By the beginning of the 20th century, any chance of exercising local political power as a chief among the Bagisu, was impossible without connection to the Whites, because the British expected chiefs 'to be both Christian and literate' (Mair 1971:179).

Among the Bagisu today, any perceived connection between Whites with political rule is, of course, very different from in these early days when Christian mission worked hand-in-glove with Kakungulu's conquest and rule. Nevertheless, there remains today a clear connection between Whites and power more generally, and even, albeit circuitously, with political power. As shown chapter four, one of the products that Whites still bring today is prestige with government officials and regulators. Those pastors who benefit from multiple White partners may have a greater platform to participate in local government, and they certainly enjoy a higher profile with the public from which to wield public influence.

Social Advancement and Missionary Education

By the 1890s the culture, language, and religious affiliations of the *Wa-Ingleza* and the *Wa-Franse* foreigners had become a 'new élite idiom which the ambitious were avid to acquire' (Fallers 1964:178).

This ambition was not limited to the existing political elite. Even beyond the chiefs and their children and political heirs, an increasing number of non-elite young men seized on the educational tutelage of the missionaries to advance their station in life. Importantly, most of these young men did not share the traditional chieftain ties of loyalty to the Kabaka's throne. Rather, 'the colonial era opened up new labour opportunities for African converts, enabling them to take large steps up the social ladder regardless of their social origin' (zu Selhausen et al. 2017:1291). A new class of elites, leveraging their relationships to and the resources of the missionaries, was springing up.

Over the coming years, the education made possible by the missionaries quickly became an invaluable asset to the colonial government and to the natives who were privileged to obtain it. 'Possession of these skills, which could only be acquired in a Christian school, became one of the most valuable achievements in Buganda society' (Welbourn 1978:26). This upward mobility came with a social compact established by and revolving around the church: 'Career-building in this context began with Anglican baptism and was followed by school and vocational training *[at a mission school]* and later monogamous church marriage in compliance with the laws of the Anglican Church' (zu Selhausen et al. 2017:1317).

The same was true for the Catholic faithful, for

> it was impossible to have status in Buganda without being attached, through baptism, to either the Catholic or the Protestant party. Elsewhere in Uganda, only through mission schools was available the literacy need for admission to the corridors of power. (Welbourn 1978:121–122)

The association of Christianity and opportunity to advance one's station in life was so complete that 'to be a Muslim was to be an also-ran, and to remain a pagan was to renounce all hope of … advancement' (Pirouet 1978:7).

As the Catholic Church spread eastward, progressively moving closer to Mbale, the early catechists among the Basoga people in Busoga (east of the Nile river), and then in Bukedi (further east, abutting Bugisu) and finally among the Bagisu of Mbale joined at "the beginning of the ascent of the hierarchical professional ladder, starting from 'the untrained catechist to the junior catechist to senior catechist to lay-reader and finally ordination' (Tuma 1980:77).

Membership in the catechists' association, with the indigenous chiefs and the Europeans at the apex, conferred great status and powers on these relatively young men. Tuma interviewed a Muganda catechist who in his youth had been assigned to work among the Busoga to the east. He recalled as a young catechist dismounting from his bicycle (in itself a status symbol) and beating into submission older adults who were either unfortunate or disrespectful enough to not clear out of his intended path (Tuma 1980).

Opportunities for social and career advancement grew outside of the church. The transport and trade industry and, soon after, the British protectorate offered alternative venues of employment and career advancement for literate and numerate converts, often with better wages than those offered by the church. Nonetheless, the church was the gatekeeper to these wider opportunities, and soon the British authorities came to depend on the missionaries and in particular their schools to build and sustain the entire protectorate (Gribble Jr. 2008:96).

Keeping on good terms with the missionaries and the ordained clergy, then, was essential, since a reader's or catechumen's promotion up the ranks of the church – and into a lucrative job market - was almost entirely dependent on the favour of the missionaries and on playing by the rules of the church. As Tuma noted, 'Mission education helped provide the skills and social reference needed to climb the ladder' (Tuma 1980:91).

The relationships between mission education and upward social mobility, first established among the Baganda, continued as mission stations spread eastward and reached Mbale in the wake of Kakungulu's conquests: 'As always in occupied territory there were a few who allied themselves with the occupying power and learnt the language of the conquerors, and it was these few who received some Christian teaching in the forts' (Pirouet 1978:179). This education, in turn, was a key stepping stone to serving in the government administration. By 1920 in Mbale, it was evident to all upwardly mobile Bagisu that education was 'becoming a basic requirement for promotion to the higher grades' of the colonial administration (Heald 1982:79).

This pattern persisted over the coming decades. At the time of independence Jacobson found that 'most elite Africans' in Mbale town 'are employed in government service' (1968:125). The division between the elites and non-elites was stark in terms of their educational attainment. Jacobson found that 'of the elite Africans, 76% had completed secondary school and another 22% had finished junior secondary school. Of the non-elite Africans, none had completed secondary school; 59% had less than a primary school education' (1968:125).

Political independence did not disrupt the continuation of this long-standing pattern of social mobility through education which, according to Tuma, 'persisted throughout the post-colonial era' (Tuma 1980:91; zu Selhausen et al. 2017).

Financial Patronage and Whites

When the Mill Hill Mission fathers[10] first arrived in Baganda 1895, the Kabaka granted the hill of Nsambia in Kampala for the new Catholic missionaries to set up their first

[10] The Mill Hill Mission fathers played a central role in the formation of the new Vicariate of the Upper Nile, at the heart of which contains present-day Mbale district in Uganda, now a part of the Tororo Diocese of the Uganda Episcopal Conference.

mission compound (Gale 1959:111). But this land grant, unlike those previously given for the Anglican and White Fathers missionary stations, came with a price attached. For reasons not entirely clear, a novel and 'extraordinary decision' was made in which the new mission was to pay compensation to the Chief and the families currently living on the land (Gale 1959:123).[11] The White Fathers considered 'the whole thing a piece of trickery' in which they sensed the underhanded working of the Protestant chiefs in pushing for this unprecedented compensation (Gale 1959:124). Whatever the reason, this established the precedent of missions and missionaries transferring significant sums of money to the native Baganda and their chiefs.

As with many things, the shape of British interactions with the Baganda set a precedent which influenced exchanges with other tribes and kingdoms across Uganda. This particular exchange, and the tensions and disagreements which accompanied it, have become a familiar pattern, one which has played unremittingly throughout the subsequent 125 years of interactions between foreign and Ugandan Christians.

The fierce competition between the Catholic and Anglican missions, with both racing to embrace the receptivity of the peoples of Uganda to the gospel message, played a vital role in embedding the financial patronage of Whites and the monetization of church work. European Anglicans, for example, used a 'Pan-Anglican Fund' to begin supporting national (at that time, Baganda) missionaries working as evangelists to other tribes, in what was 'the first time that foreign funds had been used to support any African workers in the church' (Taylor 1958b:135).

This practice spread quickly from front line evangelists to include the more established church workers. Soon many of the Protestant clergy, both Senior and Junior

[11] In today's legal framework, the decision to 'sell' land is perfectly logical. In the cultural and legal framework operative at the time, however, the Kabaka owned all the land where his Baganda subject dwelt and could and did give land to whomever he wanted. Thus there was no precedent for compensating the Kabaka's subjects for land which they did not own and which they inhabited at his pleasure.

Catechists, were earning a salary from the European mission via the church. Tuma reports Catholic catechists similarly received a salary by the start of the WWI (1980).

By the end of the war, 'all church ministers' in the Protestant church 'began to be regarded as salaried workers' with the unintended consequence that 'the laity no longer felt any obligation to support them' (Taylor 1958b:133–134). Similarly, in the Catholic Church, giving by the faithful dropped off. This change 'was keenly felt by the [White] missionaries at the time, who expected the Baganda Christians to continue supporting the tradition of spreading the Gospel with hardly any material benefits' (Tuma 1980:28).

These expectation of deriving material benefits from the missionaries seems to have first found root among the chiefs (Tuma 1978a). One can easily understand why Baganda Christians would both desire material wealth and link such wealth to the Christian faith. From the inception of Christian witness in Uganda, these two things had never been witnessed separately. Given this example, it is natural that 'the demand for material benefits was growing among the [Anglican] chiefs' (Welbourn 1978:27). The affluence of White missionaries was similarly not lost on other members of the new elite, in particular the church-based school teachers who 'also increasingly felt the need for material progress' and when their demands were not initially met, many left their positions (Tuma 27). The material expectations and demands of the church workers, likewise, followed in step, starting with a strike by the catechists in seven districts demanding a doubling of their pay (Katarikawe & WIlson 1975:23).

Tuma goes on to note that the tradition in the national church of Christian vocation with no expectation of attendant remuneration was 'losing force over the years but it will be many years before it is dead completely' (Tuma 1978a:28). By 1948, a Catholic missionary who returned to Uganda after some time away in Europe believed that, upon his return, things had changed to the extent that 'material attractions [are] more powerful than baptismal obligations' (O'Neil 1999:189).

This was a startling reversal for a church which, as early as 1891, was exercising considerable initiative and financial generosity in sending out Christian teachers to neighbouring districts to propagate the gospel, and within nine years of its beginning had funded multiple native missionary teams to take the gospel to peoples on the southern shores of Lake Victoria, in present-day Tanzania (Pirouet 1978:12–13).

Whereas 'during the earlier days, men had offered themselves to go out… whether they received remuneration or not', it was now clear that 'things had since changed' (Katarikawe & WIlson 1975:23). No longer able to sustain the missionary-headed institutional church with the giving of the indigenous faithful, the missions came up with various schemes aiming to create self-reliance and financial sustainability, but they never quite lived up to their promise. For example, in 1913 'a scheme to use CoU landholding to earn income for the church was attempted, growing coffee and cotton with European business managers - it did not work, for various reasons' (Taylor 1958b:137).

Concerns with and attempts at financial sustainability have not receded with time. Many schemed have since been devised to harness local resources to sustain church and ministry structures, often conceived by missionaries. Understandably, they have largely failed. Both the origins of this issue, and its rootedness and replication over more than a century, is often lost history to overseas practitioners and partners to this day.

Whites and Issues of Control

Britain's increasing role in East Africa was reflected in the increasing numbers of European administrators who came to administer the new protectorate. This is turn changed the dynamics of White-Ugandan interactions:

> While rudimentary social equality between African chiefs and European administrators might have been a necessary part of the initial "pacification" of Uganda, it jarred the European vision of the "proper" racial order in East Africa as a new generation of British administrators filled the ranks of the civil service of the Protectorate (Jørgensen 1981:80).

Perhaps inevitably, this notion of a proper racial order spilled over from British administrators over into British missionary attitudes. Much of the earlier ideals of partnership, of cooperation on an equal footing with Africans' by white missionaries 'had been overtaken by an aggressive, if often benevolent, paternalism' (Gray 1990). Even as the power shifted towards the British inside the 'protectorate' agreement between the British crown and the Kabaka, so too the same shift was felt inside the rapidly growing church.

In earlier times Pirouet reported that Ganda Christians 'were at this stage the companions of missionaries rather than their dependents' (1978:10). Many Christian chiefs were happy to 'undertake the entire support of English missionaries, i.e. build a house for them and their boys with a regular supply of native food' (Pirouet 1978:12). Missionary patronage was not yet operative in the minds and practices of both the native Christians and the foreign missionaries. This relative egality could be seen in the early structure of the church. In 1884 the CMS missionaries commissioned twelve Muganda Christian elders, the first *Lukiiko* or Church Council, to oversee the Christian house groups and church activities (Welbourn 1978).

Such egality did not last. Attitudes among the growing ranks of CMS missionaries (Pirouet 1978) were quickly shifting, and five years later the missionaries collectively thwarted their Bishop's attempt to have their mission structure become 'completely integrated into the Church of Uganda' with 'missionaries placed at the disposal of its elected synod' (Taylor 1958a:12). By keeping a separate missionary structure, Bishop Tucker warned that 'the native Christians will not be slow to realize that the outside organization is the one which really settles whatever questions may be under discussion… and that their own organization is more or less a sham' (Taylor 1958:87).

History has found the Bishop's warning prescient. Even as more and more opportunity opened in subsequent years for national leadership inside the Church of

Uganda, the missionaries brought nationals into positions of leadership only 'by withdrawing upwards into a higher level in the administrative hierarchy, instead of… make*[ing]* room for African colleagues working beside them as fellow-members of the same category' (Taylor 1958a:14). The result was that, while Ugandan authority was steadily growing inside the church, missionary control of the top rungs of church hierarchy continued uninterrupted. Katarikawe and Wilson contend that 'From this time on, things were never the same again. The fact that they [missionaries] had refused to identify themselves with the Uganda Church put them in a different category, that of overseers' (1975:27). Only a year before national independence in 1961 did the church in Mbale (as elsewhere in the Province) become fully indigenous (Church of Uganda 2021).

Yet even if it was now indigenous, the church was not truly independent. Continuing issues of dependency, control, and power occasioned John Gatu's well-known call in 1971 (repeated in 1974) for a 'moratorium' on missionaries from the West (Adoyo 1990). Unsurprisingly, these same issues continue to cause tension today in partnerships between Muzungus and churches in Mbale. Perceptions of control by missionaries persist and were, by a clear margin, the number one complaint which I heard during my interviewees. The continuing issue of Whites and control are discussed in depth in chapter six and suggestions for addressing this issue in chapter seven.

PART TWO: UPHEAVAL, REVIVAL AND GROWTH FROM 1986 THROUGH THE 2000S.

In the second part of this historical examination, the patterns which developed during the earliest decades of interactions between Whites and local churches continued to shape White-to-local interactions in the aftermath of the Amin regime and into the first decades of the Museveni regime. The four separate themes which guided the first part of this history (*political patronage and Whites*, *social advancement and missionary education*,

financial patronage and Whites, and lastly *missionaries and issues of control*) have become, some seventy years later, increasingly enmeshed and mutually reinforcing. Their continued salience will be clearly seen, but that influence has become more organic and subterranean. For that reason, I lay aside my earlier thematic approach and simply highlight points at which these earlier findings continued to shape interactions in this more recent era.

The Birth of Pentecostalism and the Amin Interruption

In order to set the stage for the history of the church in Mbale during the first decades of the Museveni era, I must first trace the birth of Born Again churches in the region, then quickly show the situation of Mbale and local churches during the Amin regime.

The Mbale region, and Eastern Uganda more generally, is the birth place of Pentecostal or 'Born Again' churches in Uganda. In the 1930's, Pentecostal Assemblies of God (a denomination started by Canadian missionaries) spread to Mbale from Western Kenya. In the 1950s these Ugandan PAG churches were joined by missionaries from Canada, who took up residence in Mbale town (Olwa 2016:173). By the time of Amin's coup d'etat in 1971, the Baptists had also planted churches in Mbale, as had Deliverance church, the first indigenous Pentecostal church in Uganda, which had first started in Kampala (029).

In the 1960s, during these early days of born-again churches, the 'Spirit-filled believers were stereotyped as poor, ignorant, fanatical, and semiliterate people. At first they were marginalized … by traditional churches' (Olwa 2016:174). Though small in number and poor, they continued to grow and multiply. Such rapid multiplication came

to an abrupt end when Idi Amin took power.[12]. One foreigner still living in Mbale during the takeover of Amin describes the abrupt change in atmosphere in town this way:

> Idi Amin's coup of January 1971 put a terrifying end to the atmosphere of optimistic prosperity and energetic politics that I so enjoyed in Bugisu. Various leaders disappeared into unknown prisons. Soldiers roamed the streets, demanding free food and drink and beating anyone who objected to them with rifle butts. I witnessed several brutal arrests. There were … reports of torture and mutilation. Most Bagisu, and I, were constantly frightened and constantly watching for the soldier.
> (Bunker 1987:10).

Born-again churches were driven underground, their public meetings banned. Any visible growth of Pentecostal denominations and Christians across Mbale and Uganda was repressed, and 'Pentecostal churches almost died out or operated under home fellowships during Idi Amin's time' (Jenga 2017). It was this brutal repression, and subsequent fall of the Amin regime in 1979, which set the stage for a dramatic quarter century which followed.

Poverty to Prosperity and the Americanization of the Church

In 1986, seven years after the fall of Amin, a new government under Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) brought much greater stability to the nation and the reintroduction of the constitutionally-enshrined freedom of worship. This enabled 'the underground Pentecostal cells *[to]* resurface in the 1980s and 1990s as independent *Biwempe* churches (papyrus mat-built churches) under Ugandan pastors' (Jenga 2017). It was, at once, a time of deep poverty and need as well as excitement and rapid growth in the church. Speaking about churches in Mbale during this time, Bishop Eliab recalls how the Amin years and the 'circus' of post-Amin instability set the stage for what followed:

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[12] Growth continued underground during the regime of Amin, when unaffiliated/born-again churches were outlawed. Even so, church replication happened on a dramatically smaller scale. One notable development was the planting of the first Church of Christ in the country, with the aid of a missionary named Al Hamilton, living in Mbale under the covering of the officially sanctioned Church of Uganda (12).

> These ones that I'm mentioning *[Baptist, Pentecostal Assemblies of God, and Deliverance]* were there *[in Mbale]* during the times of Amin and they were burned down. And out of that kind of circus, when movement *[Museveni's National Resistance Movement]* came in *[1986]* these people that had been scattered, some had gone to exile, like that, and again *[upon return]* they were scrambling for leadership. Which… brought a lot of breakages amidst them, each one had to start his own mission accordingly, and like as you know they went *[during Amin & the aftermath]* to Kenya, where there was freedom of worship, they had been exposed to many, many friends and had different kind of spiritual cultures, especially from America, Britain, like that…. So these people came with a lot of fire, so they started different kind of missions like as you are seeing. Yeah, that's how it was. (207)

They came not only with fire, but with new partners and inputs from their cross-border and overseas sojourns:

> These neo-Pentecostal churches of the 1980s and 1990s primarily … preached a gospel of repentance and being 'born again' in the Holy Spirit. The game changer for neo-Pentecostal Ugandan churches came by way of establishment of partnerships with US American prosperity preachers. (Jenga 2017)

A surge in the number of foreign missions and charities operating in Uganda and Mbale accompanied the growth and diversification among the Born-Again Churches (Frederick 2003).

Born-Again Churches, Born in Poverty

Even while the Born-Again churches were dividing, birthing and otherwise growing rapidly, they remained deeply poor, and often were planted among the lower classes. An Mbale minister who had planted churches in the more established town of Jinja felt God's call to return to his people in Mbale. Pastor Ivan related that, after 'I had developed elders *[in the Jinja churches]*, we ordained them and we walked away with my wife' (150). So in 1989 he and his wife returned to Mbale and planted a church in town: 'It is a real needy place that the Lord sent us to, from Jinja. Because it is just a slum area when we went to start' (150)'

These churches were still too few and too poor to be taken very seriously by mainstream religious society and government.

> Pastor Dennis: They *[the government]* associated them with poverty. In fact, they were the ones who prayed in papyrus in swamps. All the *[established]* churches are on hills Namirembe hill, Rubaga hill, even Bahai hill, Muslims hill. Whereas the big Pentecostal churches? Even here Lugogo *{church]#* is almost a swamp but you go to Miracle Centre, the big one? It is in a valley.
>
> Interviewer: They still had running water in the property, they have--
>
> Pastor Dennis: A river.

Interviewer: A river running in.
Pastor Dennis: You go to Christian Life *[church]* here, it is in a valley swamp! (D002)

The relative poverty of Born Again churches when compared to their more established sisters began to change in earnest in the 1990s.

Change from the Top Down

In the decade of the 1990s, the world started to take much greater interest in the connection between development NGOs and places of worship. In Uganda specifically, this brought increased interest and funding from international donors and thus spurred the rapid growth of indigenous organizations at all levels of society, from large national organizations to small Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to take advantage of the funding opportunities (2000:117). Organizations like Compassion International, which funds its programmes through the Church of Uganda and Born Again denominations like Deliverance, started operations in Mbale during this time (B001).

Churches throughout Uganda responded to both the need of their communities and to the increasing opportunities to access funding from international donors. Some of the ways they did so built on and re-imagined patterns established earlier in history. For instance, churches frequently started schools associated with and adjacent to the church, thereby extending and re-innovating on the close, historic association between the church (and before that, the mission outposts) and formal education. Pastor Ivan and his wife relocated to Mbale, 'when we started the church, the Lord said add on a school to help the children, the needy people around so that they can have education' (150).

Moving into the 2000s, international interest in faith-based development continued to grow and was being promoted on the biggest international stages, such as in the United Nations and the World Bank. In 2001, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), facilitated by the World Council of Churches, gave a statement to the UN General Assembly which

extolled the cooperation between FBOs, local churches, and government agencies as among the most extensive and successful models of cooperation in the fight against HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa. They further requested governments to provide 'extensive support for FBOs (access to information, training, and financial resources)' (World Council of Churches 2001). The next year, the World Bank published its first study combining development and faith, the focus of which was the church in Africa (World Council of Churches 2001; Palmer & Finlay 2003; Wilhelm et al. 2019a).

Change from the Bottom Up

Even as the top levels of the international community were promoting and connecting Ugandan FBOs and churches to the global development community, a less-visible development, taking shape at the grassroots level, was working from the bottom-up towards the same end. This was the era when the decentralization of Christian mission and the spread of local-to-local relationships in the faith community began to take shape and accelerate, as noted in chapter one.

In the earliest days of these relationships, they tended to reflect the focus of the donor community, supporting activities that combatting HIV/AIDS, delivered aid and alleviated physical poverty. The earliest academic literature which directly references local-to-local and church-to-church relationships construes these relationships as a vehicle international aid and local development. The relationship is not presented as an end in itself[13]. Hefferan, for example, calls for 'deprofessionalizing economic development' through parish and church twinning relationships (2006). Belshaw mentions them approvingly in his article on pro-poor development (2006:158). In Africa

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[13] A clear and early outlier in this literature is the research done by Donald Miller. He proposed that "every church in the United States should create a relationship with a church in the developing world" in which the first years would concentrate on 'breaking bread together and getting to know each other's cultures, needs, and aspirations' (2003:23).

specifically, Scheffler gives a case study of sister congregation partnership as a means of fighting against HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe (Scheffler 2008). Judging from the literature, these local-to-local pioneers appear to follow earlier relational paradigms in which Whites set the overall agenda and their Ugandan partner plays a clientistic role.

As the outside world took notice of Born-Again churches, so also the Ugandan government began to take notice:

Pastor Dennis:	The Pentecostals Born Agains were first counted in 2002 and then they said it was about 4 or so percent. The next census of counting I'm forgetting the number I'm mixing them up but really the number--
Interviewer:	I think it was at 16 or something like that. *[The next census in 2014 census found 11.1% Born Again affiliation]*
Pastor Dennis:	It extends probably about 16 or so percent. And prior to 1990 they didn't even waste time counting them. So in a way, prior to 1990, before the Americanization had actually come, they did not even count. When the money began to come, *[they]* took note, by 2002. They begin to say 'Wait a minute….' Because prior to this, you are either Anglican, Roman Catholic or Muslim.
Interviewer:	2000.
Pastor Dennis:	2002, by that time this has grown now, this American--
Interviewer:	And that's not 20 years ago, that is such a short time!
Pastor Dennis:	It is actually very short! It's very short, and now the money has come.

No longer *Biwempe* churches, these various Pentecostal and independent streams of the faith had emerged from the repression of the Amin regime into a new era of national attention, international acclaim, and increasing wealth and influence: Today, 'the *Abalokole Ab'omwoyo*, or Spirit-filled believers, by and large, have become part of mainstream Christianity in Uganda. It would be foolhardy to ignore them' (Olwa 2016:174).

The Americanization of Born-Again Churches

By the turn of the century, Uganda was being heralded as a success story in the fight against the ravaging HIV/AIDS epidemic, the subject of 'praise of the international community over its swift and progressive response' against the global epidemic (Kelly 2008). Awards from an American consortium given to the First Lady Janet Museveni and her husband the President further raised the profile and aid funding for HIV/AIDS

work (Marlink & Kotin 2004). This coincided with the launch, by American President George Bush, of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). PEPFAR funding [approximately $650 million from 2004 to 2007 (Wilhelm et al. 2019b)] quickly established itself as the largest source of funding for grassroots efforts against AIDS. Unprecedented in its ambition and scale, PEPFAR designated local Faith-Based Communities in Uganda as 'targeted beneficiaries' (PEPFAR Uganda Small Grants Office 2019). Tripp states that religious organizations, in most cases either working with or started by local churches, 'were the main ones receiving funding' (2000:117). Gusman is more restrained in reporting that 'a considerable amount was channelled into FBOs (Faith Based Organizations) working on HIV/AIDS prevention issues' (Alessandro Gusman 2009:68). Given the scale of this funding, the PEPFAR money flowing through churches and denominations and local FBOs 'helped institutionalize the Pentecostal presence' in the national consciousness (Bompani 2016:4).

PEPFAR also helped to institutionalize American Evangelicalism into the consciousness of Ugandan Pentecostalism (Cooper 2015). As America's financial footprint in Ugandan Christianity grew, according to Dr. Pastor Kilama, American evangelicals achieved unprecedented levels of soft power and influence in Born Again churches across Uganda. Pastor Kilama explains the resultant culture shift that occurred during this era in the church.

Pastor Kilama:	I will use the word 'Americanization,' and I use it very intentionally.
Interviewer:	Please explain.
Pastor Kilama:	There had been other groups, mainly from Europe, Britain and France that came through to Uganda. But then increasingly, when the Americans began to engage, it changed the tone. Because now a single man - a pastor, the "man of God"- got elevated. He got elevated because he attained some sort of honour by associating with "a rich man" or "a rich church." So the Americans in a way rallied around one man and that one man is seen as a hero addressing issues. Number one was HIV/AIDs. HIV/AIDs actually shaped a lot of that, this single man who has a compelling story, a story of how he's working with people of HIV. How he's actually working with orphans that have come through the 1986 war really played key role. There are so many orphans that had been left, there is this single man who is intervening, now he is the hero.
Interviewer:	So also, not to interrupt, but the presence of the rugged individualism - that is the core of American identity! So, sorry, continue with your story sorry.

Pastor Kilama:	Actually at the heart of it is that individualism! If I was able to persuade you, you will never mind where I come from. You will see me as me, and it is *my* story.
	Unlike the previous eras, where the church was an institution, the church became a go-through. The church now becomes a vehicle, actually, to another end. The actual end is that they have a big name, because they have set up an orphanage. And most of these churches, next to it you find an orphanage and possibly a hospital or a clinic or a school.
	So this involved that Americanization. It is not that I'm giving to the denomination, but it is giving to one man.
Interviewer:	Which was unprecedented!
Pastor Kilama:	That was completely unthinkable! I think of this really, Americanization, it's really shaped the church. (D003)

Agreeing with Pastor Kilama, Father Jenga contends that it was a 'game changer' when 'Born Again Ugandan churches … establish*[ed]* partnerships with US American prosperity preachers.' These partnerships, and their influence in churches and church leaders, then 'reconfigured the type of theology and practices that were adopted by indigenous Pentecostal pastors' including a move towards 'celebrity statuses and … flamboyant lifestyles' and a greater media presence to both befit and sustain their enhanced social status (Jenga 2017).

According to Pastor Kilama, this created a clear shift in the attention of pastors and the purpose of many churches:

> So now, if I'm a pastor, for me to thrive, the church is again a conduit. But, the actual money that will get me a Prado *[4x4 vehicle],* that will get me a good house, it is actually in this little side business *["project" to access funding]*. (D003)

Earlier in Ugandan history, ambitious young men learned that attaching themselves to the patronage of the Whites and their churches was a sure means of advancing one's station in life. By the decades around the start of the 21st century, this basic lesson not only survived but was reapplied in new ways by a new generation of resourceful young people, in a new context of great poverty and potential. In this case, the powerful churches were in America rather than in Uganda, and Whites were American rather than British. According to Pastor Kilama, this enduring lesson has been learned by the current generation of church leaders as well.

> There are many young pastors right now, this is the way to go. They have had a background of extreme poverty. They are not educated but they've made it through. They have come from a very rural

> background previously, but they've made it through. They have had a story either of HIV/AIDs or orphans, that it just drew *[support]*.
>
> To a point that now, if I am here and I don't have that story, you may come up with it, just to make sure! You have to have a story! If you have a story, that story is actually the one that now ignites. That story ignites. (D003)

Today, American influence continues. America remains the most common nationality of overseas partners among churches in Mbale. The telephone survey reveals that relationships with Christians in America account for a majority (54%) of all church relationships outside of Africa. When combined with the average number of relationships per church, the average church in the partnership marketplace has between one and two partnerships (average of 1.49) with groups of Christians in the USA.[14] The influence of American Christians in Mbale churches today remains so pervasive that it is common to conflate a light-skinned foreigner with an American - as Pastor Stephen observed, 'for them *[my church members]* when they see a Muzungu they think that these are missionaries coming from America' (289).[15]

The adverse side effects of large-scale influence from, and imitation of, American norms was not limited to the Church. In fact, Wiegratz argues that the 'Americanization' of the church was part and parcel of the fundamental remaking of Ugandan society during the 1980s and 90s through a 'high level of foreign intervention by donors, aid agencies, … NGOs and corporations' (2016:1) and changes imposed by global institutions 'in the process and aftermath of structural adjustment policies' (2010:123). Thus Weigratz sees Kilama's observations on the 'Americanization' of the church as an outworking of the largely degenerative effects of economic marketplace liberalization on Uganda's moral and political economies. He finds an 'intensification of fraud … since the early 2000s', which he links to the embedding of a neo-liberal marketplace in Uganda. I have spoken

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[14] Among churches with overseas partnerships. More and related details, and the underlying data on the incidence of overseas partnership in churches in Mbale are explored in chapter two.
[15] The term 'Muzungu' is a Swahili word referencing a light-skinned foreigner. The term has taken on different shades of meaning over the years in different contexts, and is now endemic to virtually all local languages in East Africa. I discuss this and related terms, and my use of them in this study, later in the Literature Review section of this chapter.

to many Ugandan's who agree with Weigratz's timeline, though most tend to site more readily-visible and proximate causes for this upsurge in fraud and social ills.

Wiegratz zeros in on the interests of this research when he examines the coffee and agricultural markets of the Mbale region. He argues that the neoliberal market economy engendered other, negative shifts the moral economy of the Bagisu, spreading corruption and fraud (2016) and pushing 'destructive norms and practices in other economic sectors and sections of society' (2010:123), including Christian churches.

Kilama is a Ugandan pastor, while Wiegratz is a European academic and economist. From a different perch, a South African professor of religion arrives at a similar ending point. Ukah broadens the observations of Kilama about the 'Americanization' of the church and finds fault not only with America but also the wider, Western-dominated global order (2016). He argues that 'the Structural Adjustment era of the 1980s and 1990s not only introduced consequential new economic structures, but that 'they also, and more consequentially, deregulated social relationships and spiritual quest and practice' (2016:369). Ukah contends that 'this *laissez-faire* religious market promoted the rise of superstar religious entrepreneurs and Pentecostal empire-building' (2016:371). The end result is that when a church leader is 'operating in the neoliberal, deregulated religious ecosystem, the religious leader is his or her own authority' (Ukah 2016:371). In this deregulated marketplace, because 'neo-Pentecostal Churches are ordinarily independent, founder-led congregations that depend on … their founder, the majority of the founders are not financially accountable to anyone' (Jenga 2017).

It is little wonder, given the unprecedented funding, coupled with the unprecedented autonomy of local church and superstar pastors, that financial fraud took unprecedented root in local churches, leaders, and FBOs. Tripp refers to the spread of '"briefcase" organizations' operating as outright scams, as well as the common problem of 'organizations that lurk in the border area between a scam and being simply an inefficient

organization with poor leadership and a weak constituency' (2000:117). The key ingredient for financial breakthrough was to become or attach to a 'superstar' pastor or leader, one with a story that connected with overseas donors and their funds. Tripp quotes a Ugandan leader expressing her concern that during this era that many of these faith-based local organizations and leaders

> have no constituency at all, but have a three year budget and an executive. And therefore they are as much driving the donor as the donor is driving them…. So it's easy to find someone and get that person, and make her a superstar. I think a lot of that is happening. (2000:120)

Being connected to Whites as a means of achieving financial prosperity is an older lesson in Ugandan history, a lesson that was relearned in the years around the turn of this century and indeed passed on to church leaders today. Many church leaders in Mbale today 'have got that problem' when they see Muzungu. According to Pastor Titus,

> You know sometimes, we have got that problem. You know, when you begin seeing a Muzungu as now, the money has come. Not even a seeing him as also a man of a burden *[God given vision and desire to help]*. (029)

Indeed, the money has come. As much as overseas partners may deny or downplay the centrality of money in local-to-local relationships, pastors in Mbale agree that money in central, 'because if it does not come in, you are out of place [laughing, laughing a lot] you are living in a different world … It must involve money' (008). I deal more extensively with the common association of Muzungus and money, or, as I frame it, of Muzungus as a means of production, in chapter four.

This folk perspective connecting Muzungus with money is no longer limited to the Whites of earlier times, i.e. foreign Christians of Caucasian or European origin. Today many Asian, and Central or South American missionaries are equally included in 'that problem.' Miho Tanaka of Japan, for example, writes that she and 'Malaysians, Indonesians, Singaporeans, Americans, Brazilians, Swedes and Germans *[are]* all called *Mzungu*'(2013). She writes how a support group for HIV-positive people increased dramatically in membership when she and other non-Western interns joined the meetings,

only to reportedly see membership and attendance decline when the internship, and their attendance at meetings, came to an end (Tanaka 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW: A PERSISTENT PAST OR A NEW PARADIGM?

My motivation in this research flowed in large part from those changes I had observed and my sense that something new was happening in mission activity around the world. As the literature shows, I was far from alone in my observations.

Ross noted a 'new mode' of mission partnership ushered in through 'radically decentralized' engagements between congregations (2008:1), while Bakker hails the sister church model of mission as 'an attempt to embody "new paradigm" missiology and embrace an upside-down Christendom' and 'a breath of fresh air' for North Americans 'awakened' to the 'need for a new approach to mission' (2014:41). Schreiter gathers together various forms of 'shorter-term mission' first manifesting in the 1980s and builds them into a growing 'third wave' of Catholic mission (2015:6–7).

These insights about a new mission approach are not incorrect, but they are certainly partial and incomplete. This was demonstrated most clearly to me through my examination of the literature on sister church relationships[16], an growing type of local-to-local engagement. Bakker found that the American sister church participants in her study strongly defined their sister church relationship over and against both the Short Term Mission (STM) movement and older, gatekeeper models. That is, they considered their mode of relationship to be new and different from the past (2014). The sister church phenomenon falls squarely within my local-to-local focus, and I was eager to build on Bakker's excellent study by listening and learning about sister church relationships from a Ugandan, rather than American, perspective.

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[16] Other common terms for this mode of mission are 'church-to-church' (Vincelette 2004) church 'twinning' (Ross 2008), 'parish twinning' (Hefferan 2007) 'congregation-to-congregation' or 'companion congregations' (Cline 2006).

What I quickly learned is that designating these partnerships as a new and distinct class of mission engagement, as often described in the literature, is itself indicative of the strong Western orientation of that literature. Any attempt by myself, moreover, to create new, systematic taxonomy of local-to-local relationships on behalf of Mbale churches would itself be unfaithful to their perspective on both counts – both in its *newness,* and in any *systematic* framing of it. I will first examine local perspectives on any *systematic* typology before looking at perceptions of the *newness* of these relationships.

As to the sister church relationship being a *systematically* distinct type of engagement, this type of partnership is simply not an operative mental category for Mbale church leaders. No interviewee ever volunteered this vocabulary or this 'type' of relationship as something in which they, or their church, were a participant – including at least four interviewees whose churches were enrolled in what the literature would almost certainly classify as just such a relationship. Overall, the vantage point of local Mbale Christians is very similar to that voiced by a Ukrainian Christian in Brown's research (2007). Brown's Ukrainian interviewee was somewhat befuddled by Brown's questions about the types of relationship which his various American visitors had with his Ukrainian church. When asked about the different types American groups who came to visit, his reply was 'Well, they're Americans too. What difference does it make to us?' (Brown 2007:86).

To the extent that Ugandan Christians do possess a mental taxonomy of relationships with outsiders, it is one which categorizes degrees of relational distance, in that outside relationships and partnerships are thought of relationally, not categorically. There is no disembodied relationship between churches or parishes; rather, what an American pastor may deem a 'church relationship' is understood locally as 'my friend' who comes to visit me from the U.S.A., and who brings some of her friends from the

church. On both ends of these partnerships, the partnering entity is embodied in living beings.

The most widely used terms of reference for these relationships are 'visitor,' 'friend,' 'missionary,' and 'Muzungu.' There is generally little or no difference between the words 'Muzungu' (used when speaking in local languages) and 'White' (often though not exclusively used when speaking in English). In my observation, Whites themselves often prefer to use the term Muzungu, perhaps from an enjoyment of the exotic and/or a subconscious distaste to being colorized or signified upon after growing up white in white-majority countries. As astute observers of human (and Muzungu) nature and keen hosts, my interviewees were more likely to reference 'Muzungu' but also freely adopted 'Whites' if and when I did so. I employ this personalized language – of visitor, friend, missionary, Muzungu, and White – in my analysis. Unless otherwise clearly specified, all the above terms will hereafter be used in their inclusive, local senses of an individual who often embodies a larger relationship overseas; for example, a relationship with an American sister church, a Korean ladies Bible study or a Welsh family's connection with a former exchange student are spoken of as my American sister, my Korean mother, or my visitor from Wales.

The meaning of the terms *Muzungu* and *missionary*, as used by local church leaders and Christians, begin to call into question the perceived *newness* of their local-to-local relationships with Christians overseas. The term *Muzungu* (singular, specific) or *Bazungu* (plural, general) are local adaptations of the Swahili Mzungu and Wazungu, terms which date back to the earliest white men to set feet on East African soils. The widespread, colloquial use of the term Muzungu/Mzungu – across virtually all tribal and linguistic borders – reflects a broad, popular perception of the basic continuity of Whites today with those of the past.

This basic continuity is further evidenced through the local meaning of the term *missionary,* which is broader than the definition given the term by Christians in the West. Locally, any Muzungu who comes to work with churches is a missionary. They may be a white Christian who stays for a week or for a decade; they may be a college student or a seminary trained pastor relocating his family to Uganda; categorically, they are one and the same. Today, there are few missionaries in the western sense of the word and almost none who minister directly in growing or planting local churches in Mbale, so few pastors interact with a missionary in the word's western definition. But these new, short-term visitors, who are coming in increasing numbers, are "missionaries" just the same. They are *new* in some sense, yet they also inhabit an older mental and social place filled by traditional missionaries, a place which is deeply rooted in Ugandan history. In the below excerpt, James, Geoffrey and Mary agree on this widely accepted mental categorization of a missionary.

> James: 'We have got the Muzungus from America.'
> Interviewer: So then, if they stay for two years they are the missionary, if they stay for two weeks they are the missionary, same?
> James: Yes, the same. [We] elders and pastors…
> Geoffrey: We call them missionaries
> Mary: Because they are coming here to share some things. (104)

This mental categorization is not limited to church elders and leaders. Parishioners also place a wide variety of church visitors from overseas in the category of missionaries. According to Pastor Stephen,

> Interviewer 1: So for the ordinary Christian, the way they see her she *[referencing a white lady who was teaching weekly in his church for one year]* is a missionary, same or similar to how they see the young people who come for one day and go back?
> Pastor Stephen: Yeah that is what that is, how they see, because they are used to the groups which came, and they saw them and they said 'These are missionaries.' (289)

This is not to say that local understandings have not evolved over time; as will be shown in the subsequent chapters of this thesis, church leaders have noticed changes in how Muzungus come and what they do when they are here. But these are shifts within the overarching and uninterrupted storyline of Muzungu missionaries 'coming here to share some things' (104).

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I examined two historical eras which were particularly formative for local interactions with Whites: the first three decades of Christian mission in Uganda starting in 1877, and then the first three decades after the fall of the Amin regime in 1979. I use these two eras to demonstrate that, throughout their history, Ugandan and Mbale Christians who interact with Christians overseas have experienced Whites as gatekeepers and ancillary patrons who controlled and now facilitate access to education and greater social standing, and bring new resources and opportunities to advance one's ministry and personal interests. On that basis, I argue that the relational perspectives and practices of Mbale churches and pastors today are more part and parcel of the historical record than they are a unique break with the past.

That these current perspectives and practices are historically-grounded is further evidenced through the continuity in the terms (and in the mental categorization behind those terms) of *missionary* and *Muzungu,* used to think about and classify Western Christian visitors. Current local-to-local mission relationships, then, are an evolution within a much older mental paradigm of partnership with missionaries and Muzungus.

The historical continuity of these relationships endures, despite the changes that local Christians have observed and this research documents. While these relational changes are frequently heralded as *new* by Western observers, these same relationships feel decidedly less *new* when experienced by ordinary church leaders in Mbale. While acknowledging changes, Christians in Mbale today see the business of receiving white visitors as something that is very much in continuity with their past.

Chapter 4 – Instrumental Friendships: Producers, Products and the Means of Production

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I pointed out some of the historical events that shaped the local church in Uganda and Mbale and her conceptions of cross-cultural partnership today. With that historical foundation, in this chapter I argue that local-to-local relationships in Mbale churches are sustained by instrumental friendships and careful safeguarding, and are embedded within a hierarchy of patron-client relationships.

THE RELIGIOUS MARKETPLACE

Here I employ the *marketplace* as an organizing metaphor to examine the local-to-local phenomena in Mbale. I examine, in turn, the main components of a marketplace and their relationship to each other: the local producers and consumers, the products and means of production, the ownership of these means of production, and the role of patron/client relationships in production. This study does not seek to examine the overall religious marketplace in Mbale but rather the roles of local-to-local relationships within that larger marketplace.

A marketplace metaphor allows us to place local congregations, and particularly their leadership, at the centre of our script. These are the firms and CEOs of firms who are supplying goods and services to our marketplace; it is they who have primary agency in the market. The external partners in local-to-local relationships, as vital as they are in our study, are supporting actors whose roles enhance the agency of these local firms, acting as additional tools in pastors' toolkits. That they are *not* the central actors is a central understanding of this study.

Literature Review – The Religious Marketplace

Many people in faith-based occupations or who are otherwise engaged in 'ministry' or 'mission' shun the language of economics and the marketplace. Phrases like competition, customers, products and marketing do not often slip out from people whose vocations and passions and bound up with spiritual realities.

Sociologists of religion, on the other hand, increasingly have no such qualms. Stark and Finke, in their classic study of American religion in terms of marketplace competition, trace the origins of the social scientific study of religion (rather than social scientific scepticism thereof) to the years following World War II (Stark & Finke 2000).[1] Academic development at this intersection of economics and sociology has gathered pace since. Numerous scholars (Smith 2008; Scheitle 2015; Stark & Finke 2000) point to the last two to three decades as a time of great fruitfulness in the sociology of religion at both the micro (e.g. (Ammerman et al. 1998)) and macro levels (e.g. (Wuthnow 2009)). As this era progressed, sociologists increasingly turned to the vocabulary and tools of economics in order to study religious activity and religious institutions. As Scheitle writes:

> The social scientists… drew upon economic thinking not only to challenge the existing model of religious decline but also to propose numerous hypotheses of their own concerning religious behavior. The guiding principle of this economics of religion is that there is a market for religion that functions in a way quite similar to that for any other product or service. (2010:5)

Turning our attention to East Africa and Uganda specifically, economic thinking has been used to study religion more broadly and local churches more specifically. As early as a few years after Ugandan independence, and before the advent of independent Pentecostalism, Joan Vincent discussed the intense competition between the Protestant

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[1] Stark and Finke do point out that Adam Smith, most clearly among early social scientists, put religion inside of a marketplace, but that as religion fell out of fashion other sociologists such an Engles and Marx used economic thought to attack or dismiss religion, rather than to study it.

and Catholic churches in a Teso village along the shores of Lake Victoria (1971). Jones places the local church at the heart of village life and economic activity in rural Eastern Uganda (2008). Studies of completion among churches in the religious marketplace in the cities of East Africa are more abundant. Recent studies include those by Gez in Nairobi (2018) and Valois in Kampala (2016).

The Positionality of the Researcher: a Note

The study of religion through a marketplace lens has advanced most clearly in America. This is perhaps not surprising, given that, in the United States more than anywhere else, faith itself has become intertwined with the marketplace. Moore argues that America's founding ban on state establishment of religion laid a foundation for creating a 'flowering Eden of leisure industries' in which 'religion itself took on the shape of a commodity' (1995:5–6). In examining American history, McCarraher concludes that in America, capitalism itself now 'addresses the same hopes and anxieties formerly entrusted to traditional religion' (2019:11).

Dr. Dennis Kilama believes that the church in Uganda has, as he puts it, 'Americanized' over the past several decades, particularly during the early Museveni Era (D002). Kilama's timeline corresponds to what a number of other interviewees collectively deem to be a growing commercialization in Ugandan churches and monetization of Christian spirituality (C005, B002, C004, B009, B001, 008). Many expressed great unease with these developments. Pastor Kilama verbalized these changes, and his own attendant misgivings, most succinctly.

> The desire is numbers so people just want to compete for numbers, and the mind-set is: run the church like a business entity, and treat Christians as clients. You see that. It has a positive part to it, but I think sometimes it is over-stretched. Normally with a business, they say it is the customer who defines quality. So you have to adjust the product according to the tastes of the customer. But this may not work very well with the church! So, I think most pastors now are looking at the church as almost like a business entity. So you have to treat Christians as clients and you have to keep adjusting the message *[to]* the taste of the client. (D002)

I share Pastor Kilama's perception that running a local church as a business 'may not work well' in fulfilling the core mission of the Church. Thus, I want to be clear that, in choosing to use a marketplace metaphor in this present study, I am not advocating the commercialization of the church nor, I trust, am I am agent of it, despite holding both an American passport and a Masters of Business Administration. No doubt, my national and educational background have influenced my choice of metaphors for this study. However, I am cognizant of the truth in Reverend Canon Amos' statement:

> Now you might have heard there's a saying, which many Africans here say: in Palestine, Christianity was miracle-working Christianity. When it went to Europe, it became a strong culture. When it went to America, it became a business engine. (B009)

More hopefully, the Reverend Canon continued to say that when Christianity went to Africa and Uganda specifically, 'it was the real Word of God that transforms people, and Africans were really transformed. And it is true. People *[the martyrs]* would not have died because of Christianity if they had not been touched' (B009).

My aim in this study is to allow churches in Uganda to share their own experience at the confluence of these various Christianities, in that space where a local European, American or Asian Christianity intersects with Ugandan Christianity through a local-to-local partnership. Along with Pastor Kilama and others, I have found that using the framework and vocabulary of business helpful in thinking and sharing about the experience of the local Church and her leaders.

For the remainder of this chapter, as well as chapters five and six, I engage with the *marketplace* metaphor and its basic functions such as supply and demand to illuminate some forces at work around overseas partnerships.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

In any marketplace, the law of supply and demand explains the interactions of sellers and consumers around the commodity being traded. The bargaining power of buyers (in this study, local churches looking for overseas relationships) increases compared to that of

sellers (overseas partners) when supply is high (many overseas visitors and partners wanting a relationship) but demand is low (fewer churches looking for partners).

Robert Oh gives us an example of just such a market with high supply and relatively low demand (2018). Oh's study of Korean missionaries' relationships with Cambodian Christian leaders takes place in Cambodia. The supply of relationships with Korean missionaries in Cambodia is high, with greater and greater numbers of Korean churches and missionaries engaging in Cambodia. But the number of firms is comparatively low – Christians constitute a religious marketplace that encompasses, at the very most, perhaps 3% of the population (Joshua Project 2018). Fewer firms, in a smaller marketplace, results in lower demand. Given the high supply and lower demand, Cambodian church leaders experience situations in which 'many South Korean missionaries can approach an individual evangelical Cambodian pastor at once' as these missionaries 'compete for the same evangelical Cambodian pastor' (Oh 2018:38). In other words, Cambodian evangelical churches have greater bargaining power for firms because they have various relationship possibilities and can afford to be picky about their relationships.

Uganda's context is different. This survey frame revealed 519 Christian religious firms in Mbale, competing in a district where the marketplace encompasses 45% of the population.[2] In Mbale, unlike in Cambodia, he demand for overseas relationships outstrips supply. In Mbale it is the pastors, not the missionaries, who must compete with each other for overseas partnerships, these means of production. Thus, for instance, that more than half of Mbale churches do not have a relationship with Christians outside Uganda.

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[2] Catholics and Protestants generally operate in quite distinct marketplaces for religious goods, so the 519 churches and 45% figures cited here encompasses all non-Catholic churches and Christians (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016).

These dynamics elevate the relative bargaining power of the supply side (Overseas partners/visitors) vis-à-vis the demand side (Mbale churches). Reflecting this, church leaders note that many missionaries seem to expect a monopoly on their relationship with a church, and had difficulty working with other Whites in the same church (228, 333, D003):

Interviewer 2:	If I have a friend, if he discovers I am in touch with John Tuggy-
Interviewer 1:	A Muzungu?
Interviewer 2:	A Muzungu. Then he'll withdraw. He'll be like, "Okay, be with that one."
Pastor Terry:	That is correct!
Interviewer 2:	For them, it's hard for them, for the few I know, the Americans or the Whites, the partners.
Pastor Terry:	If you're working with Pastor Andrew, you don't want me also an American to work with him. If you discovered that I, an American, also I'm working with him, you cut off. (228)

Having said that, relationships with Christians overseas are not so rare that churches cannot be in multiple partnerships concurrently. As previously noted in chapter two, when a church has a relationship overseas, while that puts that church among a minority of churches, it is also more likely to have two or even three relationships rather than only one. However, it is 'very rare' for these multiple outside partners to know of each other and continue working together with the same local church or church leader in Mbale (228). According to Pastor Daniel, 'from my experience of all these things, some of the worst conflicts are conflicts among the *[outside]* partners themselves, the Whites themselves' (333).

Having multiple White partners who do not know each other can prevent conflict, jealousy. However, it can also open up room for abuse by the local partner:

Bishop Ezra:	It is very, very possible to find a person, one pastor, who has given a church to three different Bazungu. But of course, these ones, he has told them, "This mission is for you. This work is for you. This work is for you."
Interviewer:	So three people pay for one tin roof. [Laughs]
Bishop Ezra:	Yes. For one tin roof. You see? (B005)

PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS

Like churches and other institutions, local-to-local relationships are personalized through their embodiment in the church leader. In the local religious marketplace, it is church

leaders, as the embodiment of their institutions, who are the producers. Naming church leaders as the marketplace's producers, be they a pastor, bishop, reverend, or elder, endows these leaders with agency and places them at the centre of the action, where this research shows they belong.[3]

The consumers, or customers, are the people in Mbale. These customers can be further broken down into current customers (local church congregants) and potential customers (both other Christians and non-Christians). A third sub-category of consumers are the local government officials in their role as regulators of the marketplace.

THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION

While the overall religions marketplace in Mbale is much larger than our specific focus, chapter three shows that local-to-local mission engagements play a very significant role in the marketplace and in society at large. In this way, friendships with and visits by foreigners are a *means of production*. Visitors are an instrument used by the firm to produce both services and durable goods. A local-to-local relationship, then, is a very helpful and valuable thing to local pastors.

> Interviewer: Why do churches in Mbale, what is the reason that they are happy to have Muzungus come to do partnership with them?
> Bishop Ezra: Mm
> Interviewer: What is the benefit that-that the partnership can bring?
> Bishop Ezra: Uh, you know-- uh, of course in countries like Uganda-
> Interviewer: Mm
> Bishop Ezra: Or in Africa, uh – there is that problem of finances.
> Interviewer: Yes, yes.
> Bishop Ezra: So, sometimes … we have got that mind that if a Muzungu comes in, at least that area is going. (B005)

The word 'development' comes up frequently when discussing with church leaders about the benefits of having partners. Development is a somewhat amorphous term used in broad and narrower ways. Sometimes development conveys an inclusive sense that

[3] See chapter five for more on the agency of church leaders in local-to-local relationships

things are moving forward within a community. This use of the term 'development' here is representative of its use in this broadest sense.

> These partners are always good for us as local churches to partner with because they do a lot, they have brought a lot of development to us as local churches. Actually, in the late years *[years ago]*, one saying I am a Christian was like an abuse because he would be laughed at. But we want to thank God because he has now lifted a standard, and because of partners people have now seen that Christianity is of value, Christianity is good and Christianity has created a very big kind of impact. But as we have these partners, we have all these kinds of developments.

More commonly, development and progress is focussed on the local church itself or even the leadership of the church. Consider this testimony from Pastor Martin, who uses 'development' in much narrower way – as personal, tangible improvement:

> Interviewer: The churches, those surrounding you, that you know have Whites, what do you think are the challenges they getting in collaborating with those Whites?
>
> Pastor Martin: Khuuuush!! (Sigh) The churches which are collaborating with Whites, especially those in my neighbourhood? There is no church which I have seen them having challenges, only that I have seen development. The reason I say that, there is some of our neighbours, who collaborated with Whites. They started by giving them bicycles, then motorcycles, they now moved from motorcyles and have now given the pastor a real 'Prado' *[modern 4x4 vehicle]*, which he is now using!

Whether development is seen in the wider community, the local church, or in individual pastors and their families, the testimonials and association of whites with development is widespread.

Today, this association is so deeply rooted as to have become almost reflexive. When a Muzungu visitors show up, assumptions are made. A local pastor recounts the time that his church was under construction using local funds, with no financial contributions from the outside.

> For us when we got that plot of land and started preparing the wattle *[straw for home-made bricks]*, we made our bricks, and thought of a way that we can proceed to build. So as a church we started to fundraise. But whenever *[a certain Muzungu]* comes, there is a time he came with over 26 whites, and the people in the church neighbourhood who do welding, came to me and requested that they are ready to begin making doors[4] for us because they have seen whites come in! [Laughter] (L003).

The opportunity for material gain has a powerful effect on behaviour to which church leaders are not immune. One bishop variously refers to his partners generically

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[4] Metal doors are an expensive item, and are either a non-essential for a church made with local bricks, or at best something to be purchased in the future after the church has been built to a usable standard

as ‘friends,’ ‘visitors’ and ‘Muzungus’ before deciding to settle on another term, saying ‘Let me call them my donors’ (207).

These pastors readily and genuinely call their overseas connections their friends. But because of their wealth, friendship with outside Christians is, at its essence, an instrumental friendship. Visitors who come as part of a local-to-local relationship have felt this duality of being both a friend and a valuable commodity at the same time. Bakker quotes Mike Vallez, a pioneer and ‘evangelist for the sister church movement among North American Christians’ as saying that, while sister-church relationships are based on friendship, money is also a key factor: ‘It’s not about the money, yet it’s always about the money’ (Bakker 2014:200). Vallez articulates this friend-but-also-a-donor duality as it can be felt by the external partner. This duality, that of being a friend, but a friend who could dramatically improve your circumstances, is clearly understood and navigated by church leaders in Mbale.

Pastor Stephen:	Mostly, people think that if you go to America you can get there a friend, and after getting there a friend he can support you.
Interviewer 1:	Your life can change.
Pastor Stephen:	And life can change.
Interviewer 2:	So they go to look for partners?
Pastor Stephen:	Yes.
Interviewer 2:	And what they believe, pastors here in Uganda believe that going to America…
Pastor Stephen:	Pastors in Uganda believe that going to America you will not fail to get a what? a friend and after getting a friend then when you come back, now I think
Interviewer 2:	Your status changes.
Pastor Stephen:	Your status will change. [Laughter] (289)

Pastor Dennis explains how pastors across Uganda perceive America and churches in America, employed a description straight from the Bible:

> So [for Ugandan pastors] the Promised Land is not Canaan as we read on the scripture, the Promised Land now becomes America. A land that is flowing with milk and honey because “ministry is thriving”. In fact if you hear people’s prayers very well they pray for a God who stays in America. They may not say it out rightly, but God lives in America, because America is the land. (D003)

Other church leaders perceive dehumanizing greed in the attitudes and actions of their fellow pastors when they see a potential benefactor:

Pastor Peter:	Another one I want to add. Most pastors in urban areas when they see a Muzungu they all think about material wealth. When Muzungu comes they discuss all about … they might discuss about God, but they'll take an advantage of getting materials from him.
Bishop Daniel:	Yes. For us, milking. We usually say that. (029)

Starting with the 'milking' description used by the Bishop, and taking the small step implicit in his analogy, we can see that a partner is like a cow, an animal widely found around Mbale which provides a variety of useful goods and services to the individual and family which owns it. In that sense, then, a local-to-local relationship is, for the church leader in Mbale who own it, a means of production for himself and his church family. Whereas some American partners in Bakker's study felt that 'interpersonal relationships between members' of partnering congregations were "ends in themselves"', church leaders in Mbale generally engage in and appreciate these relationships as a means to other ends (2014:144).

Missionaries and Christian community development practitioners, in my experience, understand and agree with this 'milking' analogy, while also reacting quite negatively to the instrumental relationships that it represents. They also castigate less-experienced foreigners and visitors for their ignorance of the fact that they are a cow.

Upon reflection, I find this disdain largely unwarranted, even somewhat duplicitous. After all, the ministries and livelihoods of missionaries and (somewhat more indirectly) foreign aid workers are based on instrumental friendships. A missionary is deeply embedded in a set of instrumental friendships with individuals and churches who support their ministry. Their friendships can be genuine, but there is no denying that they are instrumental. I myself chose to invest in such relationships because they bring the financial support that enables me to do ministry. As one who has been 'milking' my friends for many years, I have little ground to judge Mbale pastors for doing the same. The challenges of milking a foreign cow are undoubtedly greater, but the underlying motivation is similar.

Interestingly, the data points to the fact that African 'cows' are different from their overseas counterparts. In a number of ways, inter-African relationships deviate significantly from the profile of overseas ones. For one, inter-African relationships are

much less likely to feature funds than overseas relationship.[5] Despite this, they suffer no corresponding drop in level of happiness vis-à-vis overseas partnerships. The most likely explanation is that Mbale church leaders enter into an inter-African relationship with greater familiarity and a different set of expectations that they do an overseas relationship.

OWNERSHIP OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION

The word *ownership*, while borrowed from marketplace vocabulary, is nonetheless a key concept in Mbale pastors' mental categorization of local-to-local relationships. *Ownership* may sound surprising when the existent literature emphasizes the bonds of friendship and mutuality which develop between the partners. Clearly, friendship is a deep component of these relationships; at the same time, however, these relationships are *owned.* An essential question a pastor must ask her/himself, with regards to external relationships is "who owns the relationship? Whose friend is this?" To the extent that a pastor *owns* the friendship, this is a direct relationship. If the primary friendship is with someone else, this is an indirect relationship.

Pastor James, for example, refers to a visiting Muzungu as his friend when that Muzungu is *his* visitor – invited and guided by himself. If, however, the Muzungu is primarily relating to James through another pastor, then James refers to the Muzungu not as a friend but simply as a 'visitor.' The vocabulary here is not the focus, but the conceptual division, signalled by the vocabulary, is important. The distinction between the two, between a visitor and a friend, is dichotomistic. If the Muzungu is a *visitor*, the rules of engagement actually forbid significant *friendship* between Pastor James and the Muzungu. The determinative factor in how James can relate to the visitor is *who this Muzungu belong to*, who *owns* the visitor.

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[5] Across the three categories of funding in the survey, churches reporting on an inter-African relationships were between one half and one quarter as likely to receive funding from their partner.

James: What I know, like now, we're coordinating, we direct *[referring to my presence as a Muzungu visitor in his church],* and I'm the one taking this friend of mine in my church. So, there's nobody who cannot allow…who can… who can stop me to bring anything on my side.

Maybe if it has gone through them, that visitor… has gone to pastor Samuel, then he [Samuel] will come and see us. That one, I'm not allowed.

But like now, we can do, even this one *[myself visiting him]* we can do.

I will not deceive you because *[there is]* that chance *[with a visitor]* we might have, but the problem is: there's no how you can talk to that man, because those people *[pastors who brought the visitor]* also they're there, those pastors, this *[discussing]* they don't want.

And even when you're in evangelism, moving with them preaching, after preaching…you know when you're [done] preaching there are no more words, then after preaching you can sit as we've sit like this, then we discuss - but that one we're not allowed.

Mary: Which means…

James: We're not allowed. So, they *[hosting pastor]* might think that 'Uh, this one is coordinating with this one, they will bring the things through him.'

But now if I go to my friend … to benefit through him with my church, there's no problem. (103)

This sense of ownership, and the clear distinction between a friend and a visitor, manifest themselves in the hypothetical example that Geoffrey shared with me.

Geoffrey: But, now as I've got my friend like you and we go there *[to other churches/pastors]* and I say that 'I've got my visitors, they want to visit you, they're mine.' So, the other *[pastors]*, they will not even…they will not stop me. Because they're not for them. I'm the one who has taken my friends to them.

Interviewer1: But if they bring the visitor it is there, then maybe they don't want you to direct contact?

Mary: Yeah, if they bring, if they *[visitors]* come from someone else that person has to control, isn't it?

Geoffrey: Yes.

Interviewer2: But if they've come directly to you, you can control them.

Geoffrey: Yes, I'm the one in charge of that very time.

If a visitor is already in a relationship with another, then an attempt to form a friendship with that visitor will be seen as treasonous by those who consider themselves the owners of the relationship. These strict rules of engagement, which are widely understood (if not always scrupulously followed) by local church leaders and parishioners alike, bespeak these relationships as valuable assets, a means of production for sought-after goods. This implicit sense of ownership should not surprise us; after all, no church leader is going to acquire a cow and then allow their neighbour to drink all the milk.

Neither will a church leader leave their cow without a watchman looking after it. Because this relationship with an outsider is an asset of great value, it must be safeguarded from those who might usurp it. The visitor must be kept close, even kept from the view of those to whom the relationships does not belong. Speaking as one of those who do not

have such a relationship, Pastor Mathias laments that 'People … call themselves superior because they have a connection with those people abroad. And for the lowly people, they try to hide those things from us. They are the only ones who want to be seen' (L002).

This safeguarding is particularly crucial when the guests are repeat visitors. Another pastor observed that most local church leaders preferred non-repeating visitors to annual or regular visitors. For this reason, rapid site visits by visitors to other churches and pastors are not simply arranged for the comfort and convenience of the guests.

> Pastor Terry: Also a missionary who comes annually… is different from this one who comes once in a while. Along the way, this one who comes on annual conferences, he will get used, familiar with… the situation and will be very complicated, because he knows every corner. And that is why most pastors and bishops would want them to stay in the hotel. From the conference or from an event they have been doing, straight to the Prado *[4x4 vehicle]*.
> Interviewer 2: From Prado to the church, from church to hotel.
> Pastor Terry: And Pastor Peter *[the host pastor]* will make sure that I'm *[Pastor Terry]* not familiar with them, don't come closer to them. (228)

Bishop Mark was very explicit in his language and explanation of the control exerted over visiting partners:

> Bishop Mark: And maybe another thing, we-- the challenge is the pastors. So when a Muzungu comes through Bishop *[myself]*, I will love this Muzungu to be in Mbale, but only for *[my]* Church.
> Interviewer: Uh, uh. Yeah, yeah.
> Bishop Mark: You see? Sometimes or-- those are some of these things.
> Interviewer: Sure, we are building our kingdom, not God's!
> Bishop Mark: And then, the pastor will like to control this Muzungu. [*Visitor speaking:]* 'Today I went there and I have got a friend. We had a dinner.' *[The host pastor will reply:]* 'Who is that one? Who is that one? I think that those people now-- they, they want to mislead *[you]*.' That controlling, whatever. (803_0019)

This careful guarding (or, less charitably, controlling) of international visitors and of opportunities to build a relationship with (and thus benefit from) them mirrors what Maxwell observed in internationally-connected churches in Ghana:

> Opportunities to speak and study in the west are monopolised by the leadership, and international speakers visiting conventions are strictly chaperoned so that young pastors cannot ask them for bursaries and bible school places. Those who make it overseas are often overseers' children. (Maxwell 1998:367)

These relationships are guarded closely and are governed by tight rules of engagement. One pastor stated simply that once a fellow pastor gets a partner, 'the partner, it becomes his wealth. He *[the pastor]* will never allow you to play around with him *[the partner]*' (029). In the minds of pastors who have a friend from overseas, there

is a dualism at play in these friendships, because while the foreigner is indeed their friend, s/he is also their resource, their 'wealth.'

Brown flatly states that 'Intercultural congregation-to-congregation partnerships constitute an improvement to traditional STM *[short term mission]* because contact and communication is sustained for years' (2007:38). However self-evident that 'improvement' may seem among practitioners and scholars in the Global North, it does not seem to be a view shared widely in Mbale.

PRODUCTS

Churches compete for each of these customers by bringing products to market. One way they can do so is by means of an instrumental friendship, a local-to-local relationship. These relationships bring at least three products to their owners. Listed in reverse order of importance, are 1) new bible teachings and new ideas, 2) prestige and influence, and 3) money and physical resources.

The first product, new teachings and ideas, primarily caters to a church's current customers. The second product, prestige and influence, is generally aimed at increasing market share among Christians and at expanding the market through evangelism. The third product, money and material resources, is the most highly valued product of local-to-local relationships because it appeals to all customers in the marketplace, including current church members and potential customers and marketplace regulators. Let's look at each of these three products and the specific customers in the marketplace to whom these products are marketed.

New Bible Teachings and New Ideas

People everywhere are curious and eager for something new.

Reverend John: No, when they *[local people]* hear that the Muzungu is coming they want to come to you to see Bazungu. Even when you came, outside didn't you see that there were some children looking at you 'Muzungu Muzungu'

[Laughter]

Reverend John: So with our congregation, we shall benefit from a big congregation [Laughter] and then we tell them the word. Some of us when we speak, they are over used to us, they want someone new, they want to hear what happens there overseas. (100)

Beyond mere curiosity, though, church leaders express appreciation for the new teaching and 'special anointing' of visitors that bears spiritual fruit:

Pastor Jonas: The difference that we see, when those brethren from outside come, aaah, the place gets transformed, as you see. When a visit*[or]* comes home, there is a difference that is created with the owners of the home!

Interviewer: Yes

Pastor Jonas: Yes, things change, we preach the same gospel, but because people have come with a special anointing, you see that people continue to get saved.

Interviewer: Okay

Pastor Jonas: Why I say that, even Jesus our Lord, when he was in his place, the people did not believe him, and he went to a different place. That's why in a place when a new person comes, people listen to him/her so much and they enjoy it. That's why we need friends like those to come and when they come, you see people's minds and speeches change and they get saved! (L003)

At the same time, much of the teaching can miss the mark. Pastor Paul relates the story of when he co-taught alongside an invited Muzungu speaker.

Pastor Paul: The rural church, they find it strange. He gets up to preach but he's using only 15 minutes. By the time people are beginning to settle to begin to hear, he's finished and goes to sit. And then I took over from there. My brother was interpreting for me also. I was speaking English and he was interpreting.

Interviewer: Okay, so the guest could understand.

Pastor Paul: Yeah. And the response of the congregation was completely different. Because when this one was teaching they were all quiet. When I started to preach it was a different kind of response! Afterwards he was like, "You people can do better in teaching here than we do." I told them that's not new, we understand these people better and we invite you to come and see and get to understand how we fellowship here and maybe get opportunity to interact with them, but not necessarily that you're going to come and teach and introduce something new.

Because we have pastors who have gone to Bible schools, some who have gone across to your countries to study. If it means I have come across a concerning doctrine, they can dig it out. If it's something concerning Bible, whatever, they can dig it out. (012)

When Whites engage in grass-roots evangelism, the results, while seemingly impressive to outsiders, can in fact prove to be counter-productive in the longer-term:

Sometimes when you white people, like when you go to the field to evangelize, people switch off from the word of God and they begin thinking about their mountains *[challenges]*

> they have, 'I think this man can solve my mountains, I think this man can help me.' So they don't listen to the word. Or even when you make an altar call, they come, they want to make an impression to you. But it happens that you just go after that one week, you go when you are very encouraged, you have a good testimony but the people who came to Christ are not genuine Christians. They did not really make a decision because they heard the word and the Word had pierced their hearts, but because they want to impress this Muzungu, to give them something.
>
> So you go back and praise God, 'God used me!' But the work on the ground is not there. And you leave these people in church and when they see the Muzungu is always no longer there, nothing is happening, they go back. And the Bible says it's better for them if they had not come to Christ than coming and backsliding. It's worse, they become hard-core, I mean more resistant to the gospel than before. (003)

Like the scenario above, David Livermore documents how the American Christians who go cross-culturally to engage in Christian education/teaching often come away with much greater perceptions of their own communicative effectiveness as compared to the private feedback of the cross-cultural listeners who have sat under their teaching. Livermore quotes one Latin American church leader as saying:

> It was a nice day but I don't think what they taught would ever work here. But if it makes them feel like they can help us in ways beyond supporting our ministry financially, we're willing to listen to their ideas. (*[Livermore's]* paraphrase—"We endured it for the money!"). (2004:459)

Livermore's choice of the word 'enduring' to paraphrase the pastor's feedback is perhaps a bit harsh, but is also incisive in that it points to a deeper motive that lies behind the invitation to come and teach. Teaching is appreciated or in some cases, tolerated, but it is not the most valuable product that local-to-local connections bring to the market. There is a longer and deeper motive at work. According to Pastor Andrew, teaching opens the door for a partner to come and 'identify the needs':

> Pastor Terry: So most pastors and church leaders, they see a *[local]* pastor preaching and they say, "Yes, he's a very good preacher but he lacks the financial muscle to boost the ministry." So the expectation of everyone towards the Muzungu is like, "You come, but come and help me in this area. Teach, yes, but as you teach identify the needs." Your only reason for coming is like, see for yourself.
>
> Interviewer 1: Yeah preaching is the invitation to get you involved, but the real need behind or underneath is 'See the need, raise money for the need.'
>
> Pastor Terry: Partner with the church and helping it to grow. Otherwise, there won't be reason for me to call you to come and teach. (228)

After the needs are identified, and if/when financial contribution(s) are given towards identified needs, there are ample reasons to invite the partners to continue visiting to either teach or evangelize:

> Interviewer 1: How can they help with the evangelism and church planting?
>
> Pastor Noah: I think there is no much benefit from our side, but from their side they want to see where that dollar, their money is.
>
> Interviewer1: Because they're giving, they want to see what is happening and to take part of that?
>
> Pastor Noah: From their perspective I think it is important that they come and witness and they get go back home encouraged, so I think from their perspective they are trying to come and see that.
>
> Interviewer1: I guess what I am asking is this, from your honest perspective, the average team that comes, what percent of what they do is their own benefit? Or what percentage they do is for actual benefit here?
>
> Pastor Noah: I think in terms of their contributions. Given the social economic difference, people benefit in that area because they bring resources. But when it comes to preaching the word, sharing, I don't think the locals benefit a lot. (293)

Visitors can bring new ideas and even a special anointing when they come and teach or evangelize in Mbale. But cultural and language barriers also inhibit their effectiveness. While often appreciated, there are other, better reasons to invite a partner to come and teach, reasons which may not be immediately apparent to the visitor themselves. One reason is that visitors bring prestige to the host and visitors to the church.

Prestige and People

Several years ago, while travelling across America, my family visited a church in a town in Idaho, U.S.A. With us on our journey was King, our Ugandan friend and former church member, now a student-missionary in America. We took advantage of King's presence with us to have him share his music and speak about his ministry to the church. Upon our departure, my pastor friend thanked me for preaching in his church, but told me that the indisputable highlight of the visit was King's presence and sharing to the congregation. Similar forces working in reverse shape interactions when a Muzungu visits a church in Mbale:

> When the white man or white woman comes and tries to teach something, even the one who doesn't want to listen will listen. Even a Muslim will listen, will give you ears to listen from a white man, but will not give this black pastor. If you find a hard one, will give you the ears, attention, and then listens. That's another experience that I've found out. (228)

Not only non-believers and lay Christians and are willing to lend their ears to hear from a White. The visit of a Muzungu occasions a conference, and opportunity to gather other church leaders together.

> You know that *[with]* a Muzungu comes people. He has the funds and so he starts organizing conferences and whatever churches gather together … and when he comes here he has got in touch with a number of pastors because he has brought together pastors and you know that time when you see Muzungu, a Muzungu comes people. (012)

In Mbale, like elsewhere, such conferences raise the profile and prestige of pastors among their peers. As the Bishop explains,

> Prestige also has created something, because now when you come to my church, I feel I should make the biggest church out of your presence. People should recognize your presence, I go over the radios and announce 'we have Bazungu…' maybe *[announcing]* from where, and all that kind of thing. Now at the end of the day, my church will grow big. (206)

The people and prestige that a local-to-local friend brings to a church leader in Mbale are more highly valued products than the new teachings and ideas which also come with these friendships. Yet the local people who come across the threshold of the church also come with expectations, often involving an expectation of help.

> Pastor Stephen: Especially like this big one *[church]*, they think that when I go there, and also there is in this church there are Bazungu coming there, I think I will be helped in a certain way,
>
> Interviewer1: So when you are the pastor who is living here, who is trying to lead this church, if the Muzungu comes and they don't help *[financially]*, I don't know – it make your job harder?
>
> Pastor Stephen: No, it doesn't make it harder, it can make people come in the church, because people might think that let me go to that church because it has, that church has, friends outside. But when a Muzungu comes people think, they have that motive of thinking that a Muzungu will help, and maybe if he comes and he does not help, still it helps.
>
> Interviewer1: At least more people have come.
>
> Pastor Stephen: Yes. Now when they see any Muzungu coming, they think that those are part of the Bazungu who normally come. (289)

Prestige and Marketplace Regulators

The prestige of a Muzungu also helps local church leaders with marketplace regulators, because a relationship with overseas patrons brings confidence and respect from the government. Officials believe that when there are Muzungus connected to the ministry that it will go smoothly, and that it helps the people so that the government won't have to

take care of these people and these needs. This helps to 'grease the wheels' of doing business with the government locally.

Respondent:	And that is the one of the thing which can, you know sometimes why even here people believed in the Muzungu so much. Most of the-the-the behind people.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Respondent:	They believe in Muzungu so much. Even the government. Actually, people or whatever, the image of Bazungu is still okay.
Interviewer:	Yeah.
Respondent:	That is why I have told you that if people see anything being done with the involvement of a Muzungu, and they see a Muzungu on the ground, they will have confidence in that thing that this thing is going to work.
Interviewer:	Yeah, yeah.
Respondent:	You see? "This thing is going to work." That's why today even in the government, I for-- a white man came and say, "I want this, this place here. I'm going to use it. I want to develop, I want to do whatever." Of course even the government, they have trust. (803-0019)

Even when financial or physical resources are not brought by the Muzungu, the presence of an overseas partner can still bring benefits to those around her/him. Paul Kollman draws upon the literature of "white privilege" in the United States in reflecting on the position of western missionaries operating in Uganda specifically, and from a place of privilege more generally (2009). When Kollman asked why he was given a spacious front seat in the mini-bus taxi, the driver replied, '"Ssebo [Luganda for 'sir'], with your white face here in the window the police do not stop this vehicle at road-blocks."' The driver uses his white passenger's position of social privilege in Uganda to benefit them both – Kollman received a more comfortable seat, and the driver dealt with fewer stops and shakedowns by the traffic police (Kollman 2009:905). Just like the taxi driver uses his Muzungu passenger to ease his navigation through police road blocks, Mbale pastors use their partners' social privilege to ease their navigation of, and relationships with, local government bureaucracy and regulations.

Money and Physical Resources

The opportunity afforded by an overseas friendship to fund the development of the church, advance the ministry, and even improve one's standard of living is the single most important motivation for church leaders in seeking out and engaging with their co-religionists from overseas. Jonathan, a senior faculty member of a local Christian

university, was very forthright in his assessment of the central purpose relationships with outsiders. He said that 'money will be at the centre of everything because that is what they [church leaders] expect' (B003).

Pastor James bluntly agrees:

Pastor Harold: I think money coming in is okay because if it does not come in you are out of place a lot [laughing, laughing], you are living in a different world.
Interviewer: Yeah so you would say is pretty much if there is a relationship that you have, or that any church here has with someone from the Netherlands, from Romania, from USA…
Pastor Harold: It must involve money.
Interviewer: It must involve money…
[laughing a lot]
Pastor Harold: [laughing] Because the actual, the actual preaching of the word is being done locally. Actually we are planning our teaching and we are doing the preaching.
Interviewer: So, I plant a church everyone will come?
Pastor Harold: Absolutely.
Interviewer: And if I leave there is no lasting effect, there is nothing?
Pastor Harold: They will come they will say this is a *[USA]* church he's going to give us 1-2-3-4 things, so if you're going to come now to set up a partnership and you say in this partnership I'm just going to sit here … then what's the use? What's the use of it? In the first place, just leave it altogether. So really it must involve money, unfortunately *[if]* it is not involving, that voice peters out. That is the reality.
Interviewer: That is the reality…
Pastor Harold: It must have money. (008)

The transfer of funds in these relationships, if not universal, is certainly prominent. The telephone survey asked church leaders about funds received from their overseas relationships. Responses were recorded for three types of funding categories, firstly funds for the church or church members, secondly for the community or for community outreach, and thirdly for any other purpose.

For those churches which chose to report on a current local-to-local relationships, just over one half (50.8%) of them reported having received at least one of the three types of funding from their overseas partner, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Local-to-local Relationships and Funds Received

	Types of Funds Received from Partner					SUBTOTALS	
	None	1 type	2 types	3+ types	TOTALS	No Funds	Funds
No. of Respondents	32	26	3	4	65	32	33
Percentages	49.2%	40.0%	4.6%	6.2%	100.0%	49.2%	50.8%

The above table records responses to one outside relationship in a church, rather than to all of their outside relationships collectively. These churches have an average of 2.66 outside relationships, meaning that the overall amount of funds is likely to be correspondingly higher than the reported numbers in a given church. The true number is higher still because survey by its very nature can only measures funds given in the past through this relationship, and cannot measure the prospect of receiving funds in the future. This survey shows that, for that minority of churches which have not yet received funds from their partner(s), the prospect of doing so in the future is very real, and indeed chapter five shows that this prospect brings real hope and motivates prayers.

When looking deeper at the transfer of funds in these relationships, it is helpful to do so in a comparative fashion. There are two main ways in which the *local-to-local* relationships I seek to parse are distinct from other relationships included in the survey: they are *overseas* as opposed to *intra-African*, and they are *local-to-local* rather than *traditional.*[6] In order to help focus in on and build a picture of local-to-local, overseas relationships as experienced by churches, I proceed below in a comparative fashion over and against traditional and intra-African relationships.

When it comes to funding 'to assist or help your church or church members', churches with traditional overseas partnerships are twice as likely (105% differential) to receive such funds are their local-to-local counterparts, a result that is roughly what we would expect given the overall higher frequency of funding in traditional relationships. From that point, though, the differences between the two groups only grow, as shown in Figure 4.1. Asked whether their church had received funds 'for outreach or benefit to the community,' those with traditional relationships were three times more likely (205%

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[6] Those churches whose survey respondent indicated that their partnership entailed any of the following: a hired professional working for the partnership, an office with a sign of the partner or partnership, or a vehicle(s) with the logo of the partner or partnership.

differential) to answer affirmatively. Lastly, these same churches were almost eight times more likely (676% differential) to receive funds 'for any other activity.'

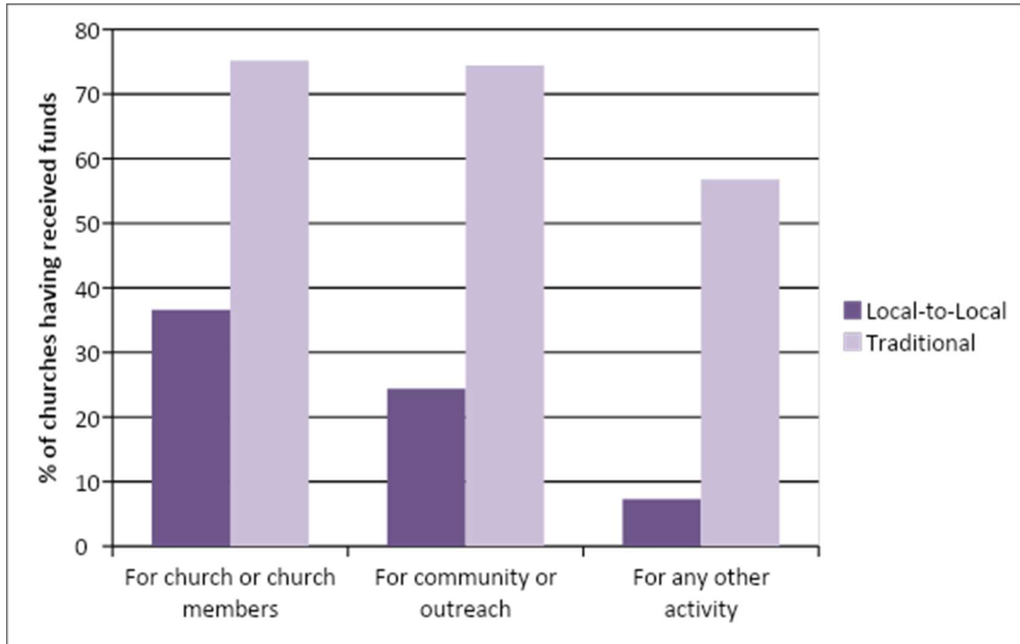

Figure 4.1 Likelihood of Funding by Purpose, Traditional v Local-to-Local

It is clear, then, that funding is a very significant part of the partnership picture. We see that, while the overall diversity and frequency of funding was decidedly lower in local-to-local relationships, the funds that were given were more likely to be for the benefit of the church itself and/or the church members themselves. Funding for the local church in local-to-local relationships was by itself more than the other two funding categories combined. In traditional relationships, the church was more often a funding vehicle both for community objectives and for other, unspecified objectives. Their funding priorities reflected this, with giving for community and other objectives nearly twice as common as giving to the church itself.

From this we see that both the activities and the funding of local-to-local partners is more centred on the church itself as the end-goal, whereas traditional relationships are more likely to focus on the wider community via the church. This picture fits more nicely

with the theme in the Western literature of local-to-local being more relationally oriented than traditional engagements.

At the same time, we must remember that this apparent relational focus in local-to-local partnerships does not correspond to higher relational happiness. Instead, the happiness of the local partner appears to be more tied to the funding than it is to the relational component of the overseas partnership equation.

Literature Review: Products from Partnership

Writing from North America about short-term mission (STM) teams which travel abroad, Priest concludes that Christians who are recipients of these visitors benefit in three ways. His findings concur to a large extent with this study of the local-to-local mission phenomenon (2010).[7] Priest contents that

> For Christians aboard who receive and partner with visiting STM teams, three of the most common benefits of linking capital are (1) shared resources, (2) open doors and enhanced credibility, and (3) strategic leverage for change and social justice. Each of these three areas represents good to which short-term missions can contribute. (2010:99)

In Peru, Priest finds that the contributions of STM teams is first and foremost as a resource transfer mechanism; I have found the same within the local-to-local relationships in Mbale. I agree with Priest that visitors open doors and enhance credibility, and that this 'good' is of secondary importance. Priests third category of STM 'goods' as 'leverage for change and justice' also matches up with the findings here: his two supportive anecdotes, from Peru and Kenya, both involve overseas visitors prompting action by government officials, similarly to how visitors lend prestige to Mbale church leaders in their dealings with local government officials (2010).

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[7] Priest's research of STM includes American short-term teams which travelled to Peru as part of a long-standing, Church-to-church partnership. Thus his working definition of STM teams is quite inclusive and has contours close to my own local-to-local research focus.

When it comes to material resources, this research concurs with what many have found (Maranz 2001; Anon 2009; Lederleitner 2010; Bonk 2006; Reese 2010; Schwartz 2007; Rowell 2006; Allen 1912; Bush 1990) that funds and material resources are often central to both the motivations and challenges of modern mission. To a lesser extent, this has also been acknowledged in the literature on local-to-local expressions of mission (Moodie 2013; Miller 2003; Bakker 2014; Ross 2008; Priest 2010).

On the whole, however, this finding does not sit easily with much of the local-to-local literature from the West, particularly when that literature gives voice to the participants and practitioners. The American sister church participants interviewed in Bakker's study, for example, indicate that money and funds transfers from richer to poorer congregations is a secondary concern. Bakker quotes one of her study participants as saying that 'we focus more on relationships than on programmes or giving money.' In his study of Iowa congregations engaged in partnership with counterparts in Tanzania, Cline insists that church-to-church 'companionship is not about money but is about accompaniment' (2006:ii).

This study reveals this statement to be, at best, half accurate. For the point of view of Mbale pastors, friendships with Christians from overseas churches are genuine, but instrumental, friendships; access to financial resources through the friendship plays a central role in the motivations for and shape of the relationship. Friendship itself is not primary. John Mbiti has no doubt about the primary motivation for involvement with missionaries: 'the church', he observes, 'tolerates' foreign missionaries because the power and wealth which bring them to Africa resides outside Africa' (Heaney 2013:36).

Cline's assertion that money is not central to accompaniment, on the other hand, reflects the predominant view of western partners. His statement needs adjusting on two fronts: not only with regard to the perceived marginality of money, but also with regard to the centrality of accompaniment. Indeed, this research finds that many church leaders

prefer partners who visit them relatively infrequently, lest both their visitors and their visitor's generosity become much more difficult to protect and control.

In his study of Ukrainian-American church twinnings, Brown uncovered a great deal of ambiguity, on both sides of the partnership, around the transfer of material resources. He found that the Ukrainian partners in church twinning relationships 'tended to hope to form relationships that would lead towards opportunity to discuss ministry ideas and funding needs' (2007:267). However, 'the American congregation was assumed to have total control over the choice to give financial assistance or to refuse to do so.' Unfortunately, 'the relationships didn't seem to progress to a point at which this assumption could be challenged' (2007:245) The result was uncertainty and exacerbated inequalities of power between the partnering churches. The American churches in the study felt that 'it would be inappropriate' to give because of the fear of creating dependency; either that, or they 'tried to diminish differences between Ukraine and the United States' in terms of resources and income disparities. They 'don't want it "to be about money"' (Brown 2007:268).

It follows, then, that in two of Brown's three case studies, communication around money was minimal, probably because it would inevitably be an uncomfortable discussion, and therefore easiest avoided. Nevertheless, 'the congregation with the greater material-resource base tended to have the most power in the relationship' (2007:269).

Minimizing communication about the reality of economic inequality, because that reality is difficult and uncomfortable, does not, of course, change reality. The unequal power dynamics do not disappear, but rather go subaltern, with regrettably predictable results: 'when the congregation with more power ignores or denies reality, they end up abusing power in the relationship' (Brown 2007:269). This occurred despite the fact that

'most Americans involved would say that they strive to be '"field driven"... [and] would deny being in control of the relationship' (Brown 2007:248).

GATEKEEPERS IN THE MARKETPLACE

The radical decentralization that Ross (2008) rightly observes in Western mission looks less radical when standing on the ground in Mbale. Here, the changes in mission practice appear to be more of an evolution, one which has steadily removed expatriate missionaries and NGO professionals as gatekeepers and shifted that role to a top tier of local church leaders. These leaders have now taking on many of the same functions that expatriate gatekeepers once fulfilled by controlling the resources, reporting, and the narrative of these relationships. Rather than being at the mercy of an international NGO or White missionary in their overseas partnerships, today many church leaders are beholden to their fellow countryman and fellow clergyman:

> We've seen very many rural churches who are depending on the mercy of the urban pastors with whom they're working with. Which is why, like where we're from, they *[urban pastors]* said if we bring anybody here we must report, report everything. (170)

These pastors, whom I term the New Gatekeepers, generally stand on top of the local religious hierarchy. This hierarchy, particularly with regard to local-to-local relationships, starts with the educated, urban, and technologically savvy pastor at the top and the rural and less educated pastors filling out the lower ranks.

> Even the Muzungu can come through another pastor in town. But expressing their *[rural church's]* needs can sometimes become a problem. Because like he has said, he *[rural pastor]* can express needs about the church and then the town pastor is going to present a different version of it all. (029)

Pastor Titus speaks of the differences between rural and urban pastors in terms of opportunities to form relationships with *Muzungu* Christians:

> Pastor Titus: *[These are]* two different realms all together, two different worlds. Education levels are completely different and also the exposure, like urban pastors are more exposed to Muzungu and…
> Interviewer: Yeah, have more opportunity.
> Pastor Titus: Yeah, so there are more opportunities. (029)

This divide between rural and urban, connected and disconnected is not solely about competition between the two. It also entails cooperation, though of an unequal sort. In this cooperation, the rural pastor occupies a lower rung of a hierarchical, cooperative relationship. As Pastor Titus says 'The rural pastor cannot compete favourably with the urban pastor, so in most cases they cooperate' (029). Despite the cooperation, he complains of the urban pastors who 'want to make a deal with the village pastor' to bringing a guest, in that the urban pastor 'limits us. He wants your *[guest's sense of]* need to stop on him, not on the real pastor' (029).

In the interview below, Gilbert, James and Mary are rural church leaders and elders from various churches who are speaking about their experience with overseas visitors and the urban pastors who accompany these visitors to their churches:

Gilbert: That is a big challenge.
James: Facebook, internet, they *[senior church leaders]* don't allow us.
Mary: [Laughter]
Interviewer: What happens if a partner from the US comes to visit the… church and you meet them, do you have the chance to interact and talk with them?
Gilbert: Yes
Interviewer: And after you have, you exchange contacts, are you allowed to communicate to them?
Gilbert: That is the problem. They *[senior church leaders]* don't want that, *[they want]* that we'll go through them.
[Laughter]
Interviewer: Because maybe…
Mary: After exchanging the contacts, how do they hinder you from talking to them direct?
Gilbert: You know for them, they think that now you will be above them. Because they want you to be under them. (103)

Despite the inequality of these relationships, cooperation is advantageous to both local parties. A new gatekeeper wants to have other pastors as his/her clients to demonstrate vital ministry and influence to his/her visitors, and allow them to visit rural areas and churches without being stolen.[8] The junior pastor, in turn, can 'hope to receive something' (170).

At first appearance, the idea of senior church leaders acting as New Gatekeepers does not seem to fit with a conclusion presented in chapter two. If the former gatekeepers

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[8] See chapter six for more on the theft of Muzungus.

in the old model of mission – vocational missionaries and international agencies – have been replaced by new gatekeepers – more urban, educated pastors – then how can it be that 30% of all churches have local-to-local relationships overseas? Here we must distinguish between a *relationship* and a *gatekeeper* of relationships. It is not that 30% of the population of churches are functioning as gatekeepers; rather it is that many among this 30% are secondary beneficiaries in a relationship that is primarily owned by someone else.[9] That someone is another church leader, one who is their senior in this relationship and who functions as a gatekeeper in it by mediating between the Muzungu and the secondary beneficiaries, the junior pastors.

PATRONS AND CLIENTS IN THE MARKETPLACE

The function of these New Gatekeepers in local society is that of patrons. The patron-client relationship undergirds and enables the local-to-local expression of mission on the ground in Mbale, and is frequently visible in Born Again or Pentecostal churches.

Patron-Client Relationships in Africa and Uganda

Goldsmith and Brinkerhoff describe patron-client relationships as 'personal bonds…founded on mutual material advantage' which 'rest on a rational economic calculus more than a blind or personal loyalty' (2004:165). 'Clientism', they write, 'refers to a complex chain of personal bonds between … patrons or bosses and their individual clients or followers.' Most of the church leaders in this study echo their description of patrons in the modern world, in which 'patrons are not independent actors, but are links within a larger grid of contacts, usually serving as middlemen who arrange

[9] Some churches, as mentioned in chapter five, are also able to find friends overseas over the internet and social media, though such partnerships seem to be smaller in scale and shorter in duration.

exchanges between the local level and the national center' (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith 2004:165). In this study the patrons serve as middlemen who link themselves and their clients to international resources, rather than to the national centre. Their essential role as middlemen, however, is unchanged.

The primary agent in this landscape is the Big Man. Vincent's ethnographic study among the Teso described the rise of a 'strategic elite through completion for land and labor' (1971:13), local Big Men whom she variously names as a 'broker' and 'gatekeeper.' These Big Men are local leaders who control capital resources and labour (i.e. the means of production) and have the 'ability to limit the access of others to them' (1971:2–3). The Christian church in Mbale is similarly structured.

Patron-Client Relationships and Big Men in African Christianity

As in Mbale, patron-client relationships are endemic to most African Christianity, nowhere more so than among the many independent Pentecostal churches highly active in the local-to-local marketplace: 'Pentecostal Africans continue to rely on the informal institution of patron-client relationships to fulfil their expectations of direct material resources and personal allegiance' (McCauley 2013:20). Many scholars have noted that this big man patron-client phenomenon has found wide expression in the growth of various Pentecostalisms across sub-Saharan Africa (Smith 2001; Jones 2005; Lauterbach 2010; Bremner 2013). McCauley notes that Pentecostal movements often 'distinguish units not by denomination or theological interpretation, but instead by the individual pastor or Pentecostal leader himself' (McCauley 2013:11).[10]

[10] Not all Pentecostal movements and churches have adopted a big man leadership model. Padwick's research and service among the Roho or Holy Spirit Churches in Kenya, for example, shows a contrasting approach with dispersed leadership and community 'ownership' of local churches (Padwick 2003).

When, in an interview, Elder Emma talked about church leaders feeling like a 'big boss'(379), his words evoke the big man of African Charismatic churches, leaders that John McCauley also describes as 'Pentecostal patrons' (2013:20).

> In the context of conventional, ethnic-based big man rule, clients are paid in material resources, provided by the patron and drawn from the state. Patrons are rewarded, in exchange, with loyalty and allegiance that enables them to maintain authority. In the big man rule of charismatic Pentecostalism, however, payments may be immaterial or supernatural in nature.' (McCauley 2013:13)

In this present study, the payments received by clients from the big boss are a mix of material and immaterial: material resources and funds, people and prestige, new ideas and teachings.

This big man hierarchy in Mbale extends past the large, Charismatic Pentecostal churches that are the focus of McCauley's study. Beyond the confines of Pentecostal patrons, we find pastor-patrons more widely in Mbale, both within more hierarchical denominations and in much more free-flowing independent churches. Patronage within the Church is hardly surprising when we consider that patron-clientage is widely expressed in both the social (Vincent 1971; Mwakikagile 2009; Reid 2017) and political (Tripp 2010; Beresford 2014; Green 2015) landscapes of Uganda as a whole.

Patron-client relationships are a common social structure, and like any social structure they have inherent weaknesses. One weakness endemic in the patron-client relationship is the tendency of the patron to advantage themselves at the (relative) expense of their clients. According to Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 'The patron has disproportionate power and thus wide latitude about how to distribute the assets under his control' which in turn 'leads to an unequal distribution of benefits and manipulation in the relationship', in which patrons 'take advantage of the limited information and autonomy' of their clients to advantage themselves first and foremost (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith 2004:166).

A similar dynamic is at work among Mbale churches in the local-to-local marketplace:

> Pastor Titus: My input as well in that, competition leads to manipulation. The rural pastor cannot compete favourably with the urban pastor, so in most cases they cooperate,

Interviewer 1: Right, okay.
Pastor Titus: and in cooperating you cannot know what the urban pastors really up to. So...
Interviewer 1: So, you can only hope to receive something.
Pastor Titus: Eh, hope to receive something. But you're even careful not to annoy the urban pastor thinking you're under the mercy of that pastor.
Interviewer 1: Right.
Pastor Titus: And so, we've seen very many rural churches who are depending on the mercy of the urban pastors with whom they're working with. Which is why, like where we're from, they *[urban pastor]* said if we *[rural pastor]* bring anybody here, we must report, report everything.
Interviewer 1: Right.
Pastor Titus: Must report, because if you don't report they're going to question, "How did this come up?" or "How did this happen?" (029)

Later in the same discussion, this disadvantaging hierarchy comes up again.

Pastor Titus: If they *[host pastor]* come to the village, then they want to make a deal with the village pastor, like "I'm going to bring my guests and this is what is going to happen."
Interviewer 1: So the city pastor he will make a negotiation with the rural pastor?
Pastor Titus: Yes.
Interviewer 1: Okay.
Pastor Titus: Negotiating with the rural pastor, they can bring my guest, give them all the attention or whatever, whatever and they-
Interviewer 2: But don't present your needs.
Pastor Titus: Yes, don't present your needs.
Interviewer 2: He limits us.
Interviewer 1: Well then how do you…
Pastor Titus He wants your needs to only stop on him, not on the real pastor. So at the end of the day, it is him to express the needs of his church, not the rural pastor. (029)

The gatekeeper pastor in these local-to-local relationships can leverage their superior position in decision making and accessing information and resources in order to maximize their own benefit over that of their client pastors.

It is easy to lament this self-advantaging as wholly corrupt. Before pronouncing judgement, however, it must be understood that a level of resource inequality is expected, appropriate, and indeed indispensable to a well-functioning, hierarchical society that serves and protects all its citizens from top to bottom. According to Shero, community elders – the recognized, embedded leadership in local Masaaba society – must have greater material resources at their command in order to fulfil the roles expected of them by their clients. Shero's study reported that a key quality that people expect of their elders is to be a person of means. As one participant stated,

> 'You must have riches … you would have some cow, have goats, you have plenty …. Because when you, these people come, you have to feed them. You know for us, you feed free. You don't ask for money.' (2014:100)

When a community member has a problem or a celebration, a local leader must gather the community together, at their house and expense, and lead by example in that, as a local patron, 'you must give out more', so naturally 'you must have wealth' (2014:101).

In the same way, local church leaders are expected to both gather people in their community, and to lead the way in solving problems and sustaining their community. Church members expect that their church leader will take on this role and even offer them anticipatory compensation for it. For example, in a church denomination where the pastor received housing and a ministry stipend, the local church members planted maize on church-owned property to distribute to the members. At the harvest, the members agreed together to allocate the largest share to their relatively-affluent pastor (104).

PARTNERS AS ALIEN, ANCILLARY PATRONS

Overseas partners fit naturally into the patron social category; at the same time, their patronage is fundamentally different from that of indigenous patrons in that they are overseas, or alien, patrons. When overseas partners are on the ground in Mbale, their access to local information and decision-making autonomy is very limited compared to that of a big man; indeed, it is limited even when compared to that of the local clients of the big man. Nor are they embedded in the local context, either through owning land, settling disputes or hosting local celebrations. Thus their patronage is both alien and ancillary. That does not change the basic fact, however, that they are patrons.

Partners as Patrons

In their mental ordering of the social and religious hierarchies in Mbale, my interviewees largely situated their overseas friends and visitors as above themselves. They also widely acknowledged that this was not an inherent inequality so much as an inescapable material one.

Pastor Paul: Ideally, we are supposed to be equal.

Interviewer: But in reality?

Pastor Paul: In reality we are not, as I said before. Yes they come, they are partners, verbally they declare we are equal, but in reality on the ground they are our bosses. What makes them bosses over us, it is the economic muscle, the financial muscle, is what makes them control us. The power of the economy, that one you cannot ignore. And that one becomes the controlling factor.

But ideally and by principle we are supposed to be equal. But practically, because of our financial constraints, they are our bosses. So we dance according to their tune. They play the music and we are the ones to dance. (C003)

Pastor Paul speaks into some of the central points that come out of this research. Firstly, is how control is exercised through 'financial muscle', and how that control is felt by local leaders as dancing to the tune played by the outside partner. Secondly, that the 'power of economy' is an inescapable reality. It cannot be ignored. While partnership equality is hypothetically possible, it seems that translating that into actual practice is very difficult if not impossible.

Because of the inescapable financial gulf between themselves and their overseas partners, only three of the initial 23 interviews with local-to-local church leaders clearly affirmed a belief that their partnerships with their overseas partner was a relationship between equals. One of these three was the senior-most leader of a denomination in the top tier of globally-connected (and therefore wealthy) church associations in Mbale. This church leader had travelled abroad extensively through his denomination, was active in local politics, and was well connected locally. In other words, this leader was something of a big, Big Man in Mbale, not just in his church community or denomination.[11]

The two other church leaders who clearly affirmed actualized equality with overseas partners did so on spiritual grounds. It is in the spiritual realm where local church leaders are more likely to consider themselves as true equals or even relative superiors. According to Reverend John,

> It is only the devil which has brought this because when you look at the church in developed countries, in Europe and America, you will compare it with development – social economical, technological.

[11] Interestingly, and I believe not coincidentally, the particular local denomination to which this senior leader belonged was birthed out of three generations of denominational splits, each divorce stemming from conflicts over funds and funding flowing in from overseas partners.

> There in those spheres they have gone very far. But why is it that in religion they are down? [Laughter] (100)

Such travel gives local church leaders – albeit only the top tier of gatekeepers – the opportunity to share their deep spirituality and faith with the world.

> Pastor Jenneth: I just feel that God sending me there is to share the God I have tested, I've experienced, to them.
> Interviewer 1: Amen.
> Pastor Jenneth: Yeah, that's what I feel, and that's what I did. I shared the God I've seen. (170)

Pastor Jenneth is here referring to her travel for ministry in mainland China. She clearly felt that people needed and appreciated what she had to give. The vocabulary that Pastor Jenneth uses to describe her audience in China is strikingly similar to that of overseas partners who come and teach in Africa. She reported that 'they're very hungry and thirsty. These are people who can sit, even if you tell them 'Let us stay here for the whole week.' No going out, no eating, they're very willing' (170). According to Mary and James, one of their denominational pastors went to preach in America, and 'he touched the hearts of those people' and 'many people get saved' (104). The fact that, according to Mary, in some ways 'he acted as a tourist attraction' did not diminish God's work through him (104).

I think Mary is right. Beyond the undeniable novelty of hearing a Ugandan preacher, Mbale Christians have a distinct comfort and ability to navigate in the meta-physical realm, terrain which is less familiar for many Asian (particularly Chinese) and Western Christians. For example, one pastor related the story of a young Christian man from the West who stayed in Mbale after the rest of his short-term teammates had departed, because he wanted to stay on and do prayer and evangelism ministry house-to-house. He was given instructions to always do so accompanied by local Christian, because 'we try to protect the what? the partner' (333). Ignoring these instructions, he went to pray in a home and was beset upon by a demon-possessed man. Having accidentally 'tapping the leg of the demons' in a local home and not being prepared for

this type of spiritual encounter, he had to be rescued by his hosting pastor after he was beaten (333).

Whether it is an ignorance of demonic activity by western Christians with worldviews steeped in Cartesian dualism, or an ignorance of the Holy Spirit among eastern Christians educated in a secular, Marxist system, the spirituality of Church leaders in Mbale is something fresh and new for many overseas:

> Like when I was in China, I don't blame them and I don't despise them, but it was like they're still very, very young spiritually. Whatever I tell them, when you even tell them about the Holy Spirit, somebody is amazed to hear about the Holy Spirit. So you have to sit and tell him the Holy Spirit. They could come, I pray with them. Then I hear the Spirit of God telling me A, B, C, 'this is what you fear' … I tell you exactly what you are doing through. With them, they don't know, so they ask you 'Pastor, how do you get to know what I am going through?' You also just have to tell them 'I also don't know but the One in me is the one who revealed in me that this and this and this. (170)

That many African church leaders have come to embrace their spiritual equality is encouraging. Nevertheless, Mbale partners still generally regard overall equality as a hypothetical truth. In the real world, their friends overseas are patrons who, as seen earlier, enable them to expand their ministries and improve their lives.

Partners as Ancillary Patrons

Overseas partners provide an ancillary, supplementary patronage which feeds into the local patronage system. As ancillary patrons, they are generally more hidden from public view, behind the local patrons they support.

From the perspective of local consumers of religious goods, they are not the highly-visible company CEOs; nonetheless, they occupying a supplemental though well-known and powerful post in the local hierarchy. In their role as ancillary patrons, the Whites stand far above ordinary Christians and even lower-level church leaders and, in shrouded and unknowable ways, they resource the big men, the patron-pastors to whom these Christians more immediately and centrally relate. Each patron-pastor, in turn, is socially-

bound to ensure that their client Christians receive some benefits from the ancillary patronage of the Whites.

In particular, the ancillary patronage of the White's serves to strengthen the status of the partnering church leader. This local leader will increase in status, often with a widening clientele beneath him/her. Elder Emma relates that an association with a White man can make one feel like a 'big boss':

Interviewer 2: When a White man comes like my brother John here, most African people look at him from the perspective that you said – of money, isn't it? [Widespread agreement] So if you associate with him, then you are associating with money.

Elder Emma: And you *[the one who associates with the White]* will feel like a big boss. (379)

The language used by the Elder Emma here is striking. Bishop Ezra, speaking from his personal experience, agrees with Emma, though he shields himself by voicing his experience in the plural and third person tenses:

> For us, we *[the church]* sold our day care and they *[the Muzungus partners]* constructed a very big school. And in fact, even themselves, they came. They stay around. That we are doing manual work. Uh, carry and mixing the sand with whatever. They sat there, in the sand. And moreover for us here, a pastor, you feel now you are a boss. You have to tuck in and begin coming and supervise once in a while: 'Eh, do this, do this, ah.' (B005)

Two things stand out in this quote. Firstly, the patronage of Bishop Ezra' partners made him feel that he is now a boss who can and should command and supervise. Secondly, while Bishop Ezra expressed a certain admiration that his Muzungu donors wanted to carry out manual work, and even sat down to rest in the sand, he admitted that 'it looks funny' to himself and others witnessing the spectacle of these Whites at work (B005).

To myself, as a researcher, this also looks like Bishop Ezra's guests did not see themselves as a part of the Patron-Client hierarchy, or that if they did, they choose to operate on the familiar terrain of Western, egalitarian social constructs. Bishop Ezra, on the other hand, having understood the obligations of his enhanced social status, takes up his expected role as a 'boss' and feels a certain obligation to 'tuck in' and start giving orders.

Literature Review: Equality and Mutuality

In much of the existing scholarly literature and practitioner, local-to-local mission is presented as an essentially fraternal, rather than hierarchical, relationship.

Academic studies which investigate the Western side of the local-to-local relationship assert this type of partnerships gives the church a 'framework of mission built upon interconnectedness and mutuality' (Madden 2019:170) that is 'grounded upon solidarity and mutuality' (Mensah 2019:83) resulting in 'a palpable sense of fellowship' with their overseas partner (Ahlberg 2005:III). Bakker admirably moderates her own voice and judgements in her descriptive thesis, but finds that 'many northern proponents of sister church relationships speak of their coreligionists in the global South as "brothers and sisters" in an effort to encourage solidarity' (2014:132–3).

The congregant studies by Bakker in America employ similar language to practitioners in the United Kingdom, which characterize local-to-local and sister church relationships with words and phrases such as 'friendship' (Presbyterian Church in Ireland 2014:4), 'mutuality' (Haney 2006:207), and 'reciprocity' (Smith 2006:8). The Church of Scotland plainly states that 'congregations come together as equals' (The Church of Scotland 2015) and the Presbyterian church in Ireland advises parishioners in church twinning programs to 'come alongside' in a 'sibling rather than a paternal relationship' (Presbyterian Church in Ireland 2014:6).

Madden finds that his interviewees 'overwhelmingly expressed that the most important factor for their spiritual transformation through participation in global mission was relationships … with people in other countries' (Madden 2019:83). Supporting Madden, Mensah's study finds that relationships were core to the transformative experiences among her research subjects, who are also American (2019:131–132).

Whatever the precise terms and mental frames employed, notions of *egalitarian relationship* are pressed into service by both Western practitioners and academics to describe this new type of mission engagement. These words and mental frames are not altogether incorrect; rather, they speak from the vantage point of the lived experience of Western-world participants in local-to-local mission.

One Directional Travel and Transformation

What Madden and Mensah's studies have in common is that they document the impact of cross-cultural partnership among participants who had travelled to their partner's locations. That travel, or dislocation, is important in interpreting and, equally, in extending (or not extending) the validity of their results to the other partner in these relationships.

Having stepped out of their own cultures, pre-existing relationships, and comfort zones, the American partners has experienced a disruption which left them deeply and receptively exposed to new ideas, relationships and spiritual realities (Loder 1989). Madden documents the criticality of this disruption in participants in creating, within the compressed time-frame of a short term trip, deeper personal relationships with God, teammates, and host country nationals (2019). Cline finds a similar disruption at work in American, Lutheran congregants who travelled to Tanzania and thus 'gain distance from inhibiting stories and ways of life' (2006:ii).

Most travel in local-to-local partnerships, however, is uni-directional. Very few church leaders and almost no ordinary congregants in Mbale have had the opportunity to travel overseas to visit their partner. Such a trip is a prerequisite to undergoing the deep disruption and ensuing transformative experience observed by the studies mentioned above. Regrettably, it seems that this one-directional travel is even truer of local-to-local

relationships vis-á-vis traditional relationships. The telephone survey indicated that churches in traditional mission relationships were actually 58 percent (58%) more likely to have had members or leaders travel overseas to visit their partner than their local-to-local counterparts. This is problematic if local-to-local relationships are truly an expression of friendship as understood by local Christians.

> Pastor Simon: For us in Africa a friend is that person you in town *[who]* at least one time invite him at your place, at home he comes. Then when he comes one time, also he'll invite you to his place. Then you're friends.
> Interviewer 1: So after you know each other's homes then you're friends.
> Pastor Simon: Then we're friends. (318 & 320)

If travel is largely confined to overseas partners, then it follows that moments of transformation are also largely confined to overseas partners as well. Tellingly, in no interview did the participants express that they had undergone a transformative experience because of their partnership. The possible exception was a pastor who has travelled to China to minister there, and was deeply impacted by her experience. Others who had travelled overseas were, to varying degrees, also impacted by their travels. For the most part, however, church leaders locate the impact of their partnerships in their ministries and churches, rather than in themselves or their congregants.

When pastors in Mbale describe these impacts, they point first and foremost to the transformation or creation of physical infrastructure, whether that is as small as a regular supply of denominational magazines or as big as a new church building and pastor's house. Secondarily, church leaders also point to new congregants or new local levels of influence because of their partnership, and to new ideas and teachings for their members and the community.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I used the lens of a marketplace to illustrate the roles and relationships of overseas partners, local pastors, and Christians in Mbale. We saw that overseas partners are understood as alien, ancillary patrons who enhance the patronage of local church

leaders functioning as the New Gatekeepers in overseas partnerships. The ancillary patronage of overseas partners allows New Gatekeepers to produce three types of goods for the local religious marketplace: new teachings and ideas, increased prestige and people, and lastly money and physical resources. Local pastors engage in these relationships as genuine, if also instrumental friendships. In these friendships, the overseas friend is often impacted in highly personal, and even transformative ways. The Mbale friend, however, is much more likely to say that the friendship has had a positive on impacted their church and/or ministry. Because of the positive impact of these friendships, they are highly valued and jealously guarded by their local 'owner.'

As valued ministry assets, overseas friendships are actively pursued by local church leaders. In this next chapter, I will look at how these church leaders navigate technology to search out potential partnerships. Even as globalization has made such partnerships possible, it has also had a disparate, and indeed divisive, impact on the opportunities of local churches to join in the quest for overseas friendships.

Chapter 5 – The ABCs of Marketplace Entry & Exit: Agency, Barriers, and Closures

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I look at what brings about partnerships as well what causes their demise. In chapter one, I looked at local-to-local partnerships from a global perspective, showing that globalization has created a platform on which local-to-local partnership is both possible and, in many ways, inevitable. Here, I look locally rather than globally, examining the religious terrain in Mbale. If globalization made local-to-local inevitable, then this chapter shows that it is not inevitable everywhere and for every church; indeed, there are churches for whom partnership is almost impossible. I will look at three specific barriers which together have created a sizable gap between churches.

When pursuing and initiating partnership, I show how these leaders pro-actively leverage these changes in order to overcome the barriers to success that their churches face in the marketplace. Lastly, I turn to examine the chronological end of local-to-local partnerships, to their decline and death, both slow and fast.

THE START OF PARTNERSHIP: WHY AND WHERE?

In examining the genesis of local-to-local partnership, it is clear that technology plays a central role. My purpose here is not to reiterate these distal, technological causes but rather to investigate the level of church leaders' receptivity to, and agency in, joining the local-to-local marketplace in Mbale.

Overseas Impositions and Local Agency

If global changes have ushered in the practice of local-to-local partnership, then church leaders are quite receptive to this received practice. Rather than wishing to turn back relations to the days when the whites were professional missionaries who came to live in

Mbale for years at a time,[1] Pastor Terry forthrightly insists that 'most pastors would prefer short term, not long' term missionaries (228). Pastor Terry's view was nearly universal among those I talked to, despite the fact these church leaders were being interviewed by myself, whom they knew from my self-disclosure was a long-term, white resident of Uganda engaged in full-time Christian ministry and study.

Church leaders bring a receptive posture to the new modes of partnership with non-Africans. Their positive and receptive outlook is itself a testimony to their sense of agency, and to how they proactively use global changes to create global connections for their churches and attendant ministries.

One way that church leaders pro-actively seek out partnerships is through prayer, asking God to give them their own overseas relationship. Pastor Titus says that both he and other pastors 'have the prayers that, "Oh God one time if you hear my pray please…answer me that I get a partner from overseas"' (029). So 'you look through prayers' (104) and 'depend on God to send someone' (029), because 'God is the one who *[will]* show you the partner' (104). Pastors acknowledge that God does not often quickly give them what they want, and in fact, it can 'take years without getting a what? A partner' (029).[2] Nevertheless, 'you have to keep on praying' (104) and so not lose hope: 'God has not given me the grace to get a donor for the church, but I'm still praying for it if one time God will give me.' (170). As spiritually-inclined people from a deeply spiritual continent, the prayers of local church leaders are perhaps the most universal and powerful evidence that church leaders actively seek out local-to-local partnerships.

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[1] There are fond memories of past white missionaries and a genuine gratefulness for the contributions they brought, mixed with considerable nostalgia for a simpler time in the local community of faith.
[2] The question-answer grammatic pattern in this quote is common in spoken English in Uganda. The speaker poses a rhetorical question to both her/himself and the audience, which s/he then answers in a word or two. This pattern occurs throughout the respondents' dialogues, and should not be confused with an actual question (including the questions posed by the interviewers).

Their search, however, is not confined to directly seeking God's favour in finding partners. Local ministers also engage with social media and information technologies to put their church in front of a global audience. With the advent of internet availability and later social media, 'today some whites are got from the internet' (L003) by 'surfing … when a person wants to be internationally known, when they want to be connected with other countries' (L001).

Pastor Terry: So that wasn't the case years before. It was completely different. Right now everyone knows the internet. Right now people have phones. So if I want to search for John Tuggy, I'll go and search.
Interviewer: On Facebook, find his name.
Pastor Terry: And I find John Tuggy. And I say, "Hi John." (228)

'There's sort of a competition' contends Pastor Titus, 'Some younger pastors, they go through the internet to search, getting a what? A partner. And when that one who has used what? The internet. Gets his what? Partner' (029).

In the urban area of Mbale town, there are enough foreigners that internet searches are not needed to come into contact with foreigners. Pastor Titus contends that 'the pastors in town are so swift and very, how do I call it? They're more on the lookout for these people' and in fact they 'know what language to use to have them' (029).

Even as more foreigners come to Mbale, an increasing number of young and educated church members are moving to opportunities overseas. Rather than rue the departure of their best and brightest, church leaders in Mbale make use of these human bridges to create connections between their church and Christians overseas.

Pastor Moses: You know ministry needs finances for it to move well. At times it becomes a challenge. At times some pastors commit to prayer. God can use them and he prays for someone and God touches that person and he/she even gets to get out of the country *[go abroad]*. Like that, when he/she reaches there, he becomes connected *[to Christians overseas]* and he says that "eeeh, but my pastor in Uganda is the one who prayed for me before I even came". He speaks on the pastor's behalf before the Whites, and those people get interest to help.
Interviewer: Yah, that partnership.
Pastor Moses: And they start to partner, just like that. That is also like that. In most cases I have seen it in that angle. (L001)

Church leaders use various means at their disposal to find partners. Through prayers, through social media, and by befriending foreigners around town or connecting

to foreign Christians through expatriate Ugandans, church leaders do what they can do maximize their opportunity to find and partner with Christians overseas.

Operative Inequality and Local Acceptance

Yet, for all their undeniable eagerness and agency in finding and engaging overseas partners, I often found something rather different inside of partnerships. I also found a certain sense of ungrudging acceptance, a casual unassertiveness, in the stances of local church leaders when it comes to their own unequal position inside of their partnerships. The historical narrative of MCAP and PONT, as told by Pastor Hillary, the founder and current general secretary of the Mbale side of this partnership, illustrates this well.

As Pastor Hillary narrates the history of the MCAP and PONT partnership, it becomes clear that, in his mind, the partnership's initial conception and driving force came from those outside of Uganda. Despite his intimate and indispensable involvement in the pre-history, birth, and growth of this community-to-community relationship, the clear protagonist from the beginning of his story is Jeff Lloyd, as it was 'he [who] was the one bringing the mobilizing.' Hillary remembers his role as being the one who ''set up communities here for him to come.' In the quote below, the passion, decisions, and ideas come from Jeff Lloyd. Even the *doing* is thrice located with Lloyd, while near the end of the quote the doing is twice shared together.

> He had the passion before for trying to do something …. So he decided to say 'This is the place I think' that he would do or he will carry out his mission.' And he felt like he needed at some stage to do something about poverty and to have some interventions. And his idea was doing, not doing things for people, but doing things with the people. Because [before] under Care and Share we… just do something and go, and have no relationship. So he thought, 'why don't we do something with the people.' (B002)

Ironically, there is little mutuality in the language that Hillary uses to talk about the decision to start 'doing with' rather than 'doing for.' Even today as the general secretary of MCAP, Hillary uses language that places primary authority and ownership outside of himself and the Mbale community. In all the activities that take place, it is 'He *[a*

Welshman] is the head of the Wales for Africa so he is the one who heads it, so any project here … he is the one in charge.' While Hillary is clear that today there is 'a very strong partnership with Wales government', he simultaneously voices that 'this is just a directive of the Welsh government' (B002).

That the ongoing relationship with Wales is a directive of that government further evidences that egalitarian notions of partnership are not prominent in his thinking. Hillary's language here reflects his perceptions of the location of agency in both the birth and the sustenance of these partnerships - away from himself and towards foreigners, be they the original visitors to Mbale or the Welsh national government.

At times, church leaders talk about their partner being the source and/or driving force behind a purportedly inclusive and empowering vision. Pastor Shadrach, for example, when speaking of his church partner, says that 'the intention of Peter was this,' that 'as much as he had the vision of Bible school, he also had a vision of empowering the pastors and other church leaders' (179).

Pastors Hillary and Shadrach spoke with sincere affection for their former partners. As distressing as their operative passivity may seem to a global northern audience, these men evinced no discernible concern, hurt, or other negativity as they related their stories. Putting their stories into the larger context of this research helps to explain their willingness to cede agency and accept a lesser role in their partnerships. They see it as an improvement over the high level of control exerted by missionaries of the bygone era. These partnerships enable their ministries and strengthen their churches. Given what they receive in return for accepting a smaller seat at the table, Mbale church leaders are relatively unpreoccupied with challenging the partnership status quo. A combination of historical precedent (chapter two), patron-client cultural norms (chapter four) and positive cost-benefit analysis (chapter six) incentivises church leaders to engage with the system rather than to overthrow it, even as they can readily identify its flaws (chapter six).

Literature Review: The Question of Agency in Seeking Partnership

Given this passive language employed by local church leaders, is local-to-local partnership then something driven largely from the outside of Uganda? Kenneth Ross posits that it is. He finds it

> difficult to argue that the move to adopt twinning as a primary means of interaction has been equally driven from both sides of the partnership. To a great extent it has been an initiative of the Western partner to which the partner in the South has felt obliged to respond. (Ross 2008)

Writing from the vantage point of African immigrant churches in America, Wang sees a similar pattern. Most mission links to Africa of African-American churches are

> initiated by churches in the United States. It is the American immigrant churches that invite African pastors to come lead special meetings of revival or deliverance. It is also pastors in the United States who initiate their trips to Africa to serve in different churches. (2013:152)

Priest similarly places the overseas partner (specifically the American one) in the driver's seat as the initiator and driver of the partnership. Based on the results of his survey of US mega-churches, he argues that

> there appears to be a widespread pattern of church-to-church partnerships, supervised or monitored by highly mobile megachurch mission pastors, enabled by field missionaries and national Christian leaders, funded from the U.S. congregational base, linked through short-term mission trips, and carried out *as an extension of the U.S. megachurch and its vision for ministry.* [italics mine] (2010:100)

Ross, Wang and Priest agree that the Western partner is largely in the driver's seat in initiating and, particularly according to Priest, in supervising these relationships. This research shows that local pastors are active agents in initiating partnership, seeking God's favour and engaging with social media and the internet, and remaining vigilant in town for opportunities to befriend Whites. Such activity is common to the point where 'there is sort of a competition' for partners (029). On the other hand, there is also clear evidence, in the narratives of pastors like Hillary and Shadrach, to support Priest's assertion that vision and supervision is provided by the overseas partner.

Barriers to Marketplace Entry

Yet rather than lament the inequalities of their relationships with foreign partners, church leaders were just as likely to complain about their relative powerlessness compared to better-connected local church and church authorities. Their complaints point to the fact that not all local churches and pastors are equally endowed with the opportunity for partnership, and that there are significant barriers to overcome to access partners.

The Gap: Relational Riches v. Partnership Poverty in the Marketplace

These barriers have created a gap between churches when it comes to the distribution of relationships. Specifically, fewer than half of churches in Mbale have overseas connections, but those who do, as discussed in chapter two, are engaged in close to three of them (2.76) on average. Table 5.1 shows these results as a percentage, and Figure 5.1 visually illustrates what the table shows – a clear 'gap' between the have's and have not's.

Table 5.1 Distribution of Overseas Relationships among Mbale Churches

# of Relationships	*# of Responses*	*% of Responses*
No relationship	127	38.3
1 Relationship	34	10.2
2 Relationships	114	34.3
3 Relationships	38	11.4
4+ Relationships	19	5.7
Total	332	100.0%

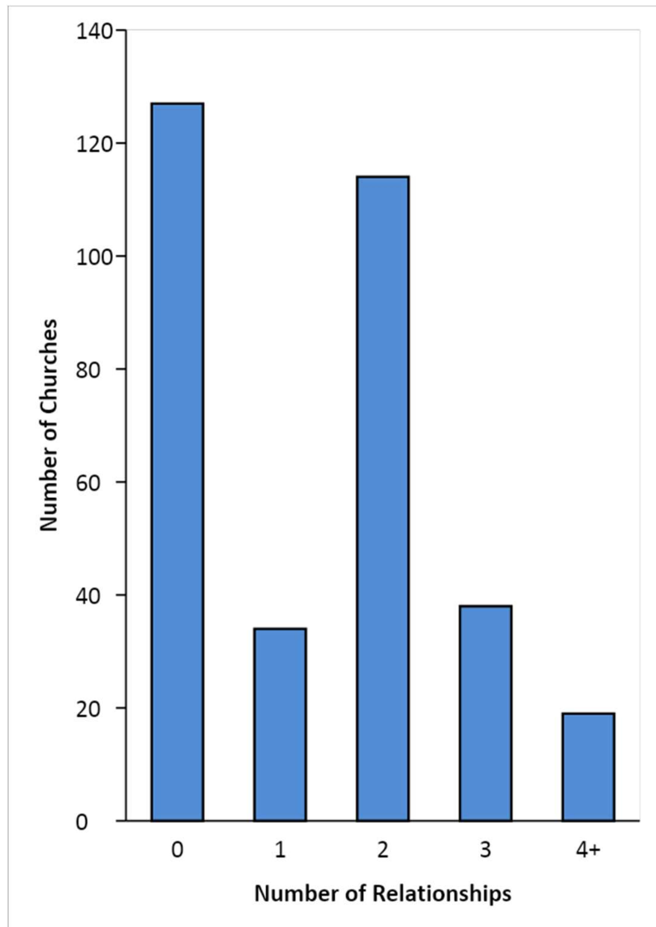

Figure 5.1 Distribution of Overseas Relationships among Mbale Churches

In chapter two it was shown that a significant minority – but a minority nonetheless – of local congregations had access to ongoing, overseas relationships. Those churches which have these relationships, then, are already privileged in some sense. These results here show that, within that privileged minority of churches, a large majority have multiple relationships. In fact, churches are more than three times as likely to have two relationships as they are have one alone. Even three relationships, in fact, is more common than only one.

Clearly the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' is widening. Following on from that, the data shows that those churches which have a single relationship only are

more likely to be in an African partnership, which carries both lower risk and lower financial reward, as opposed to those churches which have two or more relationships and are categorically more likely to have overseas relationships and the greater of financial returns and impact they bring.

We see, then, that the divide has widened further still. It seems there is a sizable gap separating those churches which have overseas partnership from those which do not. These results also indicate that churches in Mbale may be operating in a competitive partnership marketplace in which those who have partnership capital continue to accrue more, leaving behind those with less or none.[3] Not only do churches that have partnerships tend to have multiple ones, but those churches that have the most financially lucrative, overseas partnerships tend to have even more of these partnerships.

What, then, is the cause of this 'gap' in the local-to-local marketplace? The interviews conducted in this research revealed that local churches in Mbale face three main obstacles to finding local-to-local partnerships. Such obstacles are what economists call 'barriers to entry' into a marketplace.

Barrier to Entry #1: Rural v. Urban Locality

The rapid urbanization across African nations, with Uganda among the fastest, has increased the political, cultural, end economic clout of urbanized areas (OECD/SWAC 2020) and exacerbated the growing income inequality within nations (Chancel et al. 2019). Globalization has left an increasing divide between rural and urban areas. We see this divide among churches as well, with geography being a barrier to opportunity for rural churches to engage overseas.

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[3] Using the tools of economics to studying the religious and partnership marketplaces in Mbale is not the approach this research takes, but it is worth noting that this is an increasingly popular approach to examining religious institutions in the West (Scheitle 2010; Cnaan & Boddie 2002).

The existence of this barrier is evidenced by the locations of the 40 churches which reported local-to-local relationships in the telephone interview survey, which skewed urban compared to the district as a whole. In total, 42.5% of these churches were located within Mbale town or its close outskirts, whereas the district as a whole is classified as 25% urban (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016). Even this, however, may be overstating the participation of rural churches in the local-to-local market. Thirteen of those rural churches were represented by one Anglican Reverend, and upon interviewing this Reverend it was clear that the relationship of these churches with their friend outside Africa, while real, was small and tangential. Counting that relationship as one church rather than thirteen (and thus narrowing down from forty to twenty eight local-to-local results) increases the market share of urban churches even further, to sixty-one percent of the local-to-local market.

Of these 13 churches in rural areas, only two churches were not clearly linked – through a larger denominational affiliation – with an urban presence. In one of these two churches, the leader was friends with a pastor of a larger church with a Muzungu wife. The wife brought her overseas Christian contacts to work with her husband's church, and it was through that relationship that the smaller church participated in a local-to-local relationship, as a client of the larger, Muzungu-connected church.

The single remaining rural church in the marketplace was an outlier in its history and doctrine. When interviewed, the elder-leader insisted that they did not have any relationships with outsiders, though he had indicated otherwise during the previously-conducted telephone survey. The interview left me suspecting that they may well have some form of partnership which, quite reasonably, they did not wish to divulge to myself, a stranger from outside with not-fully-known intentions and largely unknown connections.

A key component of inequality of opportunity in foreign partnership is caused by the relative scarcity of Muzungus in rural places. Elder James explains it very clearly.

> But our problem in this rural setup, because there are cities, there are major municipal towns, when those missionaries come, they're always grabbed from there. We don't have chance for them to move in rural places, they ignore us. So that in fact when we try to look around, now they have been already captured by our fellow pastors. (104)

I interviewed a church leader of a large, rural parish in a mountainous area of the district. Reverend Micah showed me in his church visitor book that, in his six years pastoring here, I was the second non-African visitor to set foot in his church, and the first who was not directly linked to him from his bishop. My own brief visit to the rural parish, which is only about 20-25 minutes from Mbale town by vehicle, drove home to me the deep divide between the opportunity of rural and urban churches to meet foreigners. Later on, I narrated this story as part of a discussion with another pastor who I was interviewing:

Interviewer: Yeah, I was actually with a reverend there, talking to him. And he said he's been there six years, as the reverend there. And that time, besides me, there was one other Muzungu who went up there to talk to him. Six years, I was the second one.
Pastor Titus: To go there.
Interviewer: So we opened the guest book and he turned back many pages, "Oh here was the Muzungu." And he wanted me to sign on a full page. Because it's very rare to have a Muzungu there. It's on the mountain. And I leave the mountain, I left him and I went down. I like to drink coffee, so I went to Endiro café in Mbale town to get some coffee. And there was maybe one or two Ugandan there, and Muzungu there must have been twenty, twenty Muzungus there! I can get from there *[the mountain]* to Endiro café in twenty minutes, twenty-five minutes. It's not so far away, but it's like two different worlds! And the Muzungus don't go up there, they stay in town.
Pastor Titus: In the urban centres.
Interviewer: So what you're saying, like, so there's a divide maybe? Between the opportunity of the city church and the opportunity of the country church?
Pastor Titus: Actually, before the rural pastor knows about this Muzungu, someone in town has already known about him. But the pastors in the villages, in most cases they're depending on God to send someone to help. (029)

On those occasions in which Muzungus do go to rural areas, it is for usually for short periods of time.

Interviewer: Have there ever been the same visitors more than one time?
Pastor Jenneth: No, different.
Interviewer: Okay, so different every time? And usually, they're there for like one Sunday, or for one crusade, or…?
Pastor Jenneth: Yeah, one Sunday, one I think on so far, one day. One day I think. A day, a day. Not more than. (170)

Unsurprisingly, rural church leaders feel that their communication and relationships with these foreign visitors are shallow as a result:

> In most cases, missionaries who comes to rural places stay there for a short time. So they don't take long to know the people, to know the place even for this host pastor or whatsoever to have, to be free. The more you stay with someone, the more you become free with that person. And so, the freedom of expression … is not there in the rural places. (029)

When a foreigner does come to a rural place, even for a few short hours, their presence at a rural church is not by happenstance. Virtually all such visits are arranged through an urban contact, who handles the logistics and arrangements for the visit and accompanies the visitor to the rural church.

> Pastor Daniel: I think there is a partnership that yeah – then sometimes when visitors come, they are sent to those rural churches. But like most of the, most of the details …
> Interviewer 1: Are arranged ...
> Pastor Daniel: From the head office. So we may not have – we may not have any detailed experience, but sure, we start from head office. Like if they come, a visitor comes - maybe a pastor comes as we are visiting - one of them, I think we've had twice, that is twice. One time came and organized crusades, but it was fully managed by the head office. (333)

Pastor Jenneth agrees that their relationships with visitors are shallow, as is any impact of these visits.

> Pastor Jenneth: So concerning partnership, I myself I don't know much about it. I don't know much. I think he [Senior Pastor] knows much about partnership. Yeah, but for us here, we are on our own under God and the pastor what he feels like he can bring to Mbale, or what he can do [in] Mbale is what he does.
> Interviewer: When [Senior] Pastor… comes he brings some visitors with him?
> Pastor Jenneth: Yeah, he brings once in a while he brings visitors. … They come, they visit, they preach as you said. They go back, and for us, we move on. (170)

Pastor Jordan concisely sums up the view of many regarding a typical interaction of foreign visitors with church leaders in rural parts of Mbale district: 'They come, they visit … they go back, and for us, we move on.' It is to the urban area of Mbale, that 'different realm altogether' (170), to which they 'go back' on a nightly basis, before going back to their countries of origin after a few weeks or months.

Barrier to Entry #2: Educational Attainment and ICT Acumen

Like the urban/rural divide, the educational divide among pastors is indicative of their access to and familiarity with the communications technologies that undergird local-to-local partnerships.

> In most cases, if you are interested in making partnership, most cases it is through the internet, most people use the internet. At times it depends on how far you are learned. You may be in a village but if you are learned, then you can access Internet. (310)

> So, that kind of trend is brought about by the differences in one, technology … and two, different realms all together, two different worlds. Education levels are completely different. (170)

Pastors with little education, then, have little possibility of accessing the internet, and thus accessing partners.

> Interviewer: *[Are}* there obstacles to get partners?
> Pastor Moses: Some of the churches that need to get those partners, the ministers who lead them are not well educated. So they want it but they don't know how to do it. They don't know how they can make it happen. But in them they want it, but they still have challenges how to it. Because they are unable to access internet, things like that, so it limits them and they remain like that. (L001)

In some rarer cases, the internet has opened up some space for ordinary, even uneducated, pastors to access friends and partners more widely. Reverend Alex had very low levels of education and literacy, but he was able to navigate past these barriers to find success in securing partners. He did so, however, with the initiative and technical assistance of a younger helper. The internet still requires tech savvy, and usually younger, assistance for rural pastors to access. Reverend Alex narrates his story.

> Reverend Alex: In 2012, there is a young man who came and told me that we can go to the internet and try to search for some partnerships on the internet. So on the internet they [young men] got some friends there. They took pictures of the church when I was preaching. Because I was always making some crusades, they sent two pictures of those crusades. So there are people who said 'Yes I think we can be friends'. But the friends who have been committed by this partnership, they have been two. The first partnership, the first friend is called [name]. He is coming from Portugal.
> Interviewer 1: Portugal?
> Reverend Alex: And also expected that he is going to be my fellow pastor, minister of the Gospel. I didn't expect anything else. But he also said himself that I want to send you a donation. He just sent us a donation of about 430,000 Uganda shillings [equivalent to USD$220 in 2012).
> Interviewer 1: Mhm. So he had already visited?
> Reverend Alex: He had never visited
> Interviewer 1: So you had met him on the internet?
> Reverend Alex: On the internet, yes. So now I remained with one friend who is in California. The ones of internet were two. (259)

Reverend Alex's story is exceptional in many ways. He is a charismatic and gifted man who was overseeing twenty-six churches within his denomination with almost no formal education, much less formal theological training. Reverend Alex was able, through his connection to educated and social media savvy youth, to find friends overseas. His partnerships, born on the internet, were relationships that were relatively limited in terms

of time and scope. His success, while real, was nonetheless limited. This brings us to our third barrier to entry.

Barrier to Entry #3: Independent v. Denominational Churches

Shared denominational ties are extremely helpful to local churches in that they endow Christians outside Africa with a pre-existing degree of affinity for, and perceptions of familiarity with, local churches who share their affiliations. While the geography of churches and educational attainment of their pastors often plays a make-or-break role in the acquisition of partners, the role of denominational ties in facilitating the same is slightly more nuanced.

Denominational affiliation is not a strict necessity in finding overseas partners. Of the 28 churches in the local-to-local marketplace, only slightly over one half (15) were members of an international denomination with either a transcontinental presence or a well-known and well established presence in multiple African countries. The 13 remaining churches were either wholly independent congregations or in the earlier stages of building an indigenous association of churches. With 13 of the 28 churches, independent churches are actually over represented in the local-to-local sample – because only one in five churches in Mbale district is independent[4]. In other words, lack of denominational presence overseas does not appear to be a barrier to establishing local-to-local relationships. As such, it is not a barrier to entry per se, but is rather a barrier to full entry, to becoming a big producer with staying power in the marketplace.

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[4] The number (equalling 21%) is actually misleadingly precise, since I was not able to confidently establish the affiliative, denominational, and international v. local presence of each Born Again churches in the sample frame.

Where denominational affiliation appears to bear real fruit for local churches is in terms of ability to scale up one's partnerships. The dividends of denominational partnerships to these local churches are considerable. The wealthiest churches and denominations in the district[5], in terms of partnership, in perceptions of others in the district, and, by all visible accounts, in terms of actual funds and physical infrastructure, are churches which are members of trans-national denominations with large presence in North America or, secondly, in the UK.

The three main Presbyterian denominations in Mbale, for example, are all linked to counterparts globally through international associations such as the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). Individual church buildings ('church plants' as one leader calls them, though numerous Christian leaders and my interviewee himself cast doubt on the notion that new fellowships are formed) are often financially sponsored by Reformed churches abroad (293, 339). Reformed students study in Indonesia with financial sponsorship from their brethren in America, and their senior leadership attend Reformed gatherings in South America and Asia (71). Between the three denominations, they run two of the three largest theology schools in Mbale.

According to Pastor Noah, Reformed churches abroad partner with them in various ways.

> They *[missionary teams]* not only come to preach, but also have other outreaches. They go to the communities and conduct medical, they give treatment to people in the villages. They drill water *[i.e. wells]* for the communities wherever our churches *[are]*. Yes, we also have orphanages. I know it, this is so interesting, and it is part of the ministry. We have primary schools, one of the good primary schools actually, and even tomorrow we're opening up another primary school which has just been completed. So have different partners with different focus in general to help the body of Christ wherever there are needs. (293)

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[5] There are exceptions to this pattern. Perhaps the most prominent example of an independent church which has clearly scaled the denominational barrier is Pearl Haven Christian Centre in Industrial Division, Mbale municipality. They have done so by, among other things, fostering ongoing links to and creating a non-profit organization in America which is dedicated to raising funds for their ministry and construction needs. The church was not among those selected at random for the initial survey and follow-on interviewing.

Pastor Noah is so conversant with teams arriving from the Northern Hemisphere that he uses a northern seasonal term (the 'fall') when sharing about the length and time of year that most visitors come.

> Of course they come every year. They are part of the ongoing relationship, every fall they come, they come from different churches and we do have several teams and they have scheduled dates and activities and we always cover three months doing all these activities. (293)

Because of this abundance of international links and related works in the Presbyterian denominations, non-Presbyterian church leaders, community members and even Presbyterian church members widely perceive that these denominations are wealthy and that, by extension, their ministers are also wealthy.

Pastor Nathanael:	Maybe the challenge I can refer it to the maybe like we Presbyterian churches, some *[other]* pastors they look us as if people who has money. Because in the *[other, independent]* fellowship, people they just put there a church and begins maybe under the shed, a tree like this one.
Interviewer:	So is that because, for example, they see you have the building, you must have a big salary also?
Pastor Nathanael:	Yes. [Laughing]
Interviewer:	But the reality is different.
Pastor Nathanael:	Yes. And even the church members sometimes they can think that we Presbyterian pastors, there is something we earn so.
Interviewer:	So does it make it, does it make your work to spread the gospel around the church, does it make it difficult?
Elder Timothy:	Yes, of course. Because some of them, like for us Pres*[byterians],* they know, they know that for us we have money, because we have a sponsor, which is not there *[in reality]* sometimes. Like, as pastor was saying, for us here they can think that this one is on payroll. (339)

The Presbyterian churches were also the ones with some of the most visible history of splits resulting from disagreements and infighting, which will be examined more closely in Chapter 6 as I lay out the positive and negative consequences of local-to-local partnerships in Mbale.

In summary, three main barriers to entry contribute to the have versus have-not divide among churches in the local-to-local marketplace. Perhaps the most significant barrier is that of geography, namely the rural versus urban divide. This is somewhat related to the second barrier, which is that of educational attainment and attendant skills such as English and social media fluency. If a local church pastor does not have connections to urban churches or the fluency in English and social media skills among

her/his members, they are almost certainly excluded from the local-to-local market. Even when these two barriers are overcome, it is very helpful to be a member of an intercontinental denomination. Churches with these three characteristics were the most likely to find relationships overseas.

THE END OF PARTNERSHIPS (PROCESSES)

Whether in relationships between lovers or churches, online searches for a soulmate or casual encounters in town can turn into a crush and even grow into an ongoing relationship. As with lovers, the relationships between churches can blossom into formal, enduring commitments or they can end in heartbreak, torn apart by temptation and perceived betrayal. Other times, the relationship simply grows cold over time.

A full 69 percent of the telephone survey respondents answered that their relationships were in the highest category of 'Five years or more' of ongoing partnership. There was no significant difference between the mean length of traditional and local-to-local relationships. In retrospect, it is clear that the upper-bound of the time categories on the survey instrument was too short, a consequence of adding this particular question to the survey after the pre-testing was already significantly underway. The result in terms of the data is that the overall weighted average of 4.14 years is constrained from moving higher – in all probability above five years – by the lack of higher time categories at the upper end of the survey's time scale.

Telephone survey respondents who affirmed that they had been or were currently in a relationship overseas were asked if 'your church [has ever] been involved in any relationship with outside groups of Christians that ended in a way you were unhappy about.' Thirty percent (29.8%) responded that their church had indeed experienced an unhappy end to an outside relationship, while the balance of churches had not (95% confidence level with a 4.5 interval). In the wider population, then, one in five churches

in Mbale have experienced a relationship with a group of Christian outside of Uganda that ended poorly from the local perspective. Table 5.2 shows these results.

Table 5.2 Unhappy Endings to Overseas Relationships

Experienced an Unhappy Ending?	Type of Relationship - Traditional v. Local-to-Local v. Both Together					
	# Trad.	**% Trad.**	**# L-2-L**	**% L-2-L**	**# Both**	**% Both**
Yes	27	17%	39	61%	66	30%
No	130	83%	25	39%	155	70%
Total	157		64		221	

Table 5.2 also shows that unhappy endings are significantly more likely to occur in local-to-local relationships than they are in traditional ones. Sixty one percent (60.9%) of current local-to-local participants report an unhappy ending in the past, whereas seventeen percent (17.2%) of respondents in traditional relationships reported the same. The data cannot tell us is what type of past relationship – traditional or local-to-local – ended unhappily, but the mere fact that such a clear discrepancy exists between traditional v. local-to-local relationships indicates that the difference is probably significant.

<u>Growing Up and Out</u>

Doubtless some of the lower incidence of unhappy endings in traditional relationships is because some of these traditional relationships are former local-to-local relationships. In other words, some of the successful local-to-local partnerships tend to grow into a traditional partnership. By definition, that re-categorization lowers traditional unhappy endings while simultaneously increases local-to-local unhappy endings.

The shift from local-to-local to traditional happens as the complexity and size of a partnership grows. The need for clearer managerial and legal structures in both countries often results in the birth of non-governmental organizations in Uganda and abroad. The story of MCAP from chapter three is a prominent example of this natural evolution in

form. In Mbale, many private, government registered schools and a number of health clinics have been birthed from local-to-local partnerships. More uniquely, a café-cum-Christian-reading-room in Mbale town was started through a denominational twinning relationship.

As a vehicle for sustainable cross-continental partnership involving significant funds and activities, local-to-local relationships seem to have a limited shelf life. The complexities and accountabilities of international ministry on multiple continents eventually requires structures beyond the more organic, relationally-sustained model of local-to-local partnerships. Things move into higher level of denominational authority (as with the Tororo diocese partnerships in the Catholic Church) or into formalized, often non-governmental, organizations (as with the Wales-Mbale church partnerships) to manage the increasing size and complexity. The telephone survey results reflecting this reality, showing that traditional partnerships are approximately four times more likely to involve transfers of funds than their local-to-local counterparts.

Ending Fast and Slow

The end of partnerships can come about quite suddenly or become a more drawn out affair. Two reasons for speedy ends to partnerships are prominently cited. One reason is theological disagreement between partners. The other reason is a lack of trust and forgiveness from the overseas partner. While cultural differences and misunderstandings are often cited by church leaders as challenges they face, they do not reportedly bring an end to many partnerships. Of course, cultural differences inevitably frustrate communication and may compound problems, but in that sense, they play a secondary role in the ending of partnerships, compounding the primary problem and complexifying its resolution.

Theological disagreements tend to disrupt partnerships at the beginning of the relationship, rather than when the relationship has been established and the partners are better acquainted with each other. Local church leaders themselves were keenly interested in making sure that their partner was, in their understanding, theologically orthodox in their lifestyle and teaching.

For example, one church leader cited a British woman who came in partnership with him to teach pastors. She told those in her class that she was divorced and had remarried a divorced man. Upon hearing this, her pastor-students agreed unambiguously that 'that woman is a sinner' and 'now, they will not take' her teaching (228). Faced with her students' collective absention, she departed Mbale and moved back to Britain.

Church leaders in Mbale are quick to blame themselves collectively for partnership failures, citing local corruption and partnership theft as causes for many failures. These issues are looked at more closely in chapter six, in examining the consequences of local-to-local partnerships.

Yet even while implicating themselves collectively for relational failures, church leaders also lay a portion of the blame at the foot of external partners. Often, when local corruption is blamed as the primary cause of a broken relationship, the external partner is not presented as an innocent victim of local malfeasance; rather, the narratives of church leaders frequently frame the overseas partner as either an unwitting or a willing accomplice to the failure.

Bringers of Temptation

In these narratives, the overseas partners play the role of an agent of temptation. Reverend Alex shared about a partner he met over the internet who sent him money to support his evangelistic efforts.

So we got that money and injected it in the crusade. We also gave him a report. Later on he said 'I want to send you some support.' But then he asked about *[my]* beliefs. He asked 'How do you baptize?' I had told him *[what]* I was taught, 'I baptize in the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.' *[He]* said 'All the other things it is okay, and even the way you preach the Gospel that is fine, but you must change something here. That you need to baptize only in the name of Jesus,'

I told him 'That's quite difficult, because I have taught many people. We now have twenty six churches. And even the pastors of the churches, I am the one who baptized them! And I baptized them in the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. How am I going to say I am only going to baptize in the name of God the Son? I told him I think I won't be able to do what you want. He wrote to me 'I had a lot of support I wanted to send you. Basing on the way you do your things, I am not going to help you. I have seen that it is not good to help someone who is in darkness.'

I also responded and said 'Okay, it doesn't benefit me much to eat the whole world and I miss heaven, miss the Kingdom of God.' So that is how we separated. (259)

Later on in the same interview, Reverend Alex recalls when he met a second Muzungu through one of his church members. Doctrinal differences again caused him to terminate the relationship.

Reverend Alex: There is one of the *[local]* Christians whom I pastor, they brought him *[the Muzungu]* to his home. So *[this Muzungu]* loved me. And asked me that he wants to see my work. I moved with him, we visited eight churches basing on his programme. Afterwards he called me, that 'Give me that work and I help you.' I said 'No problem. But we need to sit down and I see how are we going to help one another.'

So … he came, we sat with our pastors. And I said 'This is our guest, he wants to help us in this work.' We read for him our constitution. So he realized that in the constitution there is a hierarchy, and he also discovered that we believe in the Holy Spirit. And the gifts of the Holy Spirit and also believe in dreams, revelations through dreams. We also believe in prophecy. So after that, he said 'Come to my office on Tuesday.'

I went to his office, he opened his computer and he showed information concerning his ministry. And he said 'You see I had introduced you into this ministry. And I see you are sleeping in a mud house. You walk on foot you don't have a vehicle. Even your children don't go to school. But this double cabin *[pickup truck]* is yours. They are going to build for you a house. Your children are going to study freely. And every month we are going to be giving you a salary of Shs 350,000/-. You will be having a card to be taking free fuel at the petrol station. If you accept these things, I want you to go back to your constitution. Change some things. For us, we don't believe in the Holy Spirit. We don't believe in dreams and then prophecy. We don't have Apostles, we only have disciples.

Interviewer 1: So they only wanted you to agree to their thinking.

Reverend Alex: Yes, to their doctrine. So I told him 'This is the teaching that we have. The one I was taught and it's the one I believe. I am not going to change anything. If it requires me to stay in this kind of life, I will stay in this poor life. But I am one with Christ. The Bible says there is nothing good for those who deduct from the Word of God, or those who add anything to scripture. We also parted like that. So, I remained with one friend who is in California. That's now the third one. (259)

In both of Revered Alex's narratives, the attraction of money and lifestyle upgrades is a temptation that threatens to lure Reverend Alex away from fidelity to his reading of the Bible and his doctrine. Reverend Alex presents himself as the hero, resisting and overcoming the temptations brought by two nascent partners and instead choosing, at

great opportunity cost, to stay faithful to his doctrinal convictions and an orthodox reading of scripture.

From my perspective, Reverend Alex's heroism is not entirely manufactured and self-serving. He himself was a man of limited schooling in a rural area, and thus had very limited options in seeking out partners. When he turned down these two potential partners in order to stay true to his doctrinal convictions, he turned down what may well have been life-changing and/or ministry-defining opportunities. An advanced degree in Bible or theology was not a pre-requisite for this pastor to know his doctrinal essentials, and poverty did not compromise his courage in adhering to them. Judging from the very rudimentary tin-and-wooden-pole church building we sat in, Reverend Alex was paying the price of his convictions. Truly, I though, in the world to come 'many who are first will be last, and the last first.'[6]

Reverend Alex's courage may not be unique, but it is also not universal. While no pastor interviewed offered up personal stories of their own fall into doctrinal or moral compromise from the temptation of money and/or power, many acknowledged that their fellow leaders have succumbed. They were willing to speak generally (and occasionally specifically) of other leaders who failed their tests.

Revered Alex relayed the story of a well-known pastor, a marketplace gatekeeper in Mbale who, in his telling, first slowly succumbs to the temptations offered by the partners, and is then spiritually undone as he cascades down into moral corruption. But in this telling, the push that sent this pastor down the slope came from the Whites, in the form of controlling behaviour and ruthlessness of those same overseas partners.

> We have pastors … one of them, like Pastor *[Abraham]*, this pastor had many Whites, very many partners. So a lot of money coming in. Yes, he had given every ministry pastor within his ministry, every pastor had a Muzungu. He used to send them *[client pastors]* money on a monthly basis.

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[6] The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Matthew 19:30.

> But time reached, the Whites, the partners that had worked with Pastor *[Abraham]* reached a point, they sat with him on the table. They told him 'We want you to sell to us this ministry.' And he was like, 'I sell you my vision, my ministry?' He said 'I am not!'
>
> After they had really given him a lot of money and raised him up, he is staying in a high life, he was driving a very first class Mercedes Benz. He was one of the pastors with a posh car in Mbale. The Whites had raised him in a standard where he knows how to spend, high spender!
>
> At that level, they put him to a point, and then they just cut that relationship. They left him there.
>
> It's now almost ten years. Pastor *[Abraham]* has failed to stand up again. Because he wants to maintain the high life he was living, and yet the income has been cut, so he became deceptive. He started loving women who have money so that he can still maintain that kind of life. So he landed in immorality, he became weak spiritually.
>
> From that time, most people, we started fearing Whites. Because Pastor *[Abraham]* used to work with many pastors. But it destroys eventually, you are lifted up and then it destroyed the ministry.
>
> His church was big; he used to do the biggest crusades in town. And he brought the powerful pastors, the ones in Kampala. He used to bring musicians all the way from Tanzania. But right now he can't do any simple ministry in open air.
>
> So the other Pastors who have been looking at his life like, this is what Whites can do? So they started fearing those partnerships. (259)

In the story above, Pastor Abraham is represented as equally or perhaps more of a victim than an agent in events which led to his own spectacular rise and fall. Even in stories where the local partner is the clear villain, the partnership itself can set the stage for the ensuing ruin of the local pastor's ministry and reputation.

> Pastor Daniel: Without partnerships, God is the focus. When partnerships come, the focus shifts from God to -
>
> Pastor Neil: "He has gone to USA. The pastor is out *[visiting partners]*." Always out, is just….
>
> Pastor Daniel: You know what usually happens is that when partnerships come in church, these partners want to engage the pastor. Like we have seen with other churches, there are some partners who want to come and help support the church with maybe building the church, or support financial some. But when they come, they engage only what? The pastor. They *[partners]* engage him so even when they send finances from out, it is the pastor who knows. So the pastor gets tempted, like we have seen some. He goes and builds a big home. [Laughter] (333)

Often, overseas partners are presented as good people, but who are unwitting vehicles for temptation. According to Pastor Daniel above, the partner's ignorance when they 'engage only what? The pastor' with financial matters leads to great temptation. Here, Pastor Ivan relays his own story, albeit somewhat obsequiously, about the temptation which arose from the great financial disparity and thus unequal power dynamics that come in to play.

> One challenge, after Amin there were many problems. Business was all gone, and I was there with the family, my wife produced eight children. You have to look after them and find education and so on. Then someone comes with an open heart.
>
> Now this guy had an open heart. I have never seen someone who could carry $10,000, and it was [inaudible...]. I have never seen, and that is the only person I've ever saw. When we were driving

> ourselves to Nairobi and we disagree. Here someone saying that there is a … [pause] I don't want to be specific, as you said, it may not be healthy.
>
> But those are the challenges. A lot of money! But then you're not agreeing, and so it is a big challenge. (150)

Not all partners are seen as merely unwittingly agents of corruption. Elder Emma and Pastor Paul report that there are whites who, disguised as missionaries, are in fact agents of moral depravity, enticing pastors and actively spread false teachings and lifestyles around Mbale.

> Pastor Paul: Some Bazungus come and *[at]* first appearance they look like they have a good intention, right? They come and stay around one, two, three weeks, one month. And their heart – they are good. Later on they do what? They change. Because I have seen them in town there, they come and then afterwards, when they had a good plan, after sometime they change, they are...
>
> Elder Emma: They inject their own ideas. You know these people in Europe are rich, but the money they get from sinful methods of ways. Like people who practice homosexuality they are very rich, now they can use someone, someone *[European}* can go there that 'I have a vision please can you give me some money.' They give him some money in pretence that he is coming as a missionary, but *[he]* has a hidden agenda to change this faith.
>
> When somebody has refused something, a Muzungu shouldn't keep on pestering him, making running around to convince him to win to his side. And he does his talk to him of these homosexual and so on. There are some strong pastors in Uganda who rejected the idea, but Bazungu insisted, pumped in their own ideologies and money and whatever tricky things to win them to their side. That is wrong, if I have rejected you, leave me as I am! (379)

The understanding that numerous individuals and western organizations are actively spreading false teachings under the guise of Christianity is so widespread as to be almost universal.

While African Christians generally adhere to more traditional doctrines and approaches to Biblical interpretation, many of their Western counterparts are forging ahead with new interpretations of Christian scriptures and doctrines. This divide is most acutely felt around issues of human sexuality. It is no surprise then that partners find themselves in deep and unbridgeable theological disagreement. In chapter six, I give more background to the current approach of the Ugandan church to the divisive issue of human sexuality.

Whatever the theological or moral dispute, pastors maintain that they must decisively break off fellowship with the White tempter, forgoing the unrealized dividends

or partnership, if they are to safeguard their members against deception, depravity and false doctrine. Encouragingly, many have done so, and often at considerable opportunity cost. Their choice is a testament to the courage and agency of local pastors in these partnerships.

No Forgiveness After Falling

Local pastors are not the only ones who break off relationships, however. While local pastors end relationships to avoid doctrinal compromise and financial temptation, white partners break off relationships when church leaders succumb to these temptations – particularly the temptation of financial misappropriation. The irony, of course, is that the white partner who breaks off the relationship is her/himself the vehicle of the temptation.

When a church leader is caught in a malfeasance or failure, intentional or otherwise, church leaders complain that western partners are quick to judge and slow to forgive. Here, Pastor Terry negatively contrasts the attitude of western partners to that of western governments.

Pastor Terry: When we have born-again Christians from Western - but of America mainly - when they come, if there is any slight mistake that they find in you, or in me, or in him, something slight, there will be so much, you know, they'll try to exaggerate it, for instance. They try to break the relationship so quickly. They will mistrust you so quickly.

Interviewer 1: Forever.

Pastor Terry: Forever, in fact forever. But then, our government there is a lot of corruption. They swindle money, they corrupt money, they embezzle money. But the western countries or governments have never stopped funding them.

But here, in fact just $50 like this, if this man *[is]* from US, the relationship is over, over completely! So that was part of the experience, negative part of it. That something slight, the American or the white man or a woman, will just think-

Interviewer 1: Cause them to break.

Pastor Terry: Forever. And the other side, our government, they swindle a lot of money, billions and they don't-

Interviewer 1: And the US government still sends them every year!

Pastor Terry: Still every year! And then when they apologize or maybe they arrest the one who stole they say, "Okay now we can continue."

Interviewer 1: But they arrest a low one not the high one!

Pastor Terry: Yes! So, we discovered there is a problem with our brothers who are spiritual or born-again Christians in a western country.

And yet, at times there is need to say, "Okay, I can understand." Like God does when you have sinned, He say, "I'm going to punish you." You say, "Please God, I'm sorry, forgive me." And He does. But for them, they don't forgive. (228)

Similarly, Bishop Eliab laments how quickly partners cut off their support when issues with money arise. He speaks from both the experience of church leaders he knows as well as from his own experience with partners.

Bishop Eliab: You can get a lot of problems, I will tell you, I will show you some of them, but these are the founder members of [denomination] in Mbale, but recently they were dropped, without even being appreciated, and the case is in court.
Interviewer 1: Because of the money problems?
Bishop Eliab: Exactly! Are you getting the point? That's why I have taken these [partnership] things slowly, slowly. Praying over it.
Interviewer 1: So money is a blessing and a curse.
Bishop Eliab: Exactly! That's the problem, most of them [partners] pulled and went away, left me wash before. (207)

The Bishop does not directly state why most of his partners in the past have 'pulled and went away' but the context of our conversation was about the misunderstanding and difficulties around money in partnerships.

As much as corruption is an endemic reality in Ugandan society and churches, cultural miscues can also lead to conflict around money in partnership. Christian leaders Carlos and Ivan explains how this happens:

Carlos: The typical average Ugandan pastor will evaluate: I have $10,000 it was given for the well *[borehole]*. But the truth is we have children who are not going to school because they don't have school fees. What should I do?
Interviewer: I need to shepherd, how can I use this to shepherd my people?
Carlos: Now, right now there's an appeal going on for somebody who died, and there's a bill of 8 million shillings. The man is dead they can't release his body the family is traumatized. You're a pastor of such a person, what are you going to do? You have $10,000 dollars seated, because it was given for a borehole, what are you going to do?
Interviewer: You do the right thing, you release the suffering of the family.
Carlos: But do you know how you *[a Muzungu]* will interpret it?
Ivan: [laughs]
Carlos: You will say this man lacks integrity.
Interviewer: He's corrupt!
Carlos: He's corrupt, he's misappropriated, cover up the reality. Even if I explained to you and said, 'You know what? I had a major-… '
Interviewer: 'No, it's too late! I'm not interested in your excuses. We were very clear this is what it is for, line item 5122!'
Ivan: [laughs]
Carlos: I can tell you, it is true there are cases of theft and deception and those realities, it is very true, there's no doubt about that. And I can tell you for a good number of partnerships that have broken, it has come because of a failure to appreciate that there are actual needs that people have to respond to immediately. And people have been forced to touch monies they shouldn't have touched. Not because they are lacking in integrity, no. It's because this is a very practical urgent need here and now. There is a relationship at stake.
Interviewer: Exactly. This will damage the witness of the church if there's money sitting here and it's not being used!
Ivan: You can't even explain that I have money for the bore hole but I can't give you. They will give you a name – 'You're a witch!'

Carlos: You're dying, you need a surgery. 'You're a witch! You want this fella to die, you have money! You're keeping it for a bore hole – someone is dying! You're a witch.'
Ivan: [laughs]
Carlos: So that's why books like *African Friends And Money, When Helping Hurts* they become offensive. Because they are not interrogating the cultural considerations of what people face every day.[7] (D003)

Ebbing Away and Old Age

Many partnerships do not end in a dramatic fashion, with a dramatic act of perceived corruption, doctrinal clash, or an unmasking of impure motives by either partner. Anecdotally, it seems to be more common for relational vitality to slowly ebb away, for partnerships to die from neglect more often than from a re-active or planned end.

The original church twinnings which gave birth to the much larger Mbale Coalition Against Poverty (MCAP) and the Welsh-Mbale governmental links are a case in point. Interestingly, Hillary, the local founder of MCAP, contends that today most of these church partnerships have been almost forgotten and are struggling.

Among the many different types of twinnings and links spawned from these pioneering partnerships, the church-to-church ones are today 'the weakest of all partnerships' because 'the churches in Europe are weakening… the desire for people to go to church, it's not there.' As a result, he says, for example, that 'the members [in Wales], the two old people who were supporting, they died, and since there are no young people going to those churches anymore and they are very weak. I've visited those churches, and I really sympathize.' This demographic decline in churches in the U.K., Hillary continues, is 'what has caused the collapse of the partnerships or friendships' due to a 'loss of interest from the other side.' (B002).

Out of fifteen twinned Mbale churches, he says, four are 'still kicking a little bit' (i.e. retain some signs of life). Of these four ongoing relationships, one of them has seen

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[7] *African Friends and Money Matters: Observations from Africa* by David Maranz, and *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor-- and Yourself* by Brian FIkkert and Steve Corbett.

the most senior Mbale minister among these twinned churches travel to Wales (B002). From these four churches in Wales, I was able to identify websites for three of them. Two of these three churches had posted information about the outreach, mission activities and/or agencies supported by their church on their website, but none of the three mentioned involvement in Uganda or church twinning specifically. Two churches had public Facebook pages, but searches for Uganda and Mbale yielded no results. When judged by the Welsh church websites and Facebook posts, I could not help but wonder how much longer these remaining, pioneering church twinnings would go on 'kicking a little bit' (B002).

The ebbing away of interest in and the vitality of these partnerships seems to occur largely on the side of the overseas partner. Church leaders would often tell me about an overseas friend from whom they had not heard in several years. For example, in one case a reverend told me about a visitor(s) from a family who visited once prior to the start of his tenure at the church five years earlier, and who had sent money in the first year of his pastorate. Though he has not corresponded with them since sending his report many years earlier, the pastor told me he was praying a fresh visit (077).

At some point, church leaders may consign a dormant friendship to the past, but do not do so quickly: after all, nobody want to completely write off a valuable means of production. Rather than shutting down the factory, church leaders experience a gradual slowdown in production as the machinery slowly accrues rust.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I identified a gap between the haves and the have-nots in the church partnership marketplace. There are churches for whom entering into the partnership marketplace is extremely challenging, whereas other churches reap a partnership dividend from their ready inclusion in the marketplace.

This is because three distinct, but interrelated, obstacles ring-fence the marketplace and create high barriers to entry for churches who find themselves among the have-nots: Geography, pastoral educational attainment, and denominational affiliation have a decisive impact on the ability of local churches to find, engage, and retain overseas partners.

Yet the desire for overseas partners remains widespread, and in local leaders' quests to access these relationships, they pro-actively leverage global changes and imported technologies to overcome the challenges they face in acquiring partners.

Once a partnership has been secured, a new set of challenges confronts church leaders. The partnership is often a vehicle of great temptation, temptation that a leader must overcome if s/he is to continue faithfully in ministry. Sometimes, partnerships must be ended in order to slay the temptation to compromise on doctrine or convictions.

But there are other challenges which are largely beyond the scope of the local leader to navigate, particularly when the challenge is based overseas. Declining interest in the relationship from the overseas partner – an indeed declining membership in the partner church itself – can lead to a slow decay and eventual end to local-to-local relationships.

Chapter 6 – Return on Investment: Building Built and Bridges Burned

INTRODUCTION: THE FRUITS OF LOCAL-TO-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

In this chapter, I examine the results or impact of local-to-local partnerships as they are seen and experienced by church leaders in Mbale. Unsurprisingly, some results of partnership are seen as positive (buildings built, for example) and others are viewed more negative (relational bridges burned, for example). Still other results of partnership are more nuanced and contested.

In the conversation below, Pastor Jonas suggests that the fruits of a partnership can provide a measuring stick against which it can be judged, quoting the scripture 'you will know them by their fruits.'[8] I take up this fruit analogy suggested by Pastor Jonas, and find that local-to-local partnerships in Mbale have yielded a very mixed harvest. In this one exchange, we get a foretaste of much of what is to come:

Pastor Jonas: The Bible says you will know them by their fruits. You have got land, they have started to construct, may be they have established projects like schools, hospitals *[health clinics]*, and the people who look on really see that you have a good partner, who is doing great work.
Interviewer: Do you think this [*a church-based project nearby]*, if it had no support, would be standing?
Pastor Jonas: No. Even the school would have collapsed sometime back. At one time it collapsed but *[another white partner]* resurrected it. It's the whites who make that project to stand. And if they disconnect their link, that will be the end of the project. So what they get, *[a local person]* gets his share, the director gets his share, and other top staffs as well!
[Laughter]
Pastor Jonas: But still, the project still remains okay. They are doing some few things *[the project does]* for the children. But something keeps happening both at the project, and in the homes of the directors. I discovered recently that the director of the project has a big hotel in town,
Interviewer: Eeeh, in town here?
Pastor Jonas: A big hotel. [Laughs] You see the house next to *[radio station]*, when you go past *[hotel]*, on *[a big]* road, it's called *[Shepherds Inn]*.
Interviewer: Yes, yes I have seen it.
Pastor Jonas: That one. Is for *[project director]*.
Interviewer: Eh, sure!
Pastor Jonas: Discovered it recently. She is not renting it, but it's her house.
Interviewer: She bought it?
Pastor Jonas: Yes.
Interviewer: So in that case, for her, she has benefitted.
Pastor Jonas: Yes! It's not that she is a rice grower, or business person!
[Laughter] (L003)

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[8] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mt 7:16.

A good fruit of partnership, according to Pastor Jonas, is clearly seen in acquisition of land and construction of things like schools and health clinics. On the side, that of bad or rotten fruit, we see clear evidence of what the community development industry often refers to as aid or donor dependency.

What I find more interesting is the murkier ground, where indirect-yet-clear allegations of corruption point towards an endemic mistrust of the new, local gatekeepers in these partnerships. The intimations of corruption are voiced by both Pastor Jonas ('something keeps happening … in the homes of the directors'), by the interviewer (the project director has 'benefited' greatly from the project), as well as by the laughter (a cultural means in Uganda, as elsewhere, of diffusing uncomfortable situations or de-escalating emotions). While financial impropriety or corruption is never directly stated, the suspicion directed at the project director in this conversation is clear.

The exchange with Pastor Jonas illustrated the 'mixed' nature, both in terms of variety and quality, of the fruit of local-to-local relationships in Mbale. In this chapter, I examine both the good and the bad fruit. I also spend time in between, looking into the murkier middle ground of mistrust.

I discuss the bad fruits first and end with the good fruit, looking at what Mbale churches and church leaders enjoy about and benefit from as result of local-to-local partnerships. Such an arrangement is proper because it is abundantly clear that, for all of the negative fruit of local-to-local partnerships, church leaders in Mbale have an overall positive outlook on these relationships.

THE BAD FRUIT

In this section, I first elucidate some of the bad fruit that can befall church leaders, as individuals and ministers. I then look at consequences more broadly, first surveying some of the non-novel and non-exclusive consequences of local-to-local partnerships, which I term 'old bad fruit', and then look more closely into some of the 'new bad fruit' – such

as the theft of Muzungus, and the new directions and dynamics of mistrust in these relationships.

Bad Fruit for Those who Fall

In chapter five, I showed how external partners bring temptation to local pastors. Here, I lay out some of the consequences of succumbing to that temptation. In the same way that overseas partners are often unaware of the temptations they introduce to their partners, they are often unaware of when their partner is succumbing to temptation. However, should the tempters discover that their partner has fallen into the trap that the tempters have unwittingly laid, then the relationship usually suffers irreparable harm and a quick death. More consequentially, however, is that when church leaders fall to temptation their once unimpeachable character is compromised and their reputations, personal lives and ministries suffer great harm or even outright destruction.

Unsurprisingly, most of the talk of temptation revolves around money. Interviewees repeatedly talked about how money is corrupting, and how good leaders/pastors are often corrupted by the temptations of money – made available because of their partnerships – in their ministries. Various stories of formerly upstanding ministers and lay leaders show how they can be led astray, compromising their character and degrading their personal integrity. Pastor Ben relates this story:

> *[This Christian leader/friend of mine]* has a number of people who have given him money, and recently there is a church planting organization in the US that he applied. They told him that 'we want 5 churches in only six months planted' and he said 'Am very anointed, and am very good at doing that, I will do it.'
> He came to me because they asked him to write a proposal. And so I said 'That's a very good idea, but how will you plant five churches?' Then he said 'I will try' so I helped him come up with a proposal.
> The next time we went, he was like 'Brother thank you very much, the strategic plan and the proposal you wrote for me, it went through' and I was like 'What is your plan?' He said 'Now, I have called five pastors who are struggling so I want them to hand over their churches to me, and then I'll report that I planted churches.'
> I was like 'I don't like what you are doing.' But there is much pressure. And of course that's what he is doing now. (003)

Beyond compromising one's character, falling to the temptation brought by Whites can lead to dire repercussions for one's ministry and local reputation:

> They *[partners]* engage him so even when they send finances from out, it is the pastor who knows. So the pastor gets tempted, like we have seen some. He goes and builds a big home.
> [Laughter]
> And that has affected the image of the pastors, some of the pastors, so much. The partners come and say, 'What did the money do?' Because for them, they know it has built some, or it had done something they agreed. So they cross with him *[the pastor],* so the *[local]* Christians see this pastor is a thief. So it affects the image of the pastor. (333)

Failure to cut off the source of temptation can lead to catastrophic personal, physical consequences as well:

Pastor Mathias:	When a rich person comes, whatever he wants is what we do, because he has authority. It's not good is because this rich person, especially those from abroad, can oppress the poor person and involve him in some practice that he/she never wanted to be part of. I even had a radio announcement recently that one pastor, he turned into half an animal and half a person.
Interviewer:	What did he do?
Pastor Mathias:	As I observe, it looks like he left Christ and entered into seeking powers for making miracles. And those miracles turned out to happen on himself.
Interviewer:	Eeh, he became both a human and an animal.
Pastor Mathias:	Yes. (L002)

Such histories sound strange to Western audiences steeped in Platonic dualism. But locally they represent the logical end of successive moral failings, rejecting the Christian faith, and dabbling in Satanic powers and curses (seeking 'miracles' from 'powers' apart from Christ, in Pastor Mathias's words). Bishop Ezra similarly warns greedy pastors that they can bring a curse on their family members. He told me that Whites had washed cars and even taken care of dying or deceased people in order to raise funds to bring to Africa. He continued:

> Such sacrifice! Then for you, you are only waiting to receive *[benefit]* and change *[upgrade]* the schools of your children. Actually that one, you are putting a curse on them *[your children]*. You are-- for you, you are waiting *[to receive]*, 'when will they bring, and I change this vehicle, it is becoming old.' In fact, you are driving a curse! (B005)

Pastor Mathias relates another story, this one involving what one might term a 'serial partnerer' pastor, to whom he assigns eternal consequences for the pastor's moral infractions:

> The then pastor of the church used to partner so much with Whites. But his partnership with Whites was not good and he got some problems. We don't know who cursed him, either God…. He decided to detach himself from the *[mother]* church in *[village]* and became independent, and this is how he started to partner with Whites. When he started these partnerships, he would reject one group of partners, go to *[larger town nearby]* and get other partners and then reject them. He went like that

> until he failed in ministry, and dropped out of salvation. Right now he has disappeared and no one knows his whereabouts. (L002)

Pastor Mathias, like other pastors, is aware of the consequences of succumbing to temptation. That does not deter him, however, from desiring and actively pursuing partnerships. Given the catastrophic consequences, why wouldn't local pastors flee this temptation? As argued in chapter four, the potential from 'owning' a White simply outweighs the risks. Pastor Mathias, having earlier outlined the very damning consequences of falling to temptation, explains why he willingly takes on these risks:

> Me what I am praying for God to do, those friends of our, I desire that God should help them and they come back. And we talk with them and they help us. We need supporting hand. We preach the gospel, people listen, but when they look at the way I look, and they look at the Christians and see that the way they came to church is still the way they are, they do not see a difference. When a guest comes, there is a difference that is created. That is why we need those friends to come and be close to us and visit us, so that God can help us and create a difference. Last time, I am not the one who told them *[white friends]* to bring for us iron sheets. But the grace of God convicted them and they brought. That's why I think that that same grace should convict them again, so that they can give us anything that can strengthen our foundation. (L002)

Pastor Mathias's desire for his white friends to come back 'so that God can help us and create a difference' is meant very practically. His hope that his friends would 'give us anything that can strengthen our foundation' is more of a physical than a spiritual expression, as shown when he gives the example of how last time his visitors brought iron sheets for the church.

Old Bad Fruit

The overall posture of Pastor Mathias in the quotation above – that of a recipient who is waiting for his visitors to 'give us anything' – may be symptomatic of what is known as dependency syndrome, part of a wider, much-studied and contested field among academics and practitioners alike. A second old, bad fruit of local-to-local partnership is corruption. Some of the historical roots of this have been examined in chapter three. Here I give some evidence that corruption continues, unsurprisingly, to be a feature of local-to-local relationship. Because both of these fruits (dependency and corruption) are neither

exclusive nor particularly novel to local-to-local relationships, I deal with these briefly and first.

Dependency

The consensus of community development specialists defines dependency, at the level of a community or a household, as 'an attitude and belief that a group cannot solve its own problems without outside help' (Harvey & Lind 2005:9). Symptoms of dependency are far from unique to the local-to-local expression of partnership. They are rather fruit of an older kind, propagations of long-standing patterns inside of all kinds of relationships, from international trade and financial structures to bilateral aid and funding dynamics among community development NGOs.

I will not take up the wider debate around dependency here, except to note that numerous pastors observe and/or lament that the presence of Whites (and the material and financial resources they bring to the table) can and does engender what they themselves deem to be unhelpful attitudes on the part of Christians in Mbale.

Pastor Jonas and many others agree that Christians are less inclined to tithe and give to the church when 'they know you are connected to a partner' (L003). Pastor Moses uses the term 'dependence spirit' when looking at the impact of partnership on the faith and giving of local Christians:

> Pastor Moses: For people who are already connected *[have a partner]*, first of all the believers are always weaker in faith, in a way that the believers will not want to give, because they already know that some people will give them. So they have a dependence spirit. So the challenge the pastor gets is that the giving in the churches which are connected to whites is in most cases not even there. I remember I went to *[a church belonging to a denomination with many church twinning relationships]*, and I analysed how the members of the church give. I then asked the pastor, 'Is this how they give?' And he responded 'Eeeh pastor, these people know that whites provide for us, so there giving is very limited.' So people do not grow in the spirit of giving.
> Interviewer: They don't excel in that gift that Paul says….
> Pastor Moses: Yes (L001)

I observed a startling contrast in an interview with Pastor Shadrach, who pastored in a fairly large, permanent church building in a peri-urban part of town (i.e. costly) and

replete with expensive wooden doors, glass windows and tile floors. It was clear, however, that the structure itself was in decay, with broken windows, peeling paint and general dilapidation setting in. The building was a gift from a foreigner who often visited (and briefly lived in) Mbale but who had since departed and subsequently grown relationally remote.

Pastor Shadrach admitted his frustration with the members when it comes to their lack of commitment to the church building itself:

Interviewer:	So when something breaks, the members of the church did not build that, they won't want to fix it.
Pastor Shadrach:	No they didn't, exactly
Interviewer:	They have no vision to fix it.
Pastor Shadrach:	You see this door, this central door here *[pointing to a single wooden door]*, had taken here three years without fixing it in the centre there! No, nobody in the church could bother until we need to put this chair *[i.e. door needed keep chairs safe]*. There are able people here but … simply because we need to fix that door, we need to put windows, even putting a new paint here, but simply because they do not own it, they think ….
Interviewer:	They did not work on this with their hands.
Pastor Shadrach:	Exactly! They think this one might be belonging to some Muzungu, will come and take it back, 'Its not ours', but if they owned it and built it, they would have said 'No, I am putting there a door.' Because a door cannot defeat somebody to put it there! But simply because they don't own it. And this is what we are trying to tell them. (179)

What made this conversation memorable to me was that Pastor Shadrach had shared with me, earlier in the conversation and with evident pride, about a 'piggy banking' project that was entirely funded and run by the members of the church. They had banded together to buy six piglets and distribute them to poorer members of their community in a project which then required the recipients to distribute some of the first offspring to other families, and so on and so forth. In Pastor Shadrach's telling, the project was home-grown, ongoing and enthusiastically embraced by the same members who were uninterested in contributing towards a door in the church.

Other kinds of dependency can grow within local-to-local relationships. Specifically, an understandable desire to please the visitor can lead to situations where the visitor's ideas and plans hold undue sway in what happens in Mbale through the partnership. The high value of a white visitor means that pastors take care not to disagree

too much and risk the displeasure of the visitor, knowing that they could 'lose out completely':

Pastor Benjamin:	I have attended some meetings where we have missionaries who have come, and the African pastors who have come as well, and in those meetings the missionaries are bringing out ideas. The participation of the African pastors is all about appreciations: "actually thank you so much" "it was a good idea", "actually if you do that, that will be great". They don't have their own opinion to put forward, something like that. If I am to give the percentage, most *[pastors]* not wish to insist the decision. Why? Because is fearing to harass, and *[the visitor]* might give up and say 'This is what I wanted to do, if that is the case …'.
Interviewer:	They are fearing to harass the visitor?
Pastor Benjamin:	To turn down the visitor's idea, and like if they turn down the idea, they might lose everything.
Interviewer:	So it is difficult to say no to the idea. Especially if the relationship is a new one, and if you say no at the beginning, maybe it is a no forever?
Pastor Benjamin:	You might lose out completely. (310)

Jeffrey, the head of a smaller international organization as well as a pastor, emphasized the thought conformity that happens when visitors come:

Jeffrey:	So like I said when you go up deep there, even not even deep there, near here even town here, some people everything you say, because you have the money, they will say 'yes yes.' Without having to say no. When you go up to the mountains, they must just say, 'yes yes yes' when they are saying 'no no no.' [laughter]
Interviewer:	Behind the back they say 'no no no.'
Jeffrey:	Behind the back. Yes. (B004)

Corruption

One more negative fruit of partnership is corruption, which like dependency is manifested inside of partnership but is also found much more widely in society. Also, like dependency, corruption is a widely examined and a well known phenomenon, which I here note without discussing extensively.

Transparency Corruption Perception Index ranked Uganda as the 149th most corrupt nation out of 180 nations surveyed in 2018 (Transparency International 2019). Corruption runs deep in Uganda, and it would be remarkable if it was not equally deep in the grassroots practice of local-to-local partnership. So it is no surprise that corruption within local-to-local relationships is widely known and, at times, easily observed by locals:

Pastor Abraham: Like we have seen Pastor *[Jonathan]* now joined politics, his church has got various partners, who have come and left money for construction and they go. And he looks for others, they come and leave money and go. Every partner receives a different structural plan for the church, they send money and the church is not built. So, one Christian told me that that church will never be completed because they have put it there as a strategy to raise funds. If it gets completed quickly, they will stop receiving!

[Laughter]

Pastor Jonas: Eeeh, so have they began the foundation?

Pastor Abraham: Yes, they have begun, and even the first wall is built, and broken several times! As long as they get new partners, they keep making adjustments every time.

Pastor Jonas: Yes. I went to *[village]* and I saw it. (L003)

The very nature of local-to-local partnerships leave them vulnerable to corruption and fraud. Two defining features of these relationships is that they span vast geographic and cultural difference with no professional mediating the relationship; secondly, they are often small-scale and less structured than their gatekeeper counterparts. This absence of professionals and structures often results in less accountability in the raising, transfer, receipt, and disbursement of funds. When a partner comes to a church, Pastor James relates, people jockey and fight for an advantageous position.

> Even members within one church, now that they know there is this support coming in, the committee that you have, the leaders that you have, will want to sit together to think of how they can begin to benefit personally from that same money. And they will struggle to see which leaders need to be removed from leadership. So that when this money comes, I am the one heading *[the committee],* it's me now. So that has happened before. Those kind of relationships, there has been a lot of conflict. (008)

Similarly, Pastor Jonathan has observed that 'there are cases where one person *[will]* be treasurer, because *[s/he]* is faster *[clever/quick to benefit her/himself]*.'

An additional risk factor on the local, cultural dimension of these relationship, is that the local gatekeeper/patron is often not accountable to their congregants, clients or other constituents. Similarly, Maxwell describes the largest Pentecostal church in Zimbabwe as being governed by an 'authoritarian hierarchy and personality cult' (1998:352) and in Ghana, Gifford contents that the Big Men of Pentecostal churches are unaccountable and unchallengeable (2004).

Nonetheless, because Big Men must also share some benefits with his/her clients, and because financial misappropriation and corruption are much harder to hide from

locals than they are from overseas partners, the financial dividends of partnerships are distributed to clients on lower tiers as well:

Bishop Robert:	Another thing, partnerships cause a lot of collusion. I remember one of my pastors, he told me himself, that… he quarrelled with his pastor called *[Pastor John]*. This pastor diverted the funds, I don't know how, well I don't know most of the details, but this person *[pastor]* is the one who told me that it was *[Pastor John]*. That pastor *[who told me]* became very tough, to the extent that *[Pastor John]* gave him something to silence him.
Interviewer:	[Laughs] So the one who toughs receives, and those who keep quiet miss out?
Bishop Robert:	Yes! So that is what happens in churches which have partners. (L001)

<u>New Bad Fruit</u>

As compared to the fruits of dependency and corruption, some consequences of local-to-local partnership are more novel, born from or greatly amplified by the particular dynamics inside of local-to-local partnerships. These negative consequences include a relatively new form of theft, specifically the stealing of a Muzungu's allegiance or the theft of a whole congregation(s). Other negative fruit includes local mistrust and suspicion of overseas partners, often over fears of Western sexual mores, sometimes over perceptions of racism, and even over suspicions of underlying profit motives of their partners.

This can be difficult reading for a Western audience, but my purpose is not to discourage. Rather, I intend to re-center a conversation which, in light of what is shown here, often presents a picture of local-to-local partnership that is one-sidedly optimistic. In that sense, I am presenting the negative or pessimistic 'pole' as a counterweight to the prevailing positive or optimistic pole, in order to swinging the pendulum towards a middle ground which better reflects the wonderful and wicked, multidimensional reality of cross-cultural partnership.

Stealing Muzungus

If a relationship with a Muzungu is an asset which is carefully safeguarded, as argued in chapter four, then it is because a Muzungu is something which can be stolen. Exactly that seems to happen with some frequency. Phrases such as 'hijack this Muzungu' (339), 'visitor was hooked away' (207B), 'his Muzungu was snatched from him and taken to another district' (29), 'break the partnership to move this partner from here to them' (8), and specific anecdotes ('there is one who tricked Pastor Ben's partners' [L003].) are common in my conversations. Here is the experience of Bishop Eliab:

Bishop Eliab: He took away my visitor. Because the Muzungu …
Interviewer 1: See, I hear this so often! It's common.
Bishop Eliab: ,,, this Muzungu came somewhere, like as you have come and met here, we met him but when it came to … like, as I told you, I'm the chairman *[of churches in cooperation together]*, now when he wanted some deep information, he brought him to me.

Now, I called my fellow pastors around to fellowship with the friend, *[I did this so as to]* maybe not to take for granted that I'm just talking my own things that are not on ground. So later on, he *[my visitor]* came with twelve young men who were to preach the gospel. We took them through, they preached the gospel and, when I gave him information as I'm talking to you, he picked interest in me. And feel that maybe he would make a centre of his concentration at my church base.
Interviewer 1: Ok
Bishop Eliab: So when this friend *[local friend of mine]* heard of that, he befriended one of the *[Ugandan]* brothers who was escorting them *[Bazungu]* from Kampala.
Interviewer 1: Ok
Bishop Eliab: And then told him *[the Ugandan brother who was escorting the Bazungu],* that 'when we take them this way, we are also going to benefit.' So they took them somewhere, when they preached the gospel.
When this one *[Muzungu visitor]* called from Kampala to communicate to me, he *[local friend of mine]* told him that I *[the Bishop being interviewed]* have gone abroad. So he cancelled the program. Later on, when I found somebody who was supposed to coordinate the relationship, he told me that that one has channelled his relationship now, he has gone….
Interviewer 2: [Laughs]
Bishop Eliab: And up to date I have not got a prominent donor. (207)

Even as donors can sometimes be found over the internet and social media, they can likewise be stolen over the internet. I documented two cases of funds from partners stolen using the internet, using stolen identity and email login information, one of which involved a brutal physical assault. In fact, the stakes can go higher still: the death of a local pastor, generally thought (not proven) to be a murder, is attributed to a falling-out with his Kenyan church partners.

Given these very real dangers that arise when engaging in partnership, church leaders trust very few people with their partners. In the story below, the church is split or 'broken off' because of a missionary. It appears to have come about by an elder capitalizing on a disagreement between the pastor and the missionary.

Interviewer 2: We had a discussion with one of the pastors, who was of the view that if the pastor is not at the centre, the Christian or the elder or the deacon or the worship leader, who*[ever]* will be in charge of the guests, will try to pull and divert the guest to his own personal gain.
We also had some missionaries who have come in Mbale here but they *[missionaries]* found no problem splitting the church: 'So if pastor can't agree with me,' *[the missionary said]* 'I will go with the elder.' And then the elder has broken off the church here, and started another church. *[The elder]* said bad things about the pastor: 'He has a few problems in the past, I think you need to be aware of this and this….'

Pastor Daniel: I think that's why most pastors have decided to try to protect. I used to work at *[big hotel in town]*, it is the church *[that met there]* that hosted the missionaries at the church, now during that stay I interacted with one *[missionary]* who said "It was my first time to come to Africa but we were told by the person hosting us that Ugandans are very terrible don't even interact with anyone, they are coming to cheat you. But the response we are getting is different! You *[Ugandans]* are too *[i.e. very]* receptive, we have enjoyed our stay here!" So…
[Laughter]
…there are pastors, when they are connecting those partners, there are some information they give them that 'Even in our church we don't trust anyone, it's only me.'

Interviewer 1: 'Only me. I am the only one who is trustworthy.'
[Laughter] (333)

Stealing Churches

Rather than a relationship with a Muzungu being stolen, or a church being split, both of which seem to have happened in the story above, a local church can be stolen intact and transferred from one association to another. Empowered through or enticed by their possession of a White, local leaders can choose to re-affiliate their church from one group or denomination to another, or independent churches can opportunistically and temporarily take on an association.

After understanding the characteristics of local-to-local partnership, Reverend Titus was asked if he knows of such partnerships. He responded affirmatively, and the evidence he cites for the existence of these partnerships is how churches in a different denomination, as well as in his own denomination, have broken off and gone their own way:

> For example, we have this *[denominational]* church down here. They are linked directly … because they cut off themselves somehow, cut off themselves from the bigger umbrella of the *[denominational]* churches. And so those ones *[partners],* they come directly to the local church, and what they do is to see that there's development of the local church.
>
> Now, some of our churches, we have lost – like in *[my denomination]* in this case. The local churches have invited Koreans, who are now pulling and putting another organization within another organization. The churches are breaking off.
>
> So they are two ways *[to do partnership]*. If the headquarters was like opening up for the local church to invite *[partners]* and then we endorse and protect them, that would be very good. But maybe they *[headquarters]* are not doing that, therefore people are now breaking off, so that they can have their what? their partners. (C001)

As a senior clergy in a denomination which started and remains biggest in Mbale, Reverend Titus was speaking from painful personal experience.

Such breakings-off and re-alignments can, in fact, happen repeatedly within a single local church. Bishop Matthew, who heads a voluntary association of churches, recalls:

> Bishop Ezra: You could find a pastor who keeps on changing the name of the church every time because he has seen the other-- there are some missionaries in the other ministry who gives some good funds.
>
> Interviewer: Yeah.
>
> Bishop Ezra: You find he will go, I think this church, I've felt the Lord has led me to put it under you.
>
> Interviewer: Yeah.
>
> Bishop Ezra: Then maybe he will see as if there is another richer ministry which has come up. Again you'll find the same church, which we used to be called Deliverance, today is whatever, today is whatever. But not because of anything, but because of that material whatever.
>
> Every Muzungu who comes, *[the pastor]* will show, "You see this one? We are here. But we don't have anyone who is standing with us. Probably you can come in and…' Actually, of late, that's what has been working, and it is still there. Mostly in the villages anywhere, but not only villages, but even in the towns, in the cities. It is very, very possible to find a person, one pastor, who has given a church to three different Bazungus. (B005)

In the conversation below, Revered Allen returns us to the central interpretive metaphor of this study: the religious marketplace, in which the pastor, the founder and owner of own firm, is constantly looking for new sources of profitable goods which he can bring to consumers:

> Reverend Allen: I have begun my own church. And I give it a name which is not related to any other name. I give it a name, say, 'Door of God Church' isn't it? Now I am the authority, I am the owner. I am everything.
>
> Interviewer: And there are many stories. Door of God church learns about, say, Barnabas Ministries International - they have some money for some projects. So they change the name, Door of Barnabas church, and then they become something over here.
>
> Reverend Allen: So, they keep on. It is like a business man who keeps on to see where are my goods coming from, and what is the price? If I buy them, how much profit shall I get?
>
> Interviewer: So the entrepreneur of the church?

Reverend Allen: The entrepreneur of the church!
[Laughing] (B001)

The observations of Reverend Titus, Bishop Ezra, and Revered Allen illuminates the experience of an Asian missionary friend of mine who served in Uganda. The mission of which he was a part funds the construction of church buildings across the country. After the inauguration of the church, and after the Asian donors/visitors have gone home, it was common for the dedication plaques on the building, showing the donor and denominational information, to disappear off the church not long thereafter (L004). These plaques, it seems, are often the casualties of the search for new alliances, affiliations, and instrumental friendships.

Even when a church is not stolen from a denomination, local churches and their leaders can successfully overpower denominational structures and lines of ecclesial authority. In Pastor Nathanael's denomination, the wealth and influence conferred on a local church by their overseas partner resulted in senior church authorities decided against removing a local pastor, rather than run the risk of that pastor taking his Muzungu-supported church (and the attendant health clinic) out of the denominational fellowship:

Interviewer: And they basically steal the Muzungu, they take the relationship. Has this thing happened before? Do these happen?

Pastor Nathanael: Me I'm going to speak as a *[member of my denomination]*. It is there. Yeah, it is there, because I heard it. There is a certain pastor who has a communication with a certain Muzungu, then direct on the church, they built there a clinic. So they *[denominational leadership]* wanted to hijack this Muzungu to help the *[denominational association]* in general. So I understand the Muzungu said, "I had no money to put in the *[denominational association]*, because the churches are many, so I have decided to pick one." So there, they had jealousy, but up to now the church members and the community members they say, "No since this pastor is here, they *[Muzungus]* have put here a clinic, these things is ours," Because that pastor I understand he has been telling the believers and the community members that 'these are your thing.' So they *[the church authorities/Moderator]* wanted even to chase that pastor, but these people say, "If you chase him, we are not going to welcome another pastor here." So the moderator had to leave it.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Pastor Nathanael: Always happens. Yes, because he *[the Moderator]* was afraid, because he knew that if they chase that pastor, …that Muzungu is going to buy the land maybe near that church and those believers will go there, so he had to leave that pastor. (339B)

While we do not know how the Muzungu interacted with the local believers and pastor, it is no stretch to envision a well-intentioned, egalitarian Muzungu partner wanting

to empower the local Christians and crease a positive sense of ownership, saying to the local pastor and church members 'This clinic is yours! Take it and own it!'

THE MIDDLE-GROUND OF MISTRUST

Now we examine the often-murky middle ground of mistrust. This is more contested terrain, involving perceptions and interpretations which overseas partners may deny or believe misconstrued. It involves some of the bigger and perhaps more surprising manifestations of mistrust between church leaders and their visitors, with allegations of hidden sexual agendas, gross corruption and racism. For this mistrust to be interpreted properly, it needs to be put into proper context. That context is the distrust which was and still is directed towards traditional missionaries. More encouragingly, this comparison will further show that two of the biggest complaints against traditional, gatekeeper missionaries are now considered by church leaders to be two of their biggest gains in working with local-to-local missionaries.

Mistrust of New Missionaries

Church leaders distrust today's missionaries for a variety of reasons. Here I list three reasons for that mistrust: the suspect sexual mores of Whites, experiences of missionaries' racism, and discoveries of missionaries' corruption.

Mistrust of Whites over Perceptions of Non-traditional Sexual Mores

The single biggest suspicion of Christians overseas, particularly of Whites, is of their orientation, theology, and hidden agendas around homosexuality and gay marriage. Here I cite just one example of many:

> Maybe the last one, which is most current, these whites, the demon of Sodom and Gomorrah entered them. So it means connections with the whites, especially the pastors who are already connected, we

have to be very careful. Even us who are not connected with those people that we wish to, we have to be extremely careful. Because we don't know who is true and we are partnering with them, but we don't know if this person is involved in such practices or not. Because when he/she comes here, it is not an easy thing to identify that that person is a homosexual. You will see him matching officially, he is a person of responsibility, but yet in him/her, they have that spirit, and maybe he is with an aim of how to drive this motive into the people. (L001)

Uganda's religious and political authorities espouse traditional sexual morality. This stems broadly from a literalist reading of the Bible shared with many African and majority world Christians (Lavik 2001; Ukpong 2002). In the case of Uganda specifically this also stems from, among other factors, a popular understanding of a nationally-formative narrative that the homosexual and pedophilic appetites of an animistic king contributed to the famous martyrdom of 45 Christian page boys in the mid-1880s.[9] Since at least 1997, the Church of Uganda (Anglican) has actively observed and resisted the liberalizing trajectory of the Episcopal Church in the USA (Ward 2015). More recently, around the time of my interviews, there were two events which further raised the profile of this issue in Uganda: one was the visit of Pope Francis to Uganda and the martyrs' shrine in 2015, and the second was the global uproar and backlash from Uganda's *Anti-Homosexual Act, 2014* (Valois 2016; Bompani 2016; (Anthony 2018).[10] The international opprobrium suffered by Uganda and her ruling class provoked a national and political retort, hardening and consolidating elite and popular opposition into a matter of national pride and respect.[11]

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[9] Most of the written histories make no reference to the sexual predilections of Kabaka (King) Mwanga II, and instead reference the king's fear about his slipping authority over his subjects as the sole or chief motivation in his purge (see for example (Gale 1959; Tuma 1980; Welbourn 1978; Mutugi 2001; Twaddle 1993; Sundkler & Steed 2000) . Current popular histories, however, differ. When I was first guided through the tombs of the Kabakas of Buganda, my tour guide conflated the chaste sexual mores and new Christian faith of the page boys and then contrasted their faith-based courage with the sexual deviancy and rejection of Christianity of the King. The martyrdom of these page boys is commemorated with an annual national holiday on 3 June.

[10] First introduced in Parliament in 2009, and re-introduced in 2012. Revised legislation passed Parliament in December 2013, was signed into law in February 2014, before being ruled invalid on procedural grounds by the Constitutional Court in August 2014. The issue continues to occupy time in parliament and attention in the public square, but no new or re-introduced legislation has been forthcoming.

[11] Such nationalistic pride around sexual traditionalism is a more recent phenomenon, and contrasts with Uganda's historical toleration of alternate sexualities, at least relative to some of its East African neighbours (Karakire 2014; Awondo et al. 2012).

Philip Shero's 2014 research among the Bamassaba (the dominant people group in Mbale region) came only six months after the American president's specific condemnation of Uganda's anti-homosexual bill being signed into law, and he wrote that

> It is difficult to overestimate the impact Obama's condemnation had on Bamasaaba attitudes toward the West, Western culture, and America in particular. This research trip was the first time that I did not feel wholly and warmly welcomed in Uganda as an American. (2014:83–84)

By the time I first began interviewing in 2016, the hot passions had dissipated somewhat into a rock-solid rejection of this perceived 'sexual colonialism' and a strengthened, almost reflexive suspicion that Whites, Christian or otherwise, may be practitioners and even agents of this anti-Ugandan, Western corruption.

Racism among New Missionaries

I am confident that most overseas partners or visitors would be aghast at the thought that their local hosts could silently conceive of them as biased or racist. Nonetheless, this is a widespread perception in Mbale.

> I don't know if our brothers from Europe or from the US before *[they come, what]* they think of coming to Africa. I don't think they even have that idea in their mind that we are equal. I know a friend who came from Israel and his whole suitcase, there was no trouser … *[only unprofessional]* shorts and T-shirts. He was told *[before],* in Africa people do not put on clothes. So he comes, he reaches the airport, and he doesn't see anybody naked! I was taking care of him and he was *[saying]* 'I want to go and buy clothes. I can't just walk like this.' because he went to office and he was putting on open shoes, slippers and shorts. And they told him 'We don't put on that here, this is not a bathroom.'
>
> And so, what am trying to talk about is the challenge that the missionaries who come already have a biased mind. Which is why we don't interact as freely as you are supposed to. That is, you *[a Muzungu]* demand to stay in a hotel *[rather]* than to stay with Africans in their house. He will demand to eat a different meal from the meals that are here. Their treatment when they come here is different from what even an African would offer. So when you look at equality, the people who come to Uganda as missionaries already have a biased mind towards their equality with Africans. (003)

Pastor Terry is willing to extend this complaint from 'a biased mind' to the more direct term of 'racism', and he twice alleges that this is a feature of 'most' missionaries these days:

> Pastor Terry: And then maybe to my last experience, I worked with *[a well-known mission organization]* some years. I worked there. I studied there and then I worked there. Some people come full*[time]* staff for some. Some of them take leadership position.

But you find a base that is led by an African and then the other one is led by a *Muzungu.* The other one, led by Muzungu, will grow very fast.

We realized that it is true *[that]* some, I'm not saying all, but most of the Western Christian, Born-Again believers, they still have that racism. They hide themselves in that Christ-like ministry. But an American, a British, will never take *[local pastor Tim, seated with us and here cited as an example]* the same, most of them. I'm not saying all, I'm not saying you.

Interviewer: But I understand what you are saying.
Pastor Terry: They will never take you on the same level. No. Even if he's your friend.
Interviewer: But if you ask them – they deny.
Pastor Terry: They deny! Exactly! (228)

Any conversation around the racism of white missionary is going to be limited when myself, a white missionary, is the interviewer and the interviewee is a Ugandan church leader. As such, I did not attempt a direct approach to discussing racism. Rather, I broached the subject of equality in partnership, and followed the conversation where it led. Most frequently, that led to discussions around finances and issues of control; but the perceived biases and racism of their visitors and partners also crept in to numerous conversations.

Non-African partners may be tempted to respond to these allegations by pointing to cultural differences, misunderstandings, and a host of other intervening variables to defend themselves against the harsh charge of racism. I myself was tempted to do on a couple of occasions. However, regardless of any defence that might be mounted against such harsh charges, doing so quickly or forcefully may come across as a perpetuation of white privilege, in which a White chooses to privilege his/her own perception of reality over those of his/her African host.

Corruption among New Missionaries

I have already argued that financial corruption is common among the Mbale partners in local-to-local relationships. Local church leaders see similar malfeasance among their overseas partners.

Interviewer: When you examine these things, as pastors and the church and the community,

with the white partner who is trying to help us, who do you think benefits most?

Pastor Jonas: The white partner. When you examine properly, whites, much as they are missionaries, they also make money in their own ways. It's just like their job, where they get a salary. They are the one who benefit a lot.

For us and the church and the community, we lose! There is nothing much we benefit from this partnership.

Interviewer: That is why you can find a white man coming several times, without quitting.

Pastor Jonas: Yes, he persists. So white benefits a lot. Why do you think he keeps coming from Africa to America, yet the cost of transporting himself from and back to America is very expensive? It can cost them about 4 million or 8 million *[Uganda Shillings, equivalent to 1000-2000 USD]*!

For us when they come here in large numbers, like they will come in November, as long as they buy a lot of food (they know that Africans want a lot of food), they gather us for about three or four days.

And for us we are there, listening to the word, when they are busy counting the money they have remained with. For them, they are working *[a job, making money]*. They go to the zoo in Entebbe *[city of Uganda's international airport]* and spend there a week, spend all their money on their pleasures, and they go back, without doing anything tangible for the church. [Laughing] (L003)

Local partners are well aware that today's missionaries are not making money in Uganda and returning it to their home countries. Rather, they perceive a different business model at work:

The early missionaries like you said were more sacrificial or sacrificed their lives. But nowadays preachers, missionaries from Western, they're business-minded. They come here for business. Not that they're going to get money here. So why?

Because when an American comes here and says, "For sure I feel the touch, I'm going to help them. I'll be coming here, I'm going to help." Now, we realized, some of them after going back, they begin soliciting money, say they are helping. They give reports themselves. Because they themselves also want money. Their ministry is a business-minded ministry. So whatever money they solicit there, they know how to give accountability better than us. So somebody thinks they sent the money yet he didn't send. (228)

According to Pastor Terry, this kind of corruption among New Missionaries is something that most Christian leaders in Mbale have discovered, and that it has resulted in a level of 'bitterness.' Here he relates his own story and that of another Reverend friend of his:

Pastor Terry: I cannot talk about the British, but I experienced with the Americans. If you're *[an American]* leading a team of six to Uganda, for you and then you're leading to *[local]* Pastor *[Adam]*, you ask the contribution of these other five friends of yours you're coming with. So it is you to send the money to Pastor *[Adam]*. You ask him to give you a budget. If each one is paying 2,000 US and you're six, that's how much?

Interviewer 1: Twelve thousand.

Pastor Terry: Each one 2,000.

Interviewer 1: Yeah, so it's 12,000 US.

Pastor Terry: So you will not give Pastor *[Adam]* 12,000 US. You'll either give him 1,000, if you go beyond that it will be either 3,000 or 2,000, and you do not tell the other friends.

	That's what we also discovered. We also discovered that one.
Interviewer 1:	Corruption is everywhere.
Pastor Terry:	Everywhere. So an *[overseas]* evangelist, he used to come through Kenyan branch. They had to break their working relationship because they discovered that the man had not been faithful. He gives little money. Here you're struggling, and yet the friends have given him the money to sustain the conference. There is also that bitterness. And most of us, we have discovered, like pastor said, some of them also survive on coming to Africa. They gather a lot of money but they don't bring the whole money. (228)

These allegations, widespread and deep, may come as an unpleasant surprise to Western partners in local-to-local relationships. Yet the mistrust that Mbale church leaders express towards New Missionaries is not at all new. Their longstanding distrust of traditional missionaries provides important context for understanding the mistrust directed at New Missionaries.

Mistrust of the Traditional Missionaries

Traditional, long term Missionaries were and are the recipients of a great deal of local suspicion. I briefly cover the mistrust directed at them for two reasons. Firstly, it gives some helpful, interpretive context to the distrust directed at New Missionaries, examined above. Secondly, it will similarly help put the *gains* of church leaders – the good fruit – from new, local-to-local missionaries into context. It shows how these gains are the flip side of the oft-cited complaints against traditional missionaries, the two most common being a lack of transparency and controlling behaviour.

Lack of Transparency

The common complaint brought by church leaders against traditional missionaries is their lack of transparency.

Interviewer:	Can I ask about the funds? Because in my experience, the tension is always about funds, and who is controlling, and who makes the decisions.
Pastor James:	Yes, yes, absolutely, yes. It was, it has always been. The nationals they never know the money that is coming in.. They would just know the missionary is coming to help with the tin roof. How to have raised that money? You don't know how much is coming – for the seminary, for the training. How they raised it, what did they say?

> You don't know. So they *[missionaries]* could receive the money to their mission account, and they could do with it what they wanted.
>
> So the nationals here know that it is the mission that is sponsoring a particular training or project. So it has never opened up, it has never opened up. They have owned it all, it has never opened up. (008)

Pastor Timothy complains about the lack of transparency in the methods used by missionaries to bring funds into the country:

Pastor Timothy:	By the laws of Uganda, any transaction, any whatever it's supposed to go through bank whereby you'll have bank statement, how money has been flowing in and how have been spending. Many missionaries here in Uganda, they want to receive money through their accounts. And once you have money in your account, you're the king now. But with the laws of Uganda-
Interviewer 1:	It has to be displayed. Transparency there.
Pastor Timothy:	Yeah, transparency there, some people they don't want. Any single coin should, supposed to pass through bank account, the denomination bank account, whereby if somebody is withdrawing, people will know. (071)

The stories of missionaries lacking transparency again closely echoed a situation in Brown's research (2007). A missionary, working with a Ukrainian congregation in a sister church relationship with the missionary's American church, rece ived the partial salary of the Ukrainian pastor – sent by the American church – into his personal bank account, as well as gifts from the American church to individual members of the congregation. Brown simply observes that 'Matt *[the missionary]* facilitated such individual benevolence' and that in fact 'Matt had some financial resources available that he was holding back' while he waited for the congregation to demonstrate their sincerity, saying 'I can't put the money into it, if they won't put the time into it. (2007:104–105). Ugandan church leaders would judge such a lack of transparency harshly.

Controlling Behaviour by Traditional Gatekeepers

The most frequent complaint brought against traditional missionaries was their controlling behaviour. These complaints were usually tied to and often flowed from their grievances around a lack of transparency. In the following narratives, both the word and

the notion of 'control' feature prominently. Pastor Paul reflects on his experience with missionary control:

> For some time they *[missionaries]* went on, there was some patronage. They wanted to control everything and that is how they almost lost the course, and that is how they deviated somehow. So they had the right motive but the problem was with the strategy, so the strategy was very wrong.
>
> Because when they came, I remember like in our building *[of ministry infrastructure]*, the blacks were not involved in buying land, no. So basically, at the beginning they did everything by themselves. (C003)

Pastor Terry has a current observation that is very similar to what the Pastor Paul observed in earlier years. Note how lack of transparency ('more protective') feeds control:

> One thing that's also happening nowadays with long-term missionaries is that they're getting a hold of everything. They buy land, they buy it in their names or the names of their ministry. They're buying a vehicle they're buying it in their names, names of the ministry. Everything they're doing they're doing it themselves. The African pastor helps them to have access to things and bargain*[s]* and do*[es]* what, and they *[missionaries]* have all the paper work. So they're more protective. And because of that they have control. (228)

Pastor Terry relates a story about a conflict between, on the one side, a local student and her overseas sponsor, and, on the other hside, the White missionaries who want to remain in control, both on the Ugandan side (control of the girl) and the overseas side (control of the donor, controlling compassion 'has to be through us):

> Pastor Terry: I've somehow worked with missionaries, I know. It's all about guarding. Like this one *[girl]* is now penetrating, 'It's going to be out of our control now.'
> So they *[missionaries]* started alleging, making allegations. These ones don't want to lose him [*the overseas sponsor]* because he's a big donor, but they don't want this girl to take grip of him - she's moving beyond her boundaries.
>
> And so *[the overseas sponsor]* says, 'I am just helping this girl,' and whatever. And these ones *[missionaries living in Mbale area]* are like, 'This girl whom he just picked from wherever? If anything wrong, we're going to fire her at work. And secondly we're going to chase her out of the church. And thirdly we're going to make sure she doesn't have any other, whatever,' that kind of message.
>
> Now in the expression with him, they *[missionaries]* were fearful that they might lose him. Yet … they didn't want this girl to continue. So they still want to be in control.
> Interviewer 1: They didn't want her to continue…
> Pastor Terry:: …interacting with *[the overseas sponsor]*. Working directly with the girl, and you completely break from these *[missionaries]*. But what these ones wanted is control – 'If you're compassionate to this one, has to be through us.' (228)

Issues of control are not merely perceived as a problem with individual missionaries, or even of a number of 'bad apples' among them. Pastor James shared how,

in his denomination, the missionaries collectively decided to keep themselves separate from the national church structure.[12]

> The missionaries wanted to be separate, so that the *[national church]* cannot have undue influence over them, or demands on them. So they had a relationship but they *[national church]* did not have full control. But of course, since the mission were the ones who go in and put the roof on, and some church in some village, or can fund a Bible school or seminary… (008)

Pastor James did not need to finish his thought, because his thinking was evident to both of us: the missionaries, and their separate and well-funded structure, continued to exert a high level of control in the relationship. In chapter three, I related a historical incidence in which Anglican missionaries choose to maintain themselves in a separate structure from the national Church of Uganda. This story involves a different denomination (Born Again rather than Anglican, and predominantly American missionaries rather than British|), but the parallels are unmistakable and unsettling.

Pastor Terry laments that Old Missionaries can spoil New Missionaries when they invite and host them, and thereby impose their control on these short-term teams and visitors:

> Pastor Terry: In most cases short term missionaries come on the invitation and the back of another missionary who is already a long term missionary here. It's different from, if I, the Ugandan pastor, have invited a short term missionary, it's different.
>
> In most cases long term missionaries really orientate the short term missionaries: 'Don't give out your email addresses. Don't move out alone with an African person. Make sure you inform me where you're going' and any other thing.
>
> So by the time other people within the church are interacting with them, these ones are moving on restrictions. They are being invited by this missionary. And he'll *[long term missionary]* make sure it is-they're guarding their interest.
>
> Interviewer 1: So still the missionary is somehow in the middle.
>
> Pastor Terry: So it's a bit difficult the way you view a short term missionary who has come riding on another missionary's invitation. They still want to be in control. That's what I've seen.
>
> So short term missionaries nowadays, they're very good when they have come directly to an African. When they come through a missionary, there's no difference between them and the missionaries. (228)

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[12].

The stories of missionary control are echoed in a case study in Brown's research (2007). A missionary, working with a Ukrainian congregation (which he had previously planted but was not pastoring) that was engaged in a sister church relationship with an American church, saw himself as a facilitator and advocate of the sister-church relationship, calling himself a 'cultural coach for communication as it goes both ways' (2007:90). Nevertheless, the missionary clearly more than a coach and mediator, saying of himself and his wife that 'we are the in-between, but as the in-between, we will call the shots' when difficult or conflictual situations would arise in the partnership.

THE GOOD FRUIT

In continuing this examination of mistrust, I have placed this last part under the discussion about positive consequences of local-to-local relationships. The evidence indicates that mistrust inside partnership has shifted significantly, even as partnership itself has changed. Mistrust and suspicion, as shown above, are hardly new. Yet a new dynamic, born out of local-to-local engagement, has engendered a shift in the focus of mistrust, moving it from the old gatekeepers to new gatekeepers.

I argue that this displacement and re-centring of mistrust is, in fact, a positive consequence of the local-to-local relationship paradigm. I count this shift as evidence that a new class of gatekeepers has gathered substantial power and authority which were previously vested in overseas partners. Such a shift in power is, in my ledger book, an unambiguous move in a positive direction. Thus, I classify this re-directed mistrust as the first of the good fruits coming from local-to-local relationships. Following the good fruit of this re-directed mistrust, I then briefly examine two other good fruits enjoyed by church leaders: greater transparency and greater control.

Displacing Mistrust - from Traditional to New Gatekeepers

Notice how in the following dialogue the main object of the suspicion of local church leaders has shifted *from* the foreign visitor *to* their own church superiors, who are referred to as 'big men'. This conversation is between three elders/leaders of three nearby local churches, and my research assistant and myself. The discussion took place in a mixture of English and Lugisu, with on-the-spot translation through my research assistant, identified as Interviewer 2 in the transcript. The Lugisu contributions of James, Mary and Geoffrey are voiced through interviewer number two. We discussed about a previous visitor's as-yet unfulfilled promise to give bicycles to the local church elders:

Pastor Geoffrey: She *[the visitor]* promised.
Interviewer 2: Promised to be given bicycles.
Interviewer 2: So that they can follow up on the people who have received Christ from that crusade.
Interviewer 1: So the bicycles were given to the elders then?
Elder James: Not yet.
Pastor Geoffrey: Not yet.
Interviewer 1: Okay.
Interviewer 2: But his thinking is…
Elder Mary: His blame maybe.
Interviewer 2: His blame is that the elders might not have played a good role. But for her *[the visitor]*, she has played *[her role]*, fulfilled her what?
Elder James: Her promise.
Interviewer 2: Promise. But the ones who receive are not the ones who have not really acted faithfully.
Elder James: Those big men who are in offices.
Interviewer 2: That's what he's saying.
Elder Mary: He *[James]* is just alleging.
Interviewer 2: He's *[Geoffrey]* not so sure if she bought, or she fulfilled the promise. But, he is saying, he's just suspecting or assuming she might have. Why he says… why he says she might have fulfilled? Because part of the promises, one of the promises was to renovate the church.
Elder Mary: They did.
Interviewer 2: And that one was done. (104)

Later in the same conversation, Elder James similarly reveals his suspicion of his denominational leaders, rather than the American visitor, for the fact that the visitor's promise three tonnes of posho (a local, mixed-grain food staple) and three tonnes of beans for local churches (local communities through the local churches – the distinction is not

always clear) did not materialize in his church. Once again, all three participate in the recounting of events:

Elder James: Okay in *[my denomination]*, it is the same thing when the visitor come or an American come to preach, but if he reach from the headquarters…
Interviewer 2: Yes, yes.
Elder James: Our headquarters, if the visitor reach start from *[local headquarters]*, they receive him. Now the leaders of *[local headquarters]* is the one who will come with him. He's the one … who will come with him to visit us in the lower churches.
Pastor Geoffrey: Now it is very important that, you can't, if you have anything you must talk through…
Interviewer 2: Pass through the leader.
Pastor Geoffrey: You must pass through, because there's someone, there's some Americans who came, I can remember his name…we were with, they called us in Mbale in…
Interviewer 2: Mbale *[church/area headquarters of denomination]*
Pastor Geoffrey: Central Mbale, central church *[denomination]*. But that man said that it was the time of rain, that of which say that El-Nino. The man promised us that they *[were]* going to bring 3 tons of posho and 3 tons of maize…of…
Elder Mary: Of beans.
Pastor Godfrey: Of beans.
Elder Mary: To each church?
Elder James: No.
Pastor Geoffrey: Spiritual district. They said that *[this spiritual district/group of local churches]* we're going to bring 3 tons of maize and 3 tons of beans, but we didn't get it. But we have the information that those things were…
Elder Mary: Were brought.
Pastor Geoffrey: Were brought, but it didn't reach us or we didn't get even one kilogram of that…of what he said.
Pastor Geoffrey: That is a big challenge.
Interviewer 1: Big challenge.

In other interviews involving another denomination, the same issue of mistrust of higher church authorities came up. This mistrust is not without a basis, but is grounded in both a wider culture of corruption in Uganda and, in many cases, in the experiences of pastors like Stephen:

> Yeah like in our group *[denomination]* here, Muzungu can sometimes promise but at times you don't see it. Because the Muzungu can send the thing but, again, it get lost from our headquarters. I remember one time there is a brother, a fellow pastor down that way, a Muzungu promised to buy him a piki *[motorcycle]* because this man was very far from the place, and the Muzungu promised to send him some money and then he buy a piki, But then when the money came, the money was confiscated. They *[church authorities]* thought that maybe the pastor this pastor might ran away with the what? The piki. Again they made it to be theirs, and then they used to get money from that piki, and then they could give him something *[of less value to assuage or silence him]*. And that is what I saw. (289)

Note that the promise of a motorcycle (and of bicycles, in the interview with Godfrey, Mary and James) was made directly from the visitor to specific individuals or a select group (the organizers of an evangelism crusade). This promise may well have been deemed inappropriate by the visitor's host, the higher local authorities. Whether or not it was later deemed inappropriate and overruled, the fact that the promise went unfulfilled

bred mistrust between those who heard the promise, and those church authorities through whose hands any donated funds would pass.

The new gatekeepers have the unenviable balancing act of trying to protect their Bazungu (from sickness, from distress and discouragement, from objectification and dollarization, from theft) without creating mistrust between themselves and their leaders or congregants. While I have no doubt that these new gatekeepers are in a better cultural position to do so than the Whites from whom they inherited their position, mistrust nonetheless abounds. In this example, Pastor Paul narrates the story of a fellow pastor (senior to himself in age and stature) named John, who found himself in a lose-lose position, caught between his visitors and his own elders:

Pastor Paul: Actually at one time missionaries kept coming and there were these … I don't know how I can call it … the mentality was not a good one, for some Christians, like "Why do the Bazungu only go to Pastor John's place, is he the only one who has a home?"
Interviewer: Right.
Pastor Paul: They would come 20 missionaries, volunteers from a Bible school from Tennessee or wherever. They come to visit stay around for 2 weeks, one month, and they go. And some of the elders in the church were like "We also want to host them, why are you only the one who hosts Bazungu?' He *[Pastor John]* even released them to go to some of the …
Interviewer: The houses.
Pastor Paul: The houses. And they would go there and come out, and those elders who had hosted them became embarrassed, disappointed. Because they expected that when a Muzungu comes they are going to give them money.
Interviewer: Right.
Pastor Paul: But the whites … usually if they have clear minds they usually don't want to go against their hosts. And they don't want to do anything without the knowledge of their host, they always want a word. So what their host tells them is what they follow, to be careful. (012)

Pastor Hillary relates this personal story of acting in his gatekeeper capacity to protect his Welsh partner churches from off-putting requests for material assistance by local churches, in the early days of the PONT and MCAP partnership:

Pastor Hillary: So we got the list of eight first schools, which was great. Eight first schools then we merged them *[paired them with a partner]* in 2004. Then we also got churches which had interest, 10 of them, we again merged them to start.

Then we encouraged the churches here to make a-- to write to the other churches. So what happened was, to get the other ones to write – because it was a challenge, a very big challenge in the beginning, knowing that this was a new idea. And then most of the churches… were still looking at a white man, to a white man as a source of income.

So when we asked them to write letters, the letters were awful.

[Laughter]

Pastor Hillary: They were-
Interviewer: We need?
Pastor Hillary: We need! It's a long shopping list. You have not begun a relationship! Then, we get back *[to the letter writers, and]* said: first of all, let the marriage work. Don't start with telling this guy, this boyfriend you want to marry, 'me yes, a car!'
Interviewer: [Laughs]
Pastor Hillary: It is not going to… it is going to break before it starts! So let's say how are you, fine, I love you, I want to be with you. And then other things can develop from there, than really starting with this one. So we had to sieve off a lot of letters in the beginning but, even if we are sieving off, we knew inward the motive of our people are because they have already showed you all the--
Interviewer: You could not change them all.
Pastor Hillary: You cannot change them, you just you change the content in this letter, but the purpose, the behind, it 'okay we are excited we want that partner from UK thank you so much.' 'They are going to construct a classroom, they are going to construct a church, they are going to support our orphans they are going to give us salaries, they are going to….'
Interviewer: But how do you manage those expectations?
Pastor Hillary: That is where the challenge is…. So that's why most of them have not worked well, because of managing the expectations. And usually, in any relationship, shattered expectations destroy relationships. That's why, when I'm going to wed people or join people, I have to ask them, 'What are your expectations?' (B002)

Mistrust Between Leaders

The mistrust that interviewer 2 and Pastor Thomas voice about other Christians leaders, based on the perceived hoarding of the benefits of the White missionary, is widespread, and underlying suspicions can break out into fighting between leaders:

Jeffrey: If you are a missionary and i visited your house, maybe you lived in town and I'm in the village and I came to your house, even if you *[the missionary]* gave me nothing, and I passed down and bought a shoe and the other Christians saw me going back with a new shoe, they would say that one *[Pastor Ezra]* has been there *[to the missionary's home]…*
Interviewer: …has been to the Muzungu.
Jeffrey: So there was a lot of that kind of fighting. The fight that I was telling you about among the *[denomination's church]* leaders was actually based on that. They said you know the missionary loves that one better than, that one is exploiting our missionary. You know, those kinds of things. (B004)

Mistrust Between Leaders and Congregants

In addition to navigating the suspicions of her/his fellow leader, gatekeeper pastors must also navigate the expectations of their parishioners. Any partnership – even through its very existence – can easily create a wedge between a pastor and her/his own congregation:

Pastor Jonas: So the problem we face is people begin to assume that the pastor has got a lot of money, *[even]* when there is nothing really big that they *[missionary]* help the church. That is the challenge of having a missionary when there is nothing good you benefit from them. That is a big problem, because it gives birth to a situation where the Christians begin to doubt you, claiming that 'I think the whites are giving you money.'

At one time, I was summoned in a meeting at church and I heard some rumours here and there, so I called him *[the missionary]* so that he can talk to them. He instead abused them on phone and stated clearly that for him he doesn't have money that he gives, "Don't think that we give *[Pastor Lewis]* money, we don't give him any money, not even a coin". So that's the challenge we have.

Because there are some of these partner who come with their own programs. You think you have got a partner who is going to help you, but he doesn't. You can stay with him, but he does not give you anything.

Interviewer: And they are many now days.

Pastor Jonas: Very many. (L003)

The same mistrust can crop up back home, when a local pastor returns from a visit to an overseas partner:

Pastor Jenneth: You see most of the time when we go out there *[overseas]* and you come here people will think you came with sacks and sacks of money.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Pastor Jenneth: The moment you, you step on the plane and you go, those you've left behind, the family people, the church people, the friends, when I came back everybody was asking me what did you bring for me? Don't finish all that dollar because I also need it. But sincerely talking there is not even the dollar they're talking about. (170)

Rather than endure the embarrassment of 'being there like a picture' and allowing his name to be spoilt in his own congregation, Pastor Lewis' advice for how pastors should deal with a partner who bestows no financial or material benefits is clear: 'you just separate ways.'

Interviewer: Now a person like that one who does not give you anything, if he comes today and visits, and the Christians know that Pastor *[Lewis]* has hosted a visitor, goes back without doing anything in church, and he again says he wants to come back to the church and preach the gospel, then he goes back again without giving anything. When this person wants to come back again, do you allow him?

Pastor Jonas: That one is self-explanatory. You just separate ways. Not just being there like a picture, no no.

Interviewer: And he just spoils the name of the pastor, that the pastor is benefitting. And yet there is nothing he is benefitting.

Pastor Jonas Yes. You let him go. Instead of being there doing nothing.

Interviewer: Yes, because if he keeps coming, people will say "the pastor has a secret with this man."

Pastor Jonas: Yes. You have a secret, which is not true!

Interviewer: Yet when he goes, do you think it's better he does not come back?

Pastor Jonas: Yes. (L003)

Mistrust in the Ugandan Church

Uganda, as a nation, exhibits low levels of social trust. The World Values Survey found that 7.6 percent of Ugandans believed that 'most people can be trusted', the second lowest score of any nationality included in the survey (WVS Association 2020). As one can then expect, mistrust and suspicion are pervasive in the church as well; not simply among the lay believers, but extending throughout the church hierarchy. Gez, in her study of completion and affiliation among churches in Nairobi (2018), and Valois, in her analysis of competition for members among churches in Kampala (2016), show that rumours, gossip, slander and scandal are part and parcel, and indeed weapons wielded, in the fierce competition among churches (and church leaders) for adherents.

Summary – Mistrust as Good Fruit

It is in this church climate, then, in which I argue that the mistrust voiced and felt by church leaders because of partnership is, on balance, a good fruit. This is because this mistrust evidences a shift in authority inside of mission, a shift enabled by the local-to-local mode of partnership. The mistrust previously directed at traditional gatekeepers is now often redirected towards the urban and influential pastors acting as the New Gatekeepers. If this shift in mistrust is a signal of a shift in authority towards African leaders, then that is something that can be embraced and celebrated, particularly from an African perspective.

Even those who arguably stand to lose the most – the traditional, gatekeeper missionaries – actually have something to gain. In local-to-local engagements, they are no longer an easy foil for local church leaders in assigning blame for the challenges and failures of partnership. Instead, the New Gatekeepers are taking up the challenge of managing cross-cultural partnerships. So, partnership disputes, and their resolution, are often closer to home, both geographically and culturally.

In the same way, an easy foil for the overseas local partner has also been removed. The imperial and colonial mistakes of their countryman missionaries in the past are vaguely understood by wide swaths of the populations in western nations. Less understood are the oversights and errors committed among todays' local-to-local practitioners. Going forward, the mistakes of the past bear diminishing responsibility for the current and future challenges of cross-cultural partnership. Now that the missionary's moderating (and, at times, reality-distorting) filter has been removed, today's overseas partners have new opportunities to learn and grow in mission partnership.

Other Good Fruits

Having mapped the murky middle ground of partnership mistrust, both when it manifests as a negative fruit as well as a positive signal, I now turn to the good fruit of overseas, local-to-local partnerships. It is important to put bad fruit we have just reviewed into proper context. Because clearly, it is not all bad news.

Happiness

In fact, church leaders today are overall remarkably happy with their local-to-local relationships, with a full 84 percent reporting that they are either happy or very happy, as documented in table 6.1. Having said that, there is an interesting caveat to the church leaders happiness with these relationships: their happiness levels in traditional relationships are actually eight percent (7.6%) higher than they are in local-to-local relationships. [13]

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[13] Traditional overseas relationships are those which, based on the survey responses (see Appendix 2), did not fit the category of 'local-to-local.' The responses indicated that there was a traditional gatekeeper mediating the relationship.

The slightly higher happiness in traditional relationships comes despite the fact that leaders decision-making authority is actually 40 percent (40.4%) lower than in local-to-local relationships. Church leaders' relational happiness, then, does not appear to depend upon their level of control (as measured by decision-making authority) inside of their partnerships. We have limited direct evidence, but I believe that the greater happiness derived from more local control in local-to-local relationships (as argued below) is offset by the greater resources available in traditional ones (as evidenced by the survey, see chapter four).

Table 6.1 Levels of Happiness in Local-to-Local Relationships

	Level of Happiness in Current Relationships					
	Very Happy	Happy	Neutral	Unhappy	Very Unhappy	TOTALS
No. or Respondents	32	22	5	4	1	64
Percentages	50.0%	34.4%	7.8%	6.3%	1.6%	100.0%

Notably, there is a clear positive correlation between the level of happiness in the relationships, and the number of different types of funds received. One cannot support a causal argument – that greater funding creates greater happiness – from the survey data. The correlation is nonetheless compelling and supports the argument in chapter four, that funds are the most-valued product that a local-to-local relationships can bring to a local church. The correlation between happiness and funding is visualized in Figure 6.2, with Table 6.2 showing the underlying data. We see that that no church leader whose church was receiving at least two different types of funds reported that they were unhappy or very unhappy in their relationship.

Even with these qualifications and caveats, the fact remains that church leaders are quite happy with their overseas friendships. Unless we chose to dismiss their testimony, we can be encouraged by that fact.

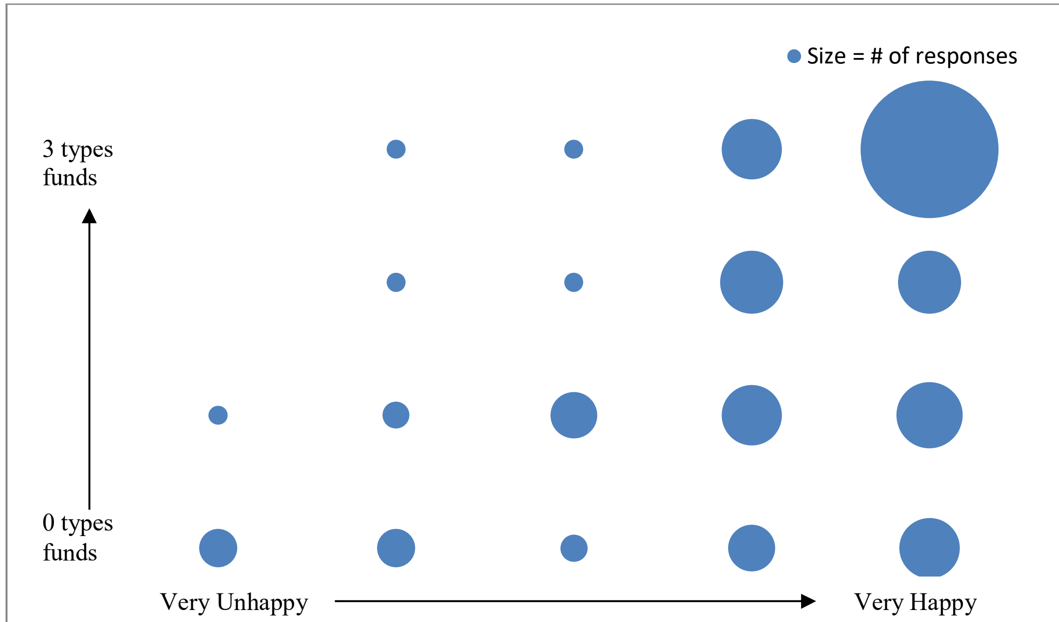

Figure 6.1 Happiness and Number of Funding Types in All Overseas Relationships

Table 6.2 Happiness and Number of Funding Types in All Overseas Relationships

	Very Unhappy	Unhappy	Neutral	Happy	Very Happy	Total
0 Types of Funds	4	4	2	6	10	26
1 Type of Funds	1	1	6	10	12	30
2 Types of Funds	0	1	1	11	11	24
3 Types of Funds	0	1	1	10	52	64
Total	5	7	10	37	85	144

Having looked at happiness in local-to-local relationships, I now give, and very briefly, give very brief a taste of two well-known good fruit, before spending a bit more time biting into two fruits that have not been sampled as extensively in the literature.

Friendship and Physical Infrastructure

Perhaps the most obvious, well-known good fruit of local-to-local friendships is friendship. Of course, friendship covers a wide spectrum of relationships, from those struck up on the internet (259) to enduring relationships with many months spent together spread over years in ministry (012). Whether praising the virtues of their friend ('My

friend … actually spent all his insurance, his real savings and so on, actually put it in this place' (179)) or complaining about their latent racism ('They will never take you on the same level. No, even if he's your friend, like ours' (228, also 003)), the most common descriptive noun of their overseas partner is that of friend. At least when speaking to a Muzungu researcher, local church leaders are quick to highlight their relationships overseas, and to call them friends: of 21 interviews with pastors in local-to-local relationships,[14] 20 used the term 'friend' to describe their partner.

If friendship is the most obvious good fruit, then infrastructure is the most visible good fruit. Countless church buildings have been constructed with the funds transferred to Mbale Christians inside of these partnerships. In one Mbale sub county alone, for example, American churches from a single denomination donated for the construction of twelve church buildings, including the purchase of the land and the construction of the church buildings and pastor's residences, with local rumours of more on the way (104). Other infrastructure that is easily seen include various schools (B005, 150, 012), health clinics (012, 339), and clean water bore holes (C003, 104, 293).

My very brief treatment of these two good fruit (friendship and physical infrastructure) is not meant to minimize their importance and positive impact – I simply have little new to add to what has been established and can be readily seen. We now turn to examine two less-documented, positive fruits that local church leaders harvest from local-to-local partnership. These two positives, the most frequently cited positives of local-to-local partnerships, are in fact direct answers to the most-cited negatives of traditional ones. Whereas traditional gatekeepers are criticized for controlling behaviours and lack of transparency, the positive fruits of local-to-local relationships are greater autonomy and greater transparency.

[14] Twenty one interviews with a full transcription; two additional interviews were based on my notes either during or immediately after the interview.

Greater Control for Local Pastors

A good fruit reported by church leaders is that that they enjoy significantly greater decision-making authority inside their overseas partnerships. This showed up firstly in the telephone survey. The survey asked respondents to grade, on a scale of 0 to 10, 'who makes the major decisions in this partnership.' As noted above, when responses were disaggregated by type of relationship (traditional v. local-to-local), the level of decision-making authority vested in the local church in local-to-local respondents is 40 percent greater compared to their traditional peers.

This is reflected in a conversation with Pastor James (008). The foreign mission associated with this denomination was, he shared, 'no longer seen, they are no longer around' and giving aid to build or assist local churches. I asked him 'Is this a good thing or a bad thing?' and his answer was unequivocal, 'It's a good thing.' At the same time, Pastor James applauded the partnership his denomination had with another US-based organization. I asked him to

> help me understand this. Because I believe it is a good thing that the *[foreign]* mission has pulled back and yet it's also a good thing that this *[new partner]* has come in *[to]* assist with some of those things. I want to understand, what is the difference?

Pastor James replied,

> There is a difference. This *[new partner]* is not the founder, so it works on partnership. The founder, they are like a parent, they just tell what to do when, and their funding and their support has strings attached. So conditional, is not free. So with this one *[new partner]* this is more free, and you talk through an equal relationship. Of course, there is no equality with someone is funding you, but this one has really taken over, and looks more vibrant than it ever was under the *[mission]*. Under the *[mission]*, there was nothing like this. (008)

One specific way in which church leaders feel empowered is through the information control that they enjoy relative to their visitors. The poverty of visitors in local knowledge and cultural understanding places then in a subservient position. Whereas long-term missionaries view this as a key weakness of local-to-local mission,[15]

[15] Given the focus of the research, I chose not to interview any overseas missionaries. However, my friendship and informal conversations with many missionaries over the years lead me to believe that this is a very nearly universal understanding among traditional, overseas gatekeepers.

local church leaders see this as a key positive of the local-to-local model. It is a means through which they can exert some form of equality in the relationship.

Interviewer:	Is it possible to be equal or is not possible to be equal? You understand my question?
Pastor Nathanael:	Yes [laughs].
Interviewer:	I want your opinion on that.
[Laughter]	
Pastor Nathanael:	Sometimes is, it is impossible [laughs] because … and sometime is possible. It is like [laughs]-
Interviewer:	Yeah. You explain me more, please.
Pastor Nathanael:	Let me explain on, on possibility, being possible. Is like when a visitor comes to your home and you, you have to be above him, not so?
Interviewer:	Yes, you are hosting them, you feed them.
Pastor Nathanael:	Yes. When they come this way, for us sometimes we be above them. And on the side of finance, you know sometimes we may not have finance, and when somebody is giving you finance, maybe to run something, he can be above you.
Interviewer:	True.
Pastor Nathanael:	So that is why I say sometimes is possible and sometimes it is impossible. You're coming to visit me and I am the one responsible to take you everywhere you want. Because when the Bazungu comes, and they *[higher pastor]* gives us Bazungu to move with them, when we reach somewhere they say, 'You move with him, maybe move with her at exactly this, this time you bring him, what? Back.' And I'm the one in control. To lead you everywhere I want -
Interviewer:	To show you what I want to show you.
Pastor Nathanael:	Yes, so for you, you just follow me, it is like now I'm above you. (339B)

Greater Transparency

Pastors James and Nathanael both admit that, when one partner is on the receiving end of funds, it will not be a partnership of true equals. Nonetheless, that there are clear gains in transparency (particularly with regard to finances) between Whites and themselves. Transparency and equality are linked, in the same way that control and equality are linked above.

Pastor James repeatedly equated a lack of transparency by missionaries with 'no real partnership … no real relationship' (008). He later credits 'more sharing' and 'more openness' as part of the positive change he sees, in which visitors today 'don't come thinking they know, in your house, more than yourself' (008).

Here, Pastor Timothy cites transparency as evidence of equality in partnership:

Interviewer 1:	In their minds, in their hearts, do they feel equal? Yes or no?
Pastor Timothy:	Yeah, they do.
Interviewer 1:	So what has made this relationship then different than the past? The past is… it was not equal.
Pastor Timothy:	Yeah the past was not equal. Somebody could feel that for him he's up than others.

Interviewer 1:	So what has changed now in this new type of relationship that there is true equality.
Pastor Timothy:	One, transparency is there. Transparency is there.
Interviewer 1:	Right! And there was not in the past?
Pastor Timothy:	Yeah. (071)

It should be noted that Pastor James is, along with Pastor Timothy, a senior leader in their respective domains of the church in Mbale. Both men, in other words, fill gatekeeper roles in overseas partnerships. It is at this level, among the new gatekeeper pastors, where the benefit of increased transparency with their partners is cited.

As we have seen here, this new level of financial transparency from overseas appears to rarely extend to the level of client pastors and churches, at least not sufficiently to offset the endemic mistrust that these clients harbour about their patron pastors. In the same interview, for example, where Pastor Timothy praises the greater transparency of overseas partners, he complains about the lack of transparency in the regional Moderator of his own denomination, claiming that 'if *[my denomination]* would be transparent, would be working their issues in light, it would be a very big denomination in Uganda, the biggest!' (071).

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I look into some of the consequences, or fruits, of local-to-local partnership on the ground in Mbale. Some of the fruits of local-to-local are not unique to it; rather, they are the ordinary, local variety - part of longer historical and wider social phenomenon which, for good or ill, local-to-local has not redefined. Among these fruits are the rotten ones of dependency and corruption. On the other hand, we also found the sweet fruit of what is known as development.

Other fruits were more novel and exotic. Here, the bitter fruits included the theft of Muzungus and congregations. Ironically, one seemingly bitter fruit that turned out to be sweet was the displaced mistrust, moving from traditional to New Gatekeepers. Other

sweet fruits, more plentiful than before local-to-local relationships entered the scene, are greater control for local church leaders and greater transparency by overseas partners.

No overseas or local partner enters into a local-to-local relationship full of expectation to reap a harvest of bad fruit. In light of all that this study has uncovered, what can partners do to minimize such bitter outcomes? How can partners act together to nurture their soil, grow good fruit, and someday 'reap a harvest of righteousness'?[16]

This is the subject of the next chapter. Local-to-local relationships are something relatively new, but the solutions I offer are as old as the Judeo-Christian tradition and the central stories and characters shared by these faiths in their sacred texts.

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[16] *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), Jas 3:18.

Chapter 7 – Covenant Marriage v. Casual Mission: Marital Fidelity & Mission Polygamy

This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first section, I show how covenant concepts and practices can guide local-to-local mission partners. In the second, shorter section I summarize my argument and research findings, showing how it helps create a conversation in the literature and pointing out directions for further research.

I noted in the opening chapter that the tone of my argument, at first reading, could come across as negative or pessimistic. Some of the inner workings and the fruit of local-to-local partnership, set in contrast to the voices of practitioners and scholars from the Global North, can leave one feeling less than enthusiastic about the on-the-ground realities of local-to-local partnerships.

My own journey in this research, however, has moved me in the opposite direction, as I show in the conclusion to this thesis. I leave having become more self-reflective into my own motivations and behaviours in cross-cultural ministry. I leave cognizant of the weaknesses of local-to-local partnership, but also aware of the aware of its strengths. I leave having heard and believed the voices of church leaders in Uganda. My optimism going forward is grounded in all of these.

PART 1 - COVENANT

Introduction to Covenant

At an even deeper level, however, my optimism is grounded in my faith and in the Christians scriptures. Whereas some have decried local-to-local engagement as the amateurization and deprofessionalization of mission, I see scant evidence in the Bible that mission is a mandate reserved for a small class of Christian professionals.

In this chapter, then, I seek to ground local-to-local mission in the Christian scriptures. Local assemblies of the Christian faithful around the world are divided by language and culture, history and ethnicity, theology and liturgy. Whatever their

divisions, however, the faithful are bound together by their common touchstone – the Bible. Whatever their methods and positionality when reading the Bible, Christians around the world still read it. Whatever their understandings of the Bible's ancient inspiration and current authority, virtually all Christians around the world read the Bible normatively and inspirationally. The Bible, then, is a natural meeting ground for diverse bodies of Christian believers seeking to walk together in missional partnerships.

In light of that, I offer up the biblical concept of *covenant* as a platform for fresh thinking and action in partnership. After introducing covenant in both of its major biblical forms and showing their relevance to local-to-local partnership, I employ attributes of biblical covenants to bring new light to three fundamental facets of partnership and, in doing so, I offer up critiques and attendant suggestions for both partners.

Kingdom, Covenant, and Mission

Today, in the Western mission establishment, there is much talk linking together two common words: kingdom and partnership.

Now using these words, both separately and together, is well and good; after all, partnership is a thoroughly biblical concept, and kingdom (as in the Kingdom of God) is thoroughly biblical as both a word and as a concept. However, linking kingdom and partnership and then limiting our thinking and theological reflection to the intersection of those two words, misses out on other motifs the Bible has to offer that can speak into these same issues. More specifically, it risks overlooking *covenant*, both as an approach to partnership and as a building block of the kingdom.[1]

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[1] Divinely established covenants for the furtherance of God's mission and kingdom, universally recognized in one form or another, are the Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New Covenants.

When God's people come together to build God's Kingdom, it seems they often stop their reflection at that intersection. The current preponderance of thinking (and linking) kingdom and partnership together can be quickly revealed with a simple search of websites related to Christian mission, which yields approximately 30 times more results for "Kingdom Partnerships" than for "Covenant Partnerships' (Worthy Christian Search 2020). In Butler's well-received book on partnership in church and mission the language of kingdom is replete throughout, but his employment of covenant is confined to a small description of one particular type of partnership, in which "a couple of people are involved; they…pray and work together; and the project is taking place in their own neighborhood' (2006:52). This chapter will show that the biblical record of covenant provides a guide for partnership between many, not just a couple of people; and across great cultural, geographic, and power distances, not simply in one's own neighbourhood.

A covenant can be simply defined as a solemn or binding agreement. In both secular and biblical literature, a covenant is entered into when two parties have a common interest or problem which requires the parties to come together despite some distance in the relationship – be that relational or familial estrangement, differing ethnicities or citizenships, or simple unfamiliarity (Kalluveettil 1982:1). The English word "covenant" is a translation of the Hebrew *berit,* which is used in the Bible to denote fellowship or relational closeness (Kalluveettil 1982:91). [2]

This notion of relational closeness seems to sit uncomfortably with the fact that the primary covenants in the biblical literature are built upon an expressly unequal, vassal-client model (Vogels 1979; Kalluveettil 1982). This invites the question: can such an unequal partnership model possibly inform local-to-local partnerships in our post-colonial era? I believe that it can.

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[2] While there is widespread agreement with this definition among scholars, it is not universal. According to Huhn (2009:2), Perlitt and Kutsch do not see a relational component in *berit*, but rather view its use as a signal of the acceptance or imposition of obligations on one party.

A clue as to why is found in our everyday, first impressions when thinking about the word *covenant*: for most of us, concepts such as *inequality*, *power* or *hierarchy* do not generally first come to mind. Rather, people tend to conceive of covenant in more intimate, relational terms. Why is that? The question grows more acute in light of the fact that these central covenants in scripture, between God and Man, involve vast inequalities in the balance of power and authority.

Divine Covenant, Hebrew Community and African Kinship

Our modern impressions of the word covenant point back to the central innovation of the covenant tradition of the ancient Hebrews. While covenant traditions were relatively common in the Ancient Near-East (ANE), the Hebrew covenantal concept was unique in that it invited their God, YHWH, to be an actual *party to* the treaty covenant, rather than merely serve as a *witness of* the covenant terms (Wright 2006:371–386). In this covenant, God stands as one party in the partnership and His chosen people are collectively the other party. Rather than covenant serving to enshrine an unequal relationship, Berman argues that it is precisely the unique, Hebrew model of covenant that allowed them to decisively break with the hierarchical social structures of their neighbours and establish a radically new, egalitarian social model: "The equality of the Israelite polity stems from their collective covenantal relationship with God…. The Israelites are 'equalized', as it were, in their status before God as members of a covenantal community…" (Berman 2008:168).

Hahn reminds us that under the New Covenant, Christians become kin or family (2009)[3]. Under the covenant, our vertical relationship to the Father transforms us,

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[3] It can be argued (e.g. see *Vogel, 1979*) that the oldest and most universal biblical covenant, the Noahic, first established the essential mutuality and equality of mankind. The mutuality and equality most clearly

horizontally, into sisters and brothers. McKenzie finds evidence that "ancient Israel was a confederation of independent tribes bound together by a covenant sworn before Yahweh. It was this covenant that bound them together as 'brothers' within a single family – the people of Yahweh" (McKenzie 2000:12). Similarly, Kalluveettil (1982) along with Vogels (1979) and Hahn (2009) hold that covenant created a sense of unity and solidarity through their common vassalage to their Suzerain God.

This grounding of mission partnership in the Hebrew covenants and the Old Testament is in distinction from much scholarly[4] and most practitioner-oriented literature, which generally traces Christian partnership in mission back to the writings and times of the New Testament church. A good example of this is Johnson's recent work: other than a reference to God's glory from Isaiah, Johnson's 'biblical foundation for mission' extends no further back than the New Testament (2017). Similarly, Borthwick's chapter on biblical continuity in mission builds only on John 3:16 and the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 (2012). Johnson's single use of the covenant motif in his chapter on mission partnership is restricted to a pact between same-culture workers in the same local church plant, rather than as a bridge across geographic, cultural, or relational divides (2017).

This overlooks the reality that, from the point at which YHWH appropriated covenant from human culture, they have been central to God's mission in the world. The Hebrews understood that their national *berit* with their God – that is, their covenant with YHWH – was a vehicle for divine purposes, establishing God's order and enabling His mission to them and to the world. In this way, their covenant relationship with God was seen to legitimize God Himself, rather than to simply convey divine legitimacy upon the

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expressed under the New Covenant is thus a re-affirmation of the earlier fraternal order established under the Noahic covenant.

[4] Even while authors such as Christopher Wright (2006), Goheen (2011) and Kaiser Jr. (2012) have given new impetus to grounding *mission* in the Old Testament, there remains a dearth of literature seeking to theologically ground *partnership* in mission in the texts of the Old Testament.

state and the pre-existing privilege of the Hebrew elite (Nicholson 1986:200–201).[5] In this way, the national berit between YHWH and his people was uniquely constitutive for both parties.

Such a relational paradigm stands in contrast to the anthropological category of 'fictive kinship.' In her study of sister church partnerships, Bakker cites this term to describe the language used by American Christians to speak of their relationships with their sister churches. This term, originally coined for its 'functional utility for the American kinship system' (Ibsen & Klobus 1972:615) remains terribly inadequate when thinking in both Biblical and African ways. As we have seen, Biblical covenants are constitutive of both parties; the kinship they create, then, is anything but 'fictive'.

The same is true in African covenant-making. For Africa generally and among Uganda's Baganda more specifically, Kisinya defines covenant as ushering in new 'being',

> a formal ratification of a relationships between two parties. It underlines an exchange of rights and duties. It reflects the creation of a new community of people with definite moral obligations and moral claims, a new sense of being and belonging. (2001:190)

Harking back to how the marriage covenant creates 'one flesh',[6] other covenants in Africa are similarly constitutive, creating a new belonging and a heralding a new kinship. Speaking about the brotherhood covenant used throughout East Africa, Shenk insists that 'tragically, Europeans did not have any idea of the meaning of brotherhood, as least not as understood by Africans' (1983:54). Nairobi Chapel pastor Oscar Muriu says that "For us in Africa, we think from a family paradigm. When we come together in partnership,

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[5] Reflecting this, the biblical prophets repeatedly used covenant language and concepts to profoundly criticize the Hebrew establishment for failing in their covenant obligations. Notable examples include the prophets Isaiah (e.g. 42:18-43:1), Jeremiah (e.g. 22:8-15), Ezekiel (e.g. 16:58-63), Hosea (e.g. 8:1-5), Amos (e.g. 3:1-10), Micah (e.g. 6:1-8), and Malachi (e.g. 2:10-17). Scholars disagree as to what extent some prophets, who do not use the term *berit,* nonetheless use covenant concepts in their critiques of Hebrew society. Following Wellhausen, earlier scholarship tended to see the concept of covenant as emerging in prophetic literature only after the Deuteronomist, while more recently scholars have tended to find elements of covenant thinking from an earlier date.

[6] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mk 10:8.

it's a partnership based on relationships (not tasks), and we stay partners for life' (Borthwick 2012:155). In response to a 5 year relationship plan, Brown quotes a Ukrainian pastor as saying 'I have never seen such a thing, a friendship planned for five years' (2007:142). This is because 'the idea that a congregation-to-congregation relationship could be planned to last five years doesn't categorize' (Brown 2007:248).

If Africans naturally think in terms of brotherhood and kinship, why, then, does this research shows that most church leaders in Mbale prefer short-term, often single-visit partners? Where is the disconnect between traditional kinship and modern partnership?

I believe it is because church leaders do not look upon their local-to-local partnerships covenantally. There are many reasons for this: short-term and shallow relationships are a ready solution to the lack of forgiveness by Whites, as discussed in chapter five, and to the intractable problem of missionaries' tendencies to exert control, as seen in chapter six. As shown in chapter two, there exists today an ample supply and varied menu of partnership options for churches with an established presence, from which they can choose and change – this hardly encourages the practice of covenantal fidelity. Further, as shown in chapter three, there are historical roots pushing current thinking away from covenantal forms. Current thinking is conveyed by Kisinya, who relates that his students, representing 20 language groups in East Africa, invariably

> embrace the term "contract" in referring to the two major parts of the Bible. In my mother tongue, Luganda *[of the central Ugandan Baganda tribe]*, instead of *Omukago Omugga* ("New Covenant"), we refer to *Endagaano Empya* ("New Contract "). The point I want to make here is that African Christianity runs the risk of expressing legalistic or contractual concepts. (2001:190–191)

This research gives evidence that, when it comes to overseas partnerships, African Christians are not just running but also falling to the risk of a legalistic and transactional view of partnership.

It is important to disti nguish between *transactional* and *instrumental* approaches to partnership. YNWH's covenants are instrumental, but not transactional. We have seen that Ugandan church leaders approach their partners through instrumental friendships.

And an honest appraisal of the many motives of overseas partners similarly reveals these friendships as means to other ends. AmonSuch 'ends' can include adventure (McAlister 2014), 'transformational travel' with cross cultural learning (Grieb 2003), in-group friendship (Madden 2019), desire to be useful (Madden 2019), making 'a personal impact on individuals' lives in a distant setting' (Wuthnow 2009), and spiritual and personal growth (Bakker 2010). Thus, an instrumental approach to partnership should not be surprising or vexing.

It is not, then, the instrumentality of current partnerships that I am calling into question. Rather, I lament the mutual ignorance of the motivations and goals of the other partner and the failure to honestly assess one's own motivations that often results in shallow, transactional relationships.

Covenant-Shaped Thinking in Missional Partnership

The missional purpose of God's covenanting extends into the New Covenant. Jesus' words at the end of Matthew's gospel, the paradigmatic text of Christian mission known as the Great Commission, show the hallmarks of a covenant declaration.[7] To do mission, then, is to do covenant.

A living covenant is far superior in partnership to a legal contract. Rather than amplifying partnership paperwork, what I am advocating here is that partners think and act in covenantal ways towards each other. As Foster writes, 'Christians who seek to think missiologically about God's world and act for him in it need to be sure they are

[7] The Great Comission matches up with classic (though condensed) covenantal declaration formula: Preable + Historical Prologue = "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Covenant Stipulations = "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them...." Invocation of Witnesses + Blessings/Curses: "and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." See (Hahn 2009).

shaped by covenant' (2010:207). When our thinking is shaped by covenant, our partnerships, and our paperwork, will follow suit.

The order, though, is important. Emphasizing paperwork, even when done in an attempt to achieve clarity and transparency, can actually undermine the unwritten codes of true friendship and partnership. At the end of a book purported as a guide for the "nuts and bolts" of cross-cultural parish partnerships, the author lays out a meticulously detailed, densely written, legally structured "covenant" that covers seven pages of single-spaced (English) text (O'Connor 2007). Bringing such a 'covenant' to a Ugandan partner is in stark contrast to both the ancient biblical and current majority-world practice of entering into covenant agreements. Covenants in the Bible were overwhelmingly oral, something natural and comfortable in oral cultures around the world today. Even though the Old Covenant was literally written in stone, the prophet Jeremiah foresaw a time when YHWH would usher in a superior new covenant, a covenant in which YHWH declared 'I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.'[8]

YHWH may write on hearts, but westerners are people of the written word. They would do well to remember that the oral cultures in Africa are, in many ways, closer to Jesus' instructions that 'Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.'[9] I am not, then, advocating that churches should sign carefully crafted, detailed "covenants" with each other, but rather that they think and act towards the other as a covenant partner, as Jesus towards His Church or as the husband towards his wife. Paperwork flowing from such a posture builds the other rather than buttressing oneself.

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[8] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Je 31:33.
[9] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mt 5:37–38.

Some may wonder whether Christians today, as co-participants in the covenant relationships with God, can in turn consider covenanting with each other.[10] Scripture evinces no conflict between participating in the divine covenant, on the one hand, and pursuing human covenant on the other. Examples of participating in both divine and human covenant making include some of the most prominent covenant-linked names in the Old Testament. Abraham entered into personal covenant with God, as well as with the king of Salem (Genesis 14:17-30) and with Abimelech (Gen 21:22-24); his sons Isaac and Jacob followed suit (Isaac and Abimelech in Gen 26:26-33, Jacob and Laban in Genesis 31:44). David also personally covenanted with God, while also entering into a covenant with Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:3) as well as with Abner (2 Samuel 3:12-13). Beyond these prominent examples, there are numerous other human covenants in scripture involving God's covenant people on one or both sides of the oath.[11] Given this witness of scripture, Christians today, as members of the divine New Covenant, can readily enter into a covenant with others.

Wright stresses covenants as vehicles of God's blessing to all peoples (Wright 2006:194). McComiskey sees God's 'promise' as distinct from the covenants, though intertwined with the covenants through its repeated expression in and advancement through them (1986:58). Our mutual, God-to-man covenant with YHWH is a great equalizer, rendering illegitimate any cleaving of God's people on the basis of wealth, status, culture or ethnicity. Yet it is precisely because of the stubborn endurance of divisions based on wealth, status, culture and ethnicity that human covenanting holds

[10] Some scholars differentiate between these two types of covenants. McKenzie (2000) follows the typology of Brown, Driver, and Briggs (Brown et al. 1907) in categorizing the biblical covenants into those in which God is a direct party, and those between only human parties. Others are unconcerned with making such a distinction (McComiskey 1986; Christopher J. H. Wright 2006; Hahn 2009).
[11] A text of a clearly covenantal nature binds Solomon and Hiram in I Kings 5:12. Other passages generally thought of as having covenantal characteristics include Genesis 21:27, Joshua chapter 9, 1 Kings 1:19, 11:4, 18:31, 20:32-34, as well as Amos 1:9.

promise for the continued outworking of the promised blessing of the divine covenant. Seeing local-to-local covenants as many, varied vehicles of God's promise and blessing enables partners to conceive of their own covenanting as yet another vehicle, albeit a modest one, for the propagation of God's promise to bless all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3).

Around the table of the Last Supper, the initiating meal of the New Covenant, we see the vertical (God-to-man) and horizontal (human-to-human) covenant relationships inextricably come together. Memorialized in the Eucharist, Christian fellowships today celebrate together their mutual, vertical covenant with God through Christ. Through that vertical relationship, in turn, they celebrate their covenant brotherhood and sisterhood.[12] Mercy Oduyoye relates that in Africa 'to eat from the same dish is to enter into vital relationship with the other, hence, for me, the pathos and tragedy... of the Last Supper; "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping his bread in the same dish with me" (Mk. 14:20)' (Oduyoye 2002:28).

For the Hebrews and other peoples of the ANE, sharing food together was an integral part of ceremonializing covenant making and relational bonding – so much so that 'one way to forbid establishing covenantal relationship was to forbid eating together' (Elazar 1995:66). This partaking of food together is the *centripetal* aspect of Covenant, in which we are drawn *into* covenant fellowship with each other and our covenant Lord. In many cultures around the world, sharing a meal together continues to draw participants

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[12] The inextricability of the two relationships, vertical and horizontal, under the New Covenant is clearly shown in Paul's letter reprimanding the Corinthians (see I Cor. 11:18-34) for their each-for-his-own celebration of the Passover/Eucharist meal. Given the context, Paul's warning of judgement if they do not "judge the *body*" correctly could be referring to the *body* of Christ Jesus (the vertical relationship), or the *body* of Christ, the Church (the horizontal relationship). Perhaps Paul left it ambiguous so as to purposefully include *both* within His reference to the *body.*

into a ‘fellowship of belonging,’ both an initiation and recognition of community (Zahniser 1997:120).[13]

Celebrating friendship around an extended meal(s) builds kinship, acknowledging that Jesus has made participants to be One Body, covenant brothers and sisters. Ceremonializing and celebrating partnership over meals encourages participants to observe the recitation of divine leading, voluntary self-disclosure, and indeed the importance of cadence and ceremony itself.

Covenant Components

Hahn sub-divides covenantal texts into six elements common to Biblical covenants, being the 1) preamble, 2) historical prologue, 3) covenant stipulations, 4) documentary clause, 5) invoking of witnesses, and 6) dual sanctions of blessings and/or curses. Table 7.1 shows Hahn’s six components and their applicability to local-to-local partnership (Hahn 2009:49). While each of these categories are not found in all of the Biblical covenant texts, they nonetheless provide a useful framework which addresses the major components of cooperation in a way that can assist local congregations to think and act together in covenantal directions.

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[13] Of all the terrible atrocities and brutalities suffered under the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime, my Cambodian friends and colleagues have repeatedly told me that one of the most humiliating aspects of life under the regime was how they were forced to eat from the same pot together with complete strangers.

Table 7.1 Hahn's Covenant Formulary and Local-to-Local Partnership

	Biblical Covenant	Local-to-Local Partnerships
1	Preamble	Self-revelation of each partner to the other partner in the interest of transparency. *See chapter 6 for more on transparency.*
2	Historical Prologue	Recitation of all that God has done to bring both parties to this partnership. *See chapter 3 for more on history of and chapter 6 for more on transparency in partnership.*
3	Covenant Stipulations	Nature and purposes of the partnership, basic commitments of each party to the other. *See chapter 4 for more on divergent purposes in partnership.*
4	Documentary Clause	Any mutual reporting, sharing and exchange arrangements. *See chapter 4 for more on mutuality and patron/clientage.*
5	Invoking of Witnesses	Witnessing of other major stakeholders, principally YHWH. *See chapter 5 for more on temptation and chapter 4 for more on church leaders as Big men.*
6	Dual Blessings/Sanctions	Blessing desired for each party by the other, and for the respective communities/stakeholders, through faithfulness to YHWH in their partnership. *See chapter 2 for more on the wider significance of partnerships and chapter 6 for more on the fruits of partnership.*

Food and the Fellowship of Belonging

Hahn's covenant formulary starts with a 'preamble' that then moves on to a 'historical prologue'(2009). The preamble is not mere formality, but rather it is a voluntary self-disclosure of the basic nature of each covenant partner to the other and of their shared connections with the other. The second part of the covenant formulary, the historical prologue, involves a recitation of all that God has done to bring both parties into this partnership, sharing God's leading and directing with one another, akin to the accounting of God's mighty works in bringing His people from slavery into the Promised Land as told at the covenant ceremonies of Sinai and Moab.[14]

[14] See Exodus 19:4 & Deuteronomy 5:2-6 for the historical introduction to the Sinaic/Horab covenant-making ceremony, and likewise see Deuteronomy 29:1-8 for the Moab covenant re-affirmation ceremony.

Such disclosure and recitation, I suggest, is best done around a shared table and a series of unhurried meals in which the 'importance, even the sacredness, of eating a meal together' in Africa is given full expression (Sybertz & Healey 1996:256). A shared table is 'perhaps the most basic and most ancient symbol of friendship, love and unity … a sign of being accepted to share life and equality'.

> The sharing of food together is a profound experience in community. All the participants in the meal wash their hands before and after eating. ... The washing of hands is symbolic of spiritual cleaning needed in order to fully experience the blessing of eating together, Cleansing and communion, servanthood and blessing, are symbolically intertwined in eating together. (Shenk 1983:10–11)

Such fellowship over a meal stands in stark contrast to the individualism, pragmatism, and hurry of 'fast food' Western culture. Sharing a table together bring partners closer to each other and to the African and Biblical traditions of hospitality and extended community. As a Shona proverb states *'Relationship (kinship) is a gap that is filled by eating'* (Sybertz & Healey 1996:257). Fellowship over community meals address a deep concern (and suspicion) of local clan elders who rightly decry the 'disintegration of collectivist culture' spread by Western media and the teachings of missionaries (Shero 2014:102).

<u>Covenant Innovations and Partnership Issues</u>

Here I use the concept, rituals, and ceremonial components of covenant to reflect on the research findings. I examine three aspects of partnership which both parties must navigate. These are the issues of power & control, accountability & transparency, and finally security & faithfulness. Aspects of covenant speaks into each of these issues, and offer both critiques and encouragements of the pre-dispositions of Africana and Westerners in partnership.

As Christ Gave Himself Up for Her: Power and Control in Partnership

Christopher Sugden insightfully writes that 'the key issue in partnership is not resources but power' (Sugden 1997). Despite the centrality of power in local-to-local partnership, many Global North partners appear reluctant to deal with issues of power (Brown 2007): some deny that it is operative in their own partnership (Bakker 2010), while other studies state that partnerships should be equal, but provide little practical guidance in that direction (Madden 2019).

One of the primary contributions of the New Covenant is in its definition of power. Under the New Covenant, Hahn reminds us, Christians become kin, or family (2009). A keen awareness of mutual, covenantal obligation transforms the use of power from one of *power-over* towards one based on mutual trust and love.

The Apostle Paul, even while acknowledging inequality in authority and power within the covenant of marriage, reflects this re-orientation of power when he instructs the "head" to love his wife "as Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for her...."[15] The way in which Jesus re-directs power is illustrated beautifully at the start of the New Covenant meal, when Jesus, 'knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands,'[16] chooses to humbly wash the feet of his disciples. It is in examining and critiquing *power over* that covenant holds promise for informing local-to-local partnerships. After all, God himself became a human in Christ and chooses to partner with humans in His ongoing mission. Thus in both the Christ event and in the sending of the Holy Spirit, power is redefined away from *power-over* towards 'the freedom to let go of all that hinders a life of sacrificial love' (Kirk 1999b:196).

Yet knowing how and what to 'let go' is not straight forward. Partners cannot, for example, simply 'let go' of their relative position and attendant power; but if the Holy

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[15] Ephesians 5:25, New International Version.
[16] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 13:3.

Spirit brought Christians divine 'power from on high'[17] then one can safely say that trying to discard or disregard power altogether is not a means of Christian partnership.

Rather than struggling with, dancing around or even denying questions of power *inside* of partnership, kingdom power can be released *through* partnership when partners think and act covenantally towards each other by 're-orient*[ing]* the power God has invested in us (our talents) to serve the other – to the point of weakness, loss, and sacrifice' (Vogt 2021).[18]

How challenging that is! The single biggest point of learning for me through this research has been in seeing with fresh, Africanized eyes the extent to which overseas partners exercise power through control in their partnership. The often-subtle ways in which Whites exercise control, despite an often expressed desire to serve and sacrifice, struck me in a deeper way during a conversation that took place immediately after a week spent interviewing church leaders in Mbale. During those interviews, I had heard repeated complaints and stories about the controlling behaviour of missionaries, both old and new.

The morning after my return to Kampala, I met an American missionary friend for breakfast. My friend shared with me his disappointment and hurt from what he saw as the duplicitous behaviour of a rural, national pastor he had been discipling for a number of years. Their relationship began when my friend was living in the same upcountry town as this pastor, and later continued through regular trips to the pastor's area from Kampala.

Unbeknownst to my friend, this national pastor had started a Facebook page for the pastor's nascent church, still in its infancy as a recent church plant. He gave his church a name that was similar to a large American church which was the primary 'sending church' of my missionary friend. On Facebook, the pastor had befriended a number of

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[17] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Lk 24:48–49.
[18] See Matthew 25:25ff for Jesus' Parable of the Talents.

my friend's contacts in the American church, doubtless finding these contacts through my friend's own Facebook profile. He then introduced these new contacts to his church's Facebook page, and doubtless started cultivating relationships and raising funds from these contacts.

For my friend, a humble and servant-hearted missionary, the offender and the offense were obvious – the national pastor had duplicitously gone behind my friend's back, trying to surreptitiously take advantage of my friend's friends and home church to corruptly profit himself, all without the knowledge of my friend. But now he had been caught, and the true, self-serving nature of the local pastor has been exposed. After years of discipleship with this pastor, my friend's sense of betrayal was clear and his pain was real.

This conversation left me with some mental whiplash, coming as it did immediately after I had spent days hearing – and believing – the complaints of church leaders in Mbale. Now, I was suddenly confronted with a completely different perspective, the perspective of someone who inhabits the world from which I come – that of a White Christian living and doing ministry full-time 'overseas.' But this conversation, and the perceptual chasm it revealed, also revealed the extent to which my own perspective had shifted over the course of this research. Somewhere along the line, over the course of hearing and learning from many local church leaders, I had been confronted with a new way of seeing and had been led into a new understanding. In short, after a lifetime of participating in Christian mission, I had been converted, in a subtle yet profound way.

As my friend told me his story, I listened quietly. While I could no longer fully inhabit his perspective, I still understood it and could accept portions of it. As his friend, whose first and most important job is to listen, I set aside my desire to offer him an alternate reading of events.

Here, I offer up that belated, alternative reading of these events. We cannot discern from my friend's story the inner motives of my friend or of the local pastor; nonetheless, this reading is, I believe, more faithful to how these events are commonly felt and interpreted among Ugandan partners.

From the point of view of this local pastor, is he not allowed to become friends with the friends of his missionary friend? Is that not the whole point of 'social media' like Facebook, to expand the circle of friendship? Is his friend the only person who is allowed to share ministry vision and needs with American Christians, and to benefit from the material blessings God has given the American church? This pastor doubtless knew that his friend earns a living through this church. As a fellow gospel worker, working together with this missionary to plant new churches, does he not have that same right? Or, in the words of the Apostle Paul, 'is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?'[19] Where, then, is the corruption in that, 'do we not have the right to eat and drink?'[20]

This pastor has a very good idea of how much money is required to sustain an American missionary family in Uganda – how, then, could his friend possibly begrudge the insignificant-by-comparison blessings which might come from America to himself and his infant church?

Lastly, in this alternate reading we can assign more charitable motives to the pastor's choice of church names. It would, after all, be only natural to name his church like the church in America. It was, after all, their theology that he now embraced and their missionaries and literature that had led him to embrace it. Rather than selling his church to the highest bidder, he may have been expressing his loyalty. Regardless, this research has shown in chapter four that being 'owned' by an overseas denomination is key in overcoming a primary barrier keeping churches out of the partnership marketplace.

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[19] *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 1 Co 9:6.
[20] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Co 9:4.

There is no corruption in creating and growing alliances for purposes of money – that is called fundraising.

Something which may well have caused this local pastor to think long and hard, though, was debating the wisdom of pro-actively sharing (or not) his Facebook activities with his missionary friend. We cannot know his thoughts, but his reasoning may have followed along these lines: 'That problem with telling my friend everything, it is this: everybody know that Whites are tricky when it comes to money. They somehow wish to control things, and even though my friend only comes to visit me some few times every year, he seems to want me to work only with him. These Whites, these ones who stay longer in Uganda, they are not like the local Big Men who give some benefit to us who work under them. So I think it is wiser for me just to let these things of Facebook continue naturally, and to make more friends and to build a network for my ministry in America. I think this one is much safer, because I don't want to argue with my friend. He may say 'no' to my idea. Either way, it will close my door, this door God has opened for me because of my prayers. And, I can't rely on my friend only, for all my help and my future. You never know how long he will be here until he goes back. Eventually, these Whites, they always leave.'

This was not the first time my friend had felt the sting of such betrayal, whether perceived or real. It may, however, have been one of the last – not long after, his family returned home to America.

I see similar controlling dynamics at play as far away as eastern Europe, in a church-to-church partnership between an American and a Crimean (formerly in Ukraine, now under *de facto* Russian control) church, as described in Brown's case study (2007). In my reading, the American missionary and self-described partnership 'coach' and 'advocate' (2007:90), clearly if inadvertently put himself into the position of partnership gatekeeper, rather than coach. As a result, Brown finds that the American couple retained

the most power and 'were so close to the situation, it was difficult for them to mediate as objective consultants' (2007:122). In the end, he observes, 'even when Sergey *[the Crimean]* became pastor, many looked to Matt *[the American]* for leadership, especially those from VEFC *[the American sister church]*' (Brown 2007:97). While Brown records no complaint from Pastor Sergey about his own dis-empowerment, I doubt he enjoys his second-tier status. It is no leap of the imagination to think that Matt's continued control could have caused Sergey to wonder why Matt didn't trust him, and to respond by withdrawing trust in equal measure.

Blessing through Hierarchy

Reverend Elias had a very succinct, and insightful, understanding of equality between overseas and African partners. When asked 'Do you feel equal, you are relating as equals?' he responded: 'Yes, but not very' (077). Reverend Elias expresses, in four simple words, the enduring quandary deeply embedded in almost all Global North to Global South partnerships. I look briefly at both sides of what Reverend Elias said, at the 'yes' and at the nuances of 'not very', offering some suggestions to overseas partners (who are more likely to be reading this study) on the necessity of affirming the 'yes' and navigating the 'not very.'

The 'Yes' in Partnership Equality

A 'yes' to the equality of partners before God requires no further elaboration beyond what has already been said in this chapter. Nevertheless, a 'yes' is not always as straightforward as it may seem. Firstly, verbal affirmation is cheap, even to the point of meaningless pandering (228, D003). It is in actions and attitudes that church leaders

perceive bias and inequality. Towards that end, this chapter is largely devoted to ways of thinking and acting that can communicate what a spoken 'yes' cannot.

Secondly, notions of innate equality are not always as self-evident to local Christians as they are to their overseas partners.[21] For local church leaders, a simple 'yes' becomes more complex after centuries of history that affirm otherwise. Some sixteen generations living under the enslavement of African peoples, and then a further three generation directly subjugated through military conquest and colonial exploitation, are not erased in the most recent two to three generations, who are themselves living in young African states that have inherited alien institutions and national borders that slash heedlessly through tribal, cultural, and economic ties.

Even today, globalization results in the 'invention of Africa' and the 'systemic manufacturing of a continent' to fit into a globalized machine designed in America and geared towards capitalistic consumerism (Viriri & Mungni 2010). Some estimate that America may have more qualified African scientists and engineers than remain in Africa (Akanle et al. 2018).

Together, the negative messaging of history and globalization leads to 'the incorporation of negative stereotypes into cultural values and traditions', a personal disorientation in the world, and a marring of one's own sense of identity and self-worth (Derthick & David 2014:10). Pastor Benjamin insists that a feeling of inferiority is 'like a mentality in Africa. Most people in Africa, they know Bazungu are superior. So that inferiority in Africans will actually just cause them to feel that they are not equal' (310). These perceptions are so interiorized as to pass through the generations, in much the same way that Americans may subconsciously and irrationally associate an English accent with intelligence and sophistication, while themselves continuing to suffering from what one

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[21] This statement is based on the assumption that most overseas partners conceptually accent to equality between African and non-African races. Testing that assumption is beyond the scope of this research.

linguist calls a 'verbal inferiority complex' (Murphy 2018). This American mentality persists after ten generations of independence from Britain (having won independence on the battlefield) and after at least three generations of unquestionably greater power on the global stage.

White Privilege in Black Africa?

If it was foreign power and privilege which allowed English and French missionaries to enter Buganda and take up residence in the King's court to preach the gospel, it is likewise privilege and power which today continues to situates Uganda as the recipient of mission and missionaries in local-to-local relationships.

As much as overseas partners may wish to ignore or deny it, when they come to visit their presence is not neutral. By default, the presence of Whites embodies and even reinforces the assigned secular status of their nations and ethnicities, clearly expressed in disparate levels of education, disposable income, opportunity and 'passport power' (Passport Index 2021). Coming to Africa to altruistically 'do good' and 'bring help' simply reinforces these disparities, because Africans are by-and-large not the ones privileged to bring and do: the good they can do and help they can bring is immaterial and systematically under-valued in the world.

Precisely because missionary privilege is structural to the cross-cultural encounter, overseas partners need to attune themselves to situations where these dynamics are most at work. Very often, these situations are, I believe, simply overlooked by overseas partners. Being served first at restaurants looks like chance. Less scrutiny at security checkpoints is easily dismissed. Much more damagingly, a 'yes' or 'good idea' from a local partner is accepted at face value as actual agreement, when in fact it testifies more to the fact that 'African brothers feel we don't have … an input, even if something wrong

happens we don't say it to these brothers, because they may refuse to bring us financial resources' (003).

Such privileging cannot be escaped. Learning to see their own privilege, however, leads overseas partners to

> embrace as a goal the kind of "double consciousness" that Du Bois said was the curse—and also the privilege—of being black in the United States. Without losing one's sense of self, one can become aware that one is always being "signified upon" in racializing ways. (Kollman 2009:928)

Generating greater self-awareness of one's position of privilege and power, then, involves acknowledging and developing an awareness of white privilege in black Africa. Given the unique setting of these encounters in East Africa, we can more accurately call this Muzungu privilege.

Helping overseas partners recognize their Muzungu privilege should start before a visit to Africa. I once participated in a short term mission trip to the Dominican Republic, while working as a youth pastor in America. The church mission committee and I asked the prospective participants 'Why do you want to go?' It's a good question. I now wish we had then also asked 'Why are you going there, and they are not coming here?' Following up with 'What does this say about our respective place in the world? Is this how the world should be?' could have engendered robust discussion and greater introspection, leading to deeper self and situational awareness in the ensuing missionary encounter. It can lead participants towards a realization that their Muzungu privilege cannot be left at home when they board a plane; knowing that leaves us little choice but to begin the much harder work of recognizing, transforming and even leveraging their privilege.

The 'Not Very' in Partnership Equality

This leads us to the second half of Pastor Elias' statement, the 'but not very' part of equality. I have already laid out the unjust ways that history, globalization, and Muzungu

privilege contribute to the 'not very.' Here, I want to bring in some nuance to that statement by suggesting that there are legitimate and affirmable ways in which overseas partners are 'not very' equal within the local, cultural hierarchy.

Partners are indeed equal, but this does not equate to egalitarianism. Overseas partners should not presume that they are to be received on the basis of simple egalitarianism. As Kollman points out,

> to unilaterally renounce all privilege in pursuit of an ideal communicative setting for mission-as-dialogue might well vitiate intercultural contact…. Any such self-willed decision could undermine the goal of renouncing such privileges, since to do so unilaterally presumes the prerogative of antecedently determining the structure of the situated missionary encounter. (2009:923–4)

Partners from egalitarian cultures may instinctively push back on the idea of privileging of any kind. But to do so would be to privilege their own cultural outlook and even, perhaps, feed an unexamined desire for cultural exoticism or virtue signalling.

Chapter four shows Whites are alien, ancillary patrons. This places them into a racial and hierarchical category that brings with it a set of uncomfortable privileges, expectations, and even limitations. In managing the racialization they encounter in Africa, Western partners would do well to remember that God appropriated and then transformed a hierarchical social model, the vassal-client covenant, into a vehicle of blessing for His missional purposes.

Understanding this, global northern Christians can engage in partnership in ways that uphold the local hierarchy in the host church, denomination and community, rather than inadvertently or actively subverting it. This begins with allowing their local partner, a New Gatekeeper, to protect them: from theft, from spreading unnecessary temptation and division, and from situations in which the visitors are dehumanized by their widespread association with dollars.

While it may not be apparent to the overseas partners, their host is almost always a person of privilege. As a New Gatekeepers, they are a local patron, a person of material means embedded in a hierarchy that often remains out of view of their overseas partners.

In the Bible, YHWH's divine blessing resulted in material abundance for YHWH's covenantal partners, and scripture is forthright in setting out this connection. Wright notes that the first passage in the Bible about wealth references the material riches of Abraham. This wealth is the direct result of YHWH's blessing to Abraham and, through his righteous obedience, a means of his extending the covenantal blessing to others. Similarly, Isaac was blessed with material abundance, and Abimelech, seeing Isaac's wealth and acknowledging YHWH's blessing, requests to enter into covenant with Isaac[22] and thus to participate in God's covenantal intention to 'bless those who bless you.'[23] Under the Mosaic covenant, the Psalmist asks YHWH to 'be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, (*Selah)* that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.' [24]

We see a similar pattern of blessing at work in Mbale. Shero (2014) points out that material and financial wealth are pre-conditions for eldership among the largest ethnic group. The 'virtuous wealth' (2014:81) of clan elders allows them to fulfill their patronal duties of hosting and feeding large numbers at community gatherings, of being in a position to 'give out more' at celebrations (2014:101), and of acting as embodied 'social security for the clan' (2014:120).

Respecting local hierarchies enables local elites and patrons, through covenant, to be blessed in order to then bless others. Like David, Solomon, Boaz, Nehemiah and the patriarchs,[25] local elites understand 'the poor' without the distortion of cultural difference and physical distance. Their patronage is far less alien than that of a Muzungu in Africa. Because they know the poor and their circumstances, they can more appropriately share covenant blessings with the poor and the vulnerable. As Sybertz and Healy state,

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[22] Genesis 26:24-31

[23] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Gen 12:3.

[24] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ps 67:1–2.

[25] With the notable exception of Abraham, who left his kin and country to live cross-culturally in obedient response to YHWH's promise.

'Africans will never eat alone, nor will they eat in front of another person without sharing what they have. "'Share your bread with the hungry" *(Is 58:7).* This is quite different from *giving* your bread to the hungry' (1996:256). Giving is a much more likely outcome if overseas visitors have 'bread' but insist on taking the lead in cooking and setting an African table in Africa.

If Africans will never eat alone, then a genuine Christian, African leader will not be a person who, metaphorically speaking, eats alone. Accountability in Africa comes through community, through a shared table in ministry where others are invited in and where local accountability through hospitality in ministry is clearly seen. A leader who lacks community in ministry will easily succumb to the financial temptations brought by their overseas partners, shipwrecking their testimony and ministry. God's covenant *with* is always for blessing *through.* Respecting local hierarchies and authorities does not equate to partnering through a single, unaccountable person, family or closed committee eating alone at the table. Dangerously, the individualism of Western cultures – including evangelical culture, particularly in America – leads them to fall in love with extraordinary personal testimonies and dynamic individuals. So often, ruin has followed.

Rather than a form of 'trickle down' economics, honouring local hierarchies and authorities in partnership is, rather, a progressive sharing or a redemptive ordering of God's blessing, from 'the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.'[26] In this way, the blessing of Abraham moves from one man and one family lineage to all kinships and all nations. By acknowledging the positive hierarchy in covenant relationships, an overseas partner will first of all understand their own 'alienness,' together with their power and privilege within their relationship. By embracing these,

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[26] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 2:10–11

they will better understand the positionality of their friend and host as embedded within a positive hierarchy in Mbale.

Bakker records a clear example of when an American pastor abjectly failed to appreciate the positionality of his partner within the social hierarchy in Liberia. Wanting to overcome what the American pastor termed local 'cultural oppressiveness,' he upset his locally-privileged hosts by flagrantly flouting cultural norms for eating and sleeping arrangements, then going so far as to 'circumventing the *[host's]* plans for agricultural development by making his own business arrangements with local farmers' (2014b:186–7). Ironically, this pastor simultaneously 'preached mutual accountability … and a relationships-centered approach to ministry' (2014b:188). The problem, in my interpretation, was the pastor's imposition of his own cultural egalitarianism in his interactions with his Liberians hosts, thus blinding himself to both the biblical record and local possibilities of harnessing hierarchy to extending the table of covenant blessing.

A hierarchy which exists to extend the table is, by definition, subversive. It overturns the normal pattern of both patron-client hierarchies and the hierarchy of market-based globalization, which reserve the choicest foods for those at the top. It is a hierarchy in which unequal parties come to the table as covenant brothers and sister under their common Covenant Lord, subversively laboring together to bring blessing to 'all the families of the earth.'[27]

A Subversive Hierarchy in the East Africa Revival

Uganda need look no further than her own history to see the inclusive blessing that can flow from a subversive hierarchy. An encouraging example of this is the East Africa Revival. Many writers see the beginning of the revival in a 1929 meeting of two men: an

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[27] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ge 12:3.

English missionary named Joe Church and a Muganda civil servant named Simeon Nsibambi. It was a time, under the British protectorate, of codified social inequality, with missionaries and European officials alike maintaining a comfortable, racial hierarchy with Europeans at the top. Missionaries had distanced themselves by withdrawing 'from any commitment to the life and struggles of the Buganda church' (Taylor 1958:92). Directly below the disengaged missionaries, the Baganda themselves exercised their own authority over others in both the church and the protectorate as a whole.

At the time when the revival was beginning to make inroads into CMS Uganda,[28] Church wrote that 'twelve Africans and four Europeans gathered in the Bishop's hilltop house, eating together at his large table and sleeping under the same roof…. We had long unhurried sessions going into the Bible teaching on full surrender.' After confession and reconciliation, they 'rejoiced that we would enter upon this coming week as a united band. It was a work of the Spirit of God' (127-8). Church's diary shows how a deep recognition of their mutual participation in the God-to-man covenant in turn re-oriented the man-to-man relationships of the revival leaders.

Church believed that this 'deeper oneness and fellowship' was, in fact, 'the greatest fruit of the Revival.' He continued: 'We found that when once we had repented and in some cases asked forgiveness for our prejudice and white superiority, a new realm in relationships was entered into' (1981:99). The confession was not only one direction, with the African revivalists at times confessing to their missionary brothers their own resentment, bitterness, or theft (Bruner 2014; Church 1981). It was through mutual brokenness at the foot of the cross that the imposed social hierarchy was effectively subverted. Such subversion could not, of course, simply cancel the considerable

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[28] The revival began with the preaching of a national believer (Nsibambi) and his converts, rather than among missionaries, and in a rural hospital outpost under separate – and not altogether warmly relating – spiritual governance (Ruanda mission v. CMS Uganda mission) and political governance (Belgian v. British). The meeting in the house of the Bishop of Uganda took place in June 1936.

differences between African and European, but rather redirected the unique positionality of each towards furthering the revival in a way that 'altered the character of all our work' (Church 1981:99).

Only the African Revivalists could spread the message of revival with the power of their teaching, their missionary journeying, and most importantly their living examples revival throughout Ruanda-Urundi and Uganda. On the other hand, it was the mission connections and government contacts of Dr. Church that opened doors for crusades and evangelists throughout East Africa and beyond. It was his position of privilege which enabled 'his fellow African revivalists to travel' and 'spread the message of the revival far and wide' (Ward 2010:4).

Each of the twelve African men around the Bishop's table were themselves privileged members of the elite in colonial Africa. Simeon Nsibambi was himself 'a member of the chiefly class' (Ward 2010), while Yosiya Kinuka 'long enjoyed a privileged position' (Moon 2017:210). Blasio Kigozi was the headmaster of the school attached to Church's medical outpost in Ruanda, and another early convert there was 'a member of the aristocratic family in Ruanda' (Moon 2017:208). As such, these leading men, and indeed the revival they experienced, were often very distant from the lives and the revival as experienced by ordinary Africans, whose revival was one 'of the peasants, of those who never had access to high levels of schooling and of women' (Ward 2010:9). It would seem unlikely that a few educated elite could initiate something affecting change at a grassroots, village level. Yet the impact of the revival at the local level was such that 'to be known as a Mulokole was synonymous with the highest form of integrity' (Mbaasa 2018:102), and many Mulokole went on to become leaders in their communities and, particularly in the next generation, in the nation.

Beyond the (often male) revivalists who took up leadership posts in their communities, women also participated in and benefited from the revival. Mombo finds

that Balokole women, despite the continuation of strong marital expectations, were free to teach and preach in the fellowship (Mombo 2011). It was 'the radical change brought about through the revival' which 'encouraged women to break with oppressive patterns. Women saw this opportunity and opted for it' (Larsson 2011:194). Even at the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy, the change was pronounced: a prison warden in Western Uganda complained that, because of the revival, he did not have enough inmates to maintain the prison grounds (Mbaasa 2018).

Despite the evident blessings that cascaded through East African societies as a result of the East Africa Revival, it's message proved too subversive for many missionaries, who could not quite bring themselves to submit to a fellowship which threatened their comfortable sense of racial superiority and decorum. As with missionaries, many professional African clergy likewise resented being confronted and even accused of sin by their juniors, and found the humility of public confession a bridge too far.

The revival also proved too subversive for the church as a whole in South Africa. Their African teammates having been denied entry papers, three CMS revivalists journeyed to bring the message to the southern shores of the continent. Before departing, the revivalists 'said plainly that revival could not come' if their hosts 'had no (apparent) intention of getting down the colour-bar' and instead kept 'our African brothers separated from us' (Church 1981:212). While the message of the revival spread through Africa as far south as present-day Malawi, and though it brought lasting blessing in places as far away as India, Western Europe and America, the revival never did take root in apartheid South Africa.

As the impact of the revival shows, this blessing is not a simple transfer of material wealth from one place to another - far from it. There is great interest today in direct cash transfers to the poor, as a highly efficient and effective means of humanitarian giving and philanthropy. Enabled by the same technologies that make other forms of local-to-local possible, organizations like Give Directly have grown rapidly by allowing people to 'send money directly to those living in extreme poverty.' A primary selling point is that there are no strings attached to the cash transfers, thus giving the poor 'the dignity to choose for themselves how best to improve their lives' (GiveDirectly 2021). Such giving certainly addresses the considerable problem of donor control.

It is also one dimensional and one directional.[29] The biblical record of covenant, on the other hand, is more relational and reciprocal:

> Charity is meant to be a free gift, a voluntary, unrequited surrender of resources. Though we laud charity as a Christian virtue we know that it wounds. What is wrong with the so-called free gift is the donor's intention to be exempt from return gifts coming from the recipient. Refusing requital puts the act of giving outside any mutual ties. Once given, the free gift entails no further claims from the recipient. A gift that does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction' (Douglas 2002:ix–x).

That a free gift is not exempt from reciprocal claims is a deeply Christian idea. Indeed, it lies at the heart of the Christian message: the free gift of salvation, offered by God the Father through Jesus Christ, invites receivers to freely re-gift themselves as 'bond-servants of Christ Jesus,[30] so as to 'present your bodies as a living sacrifice … to God'.[31]

Immediately after telling his listeners to glorify God in their bodies, Paul pivots to remind them in 1 Corinthians 7:4 that their bodies are likewise to be given to their spouse in the marriage covenant. Like sex, giving between partners must be reciprocal. Both must give and receive, lest sexuality and partnership shift from 'the medium of gift to the

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[29] An small element of reciprocity is possible in that donors to GiveDirectly can sign up to receive a newsletter with stories of beneficiaries (though donors cannot choose individual beneficiaries), event invites, and research updates.

[30] *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Php 1:1.

[31] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 12:1.

medium of appropriation' (Roberts 2007:175). The mutuality of gift giving, done inside of a covenant relationship, opens an avenue of material exchange without wounding through mere charity or, even worse, sliding into unilateral and often-subterranean exercises of power and control.

If partners are to avoid these extremes, then giving inside of a relationship must be exactly that - a gift. This is not equivalent to a project requiring a proposal and a report. Imagine if, in a marriage, the wage-earning spouse required a proposal and a report before giving next week's food money to their marriage partner! That is not to say that spouses do not, in a healthy marriage, keep track of their finances and have ongoing discussions about budgets and spending. Nevertheless, large projects and sums that require formalized agreements and ongoing monitoring are not, in fact, a gift. It is not that larger resource transfers are completely inadmissible, but that the legal architecture in Western countries pushes complex partnerships towards harmful top-down, proposal-report models. Such projects are more suited to professional agencies than to local fellowships whose mutuality must not be violated, because 'once a gift is given and received, gift reciprocation must be possible; otherwise, the receiving party remains fully indebted and is unable to communicate to the giver, impeding the development of solidarity' through meaningful reciprocity (Adler & Offutt 2017:603). Such a 'gift' exacts a heavy toll on a partner's mutuality and dignity.

Using betrothal and marriage as a partnership metaphor puts local church partners on a more equal exchange, opening up space – particularly for the northern partner, who usually enters the partnership with a "giving" mentality – to experience the transformative blessing of receiving.

In both marriage and partnership, the deepest receiving may simply be through knowing the other. The phrase '"to know" in the biblical sense' has entered into the English language as a euphemism for sex. People who know almost nothing else in the

Old Testament know that ‘to know’ someone means to have sex with that person. This popular English understanding comes from the King James Translation of Genesis 4:1: ‘And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain...’.[32]

This understanding in Western popular culture, while not incorrect, is incomplete. To know someone in the Biblical sense is not simply about sex, but is about how sex reflects the personal and intimate nature of knowing. To know someone is to be changed by receiving the gift of ‘knowing’ the other. The intimacy and union of sex – particularly within the covenant of marriage – is a picture of how both partners are intimately changed by undergoing a deep union (becoming “one flesh”) through the gift of knowing each other.

There are many gifts which the North can receive from knowing the South, not least a deeper appreciation of kinship and mutuality – covenantal values which often take a back seat to the individualism in the North.[33] Seeing one’s own cultural values reflected back to oneself through knowing Christians of another culture is a gift of truly transformative value, a gift that money cannot buy.

Hwa Yung (2012) mentions four profound gifts that believers in the Global South can gift their co-religionists in the Global North, gifts which can strengthen and build up the Northern church. First, Christians from the Global South can help those from the North to escape their ‘narrow empiricism’ and re-enchant their worldview, rediscovering the supernatural gifts of the Spirit in their own faith and taking the reality of both dreams and demons seriously (2012:102). Secondly, Southerners can help liberate Northerners from their debilitating, spiritually-paralyzing guilt complex arising from the North’s past

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[32] In non-English translations of the Bible, the same sentiment of ‘knowing’ extends back through the Vulgate translation into Latin (vero cognovit) and the original Hebrew (יָדַע) of Genesis 4:1.

[33] It is perhaps not entirely surprising that there is no adequate European-language translation for the covenantal, Hebrew word *chesed,* or *hesed* (חֶסֶד): “Love, friendship, brotherliness, loyalty, are all inherent in the concept of *hesed.* It is possible to do justice to the different shades of meaning only when *hesed* is understood as conduct in accordance with a mutual relationship of rights and duties.” ((Glueck 1967:50)

mission mistakes and their present hyper-privilege. Such guilt, Yung contends, results in the self-censure of the public and missionary witnesses of Northern churches. Thirdly, Yung believes that

> the Church in the South has a major role to play in helping the Church in the North towards a fresh recovery of confidence in the gospel of Christ that it is indeed the power of God for the redemption of individuals and the transformation of societies and nations (2012:106).

Fourthly, Yung advances the Church in the South as a corrective to liberal Christianity and the vexing question of human sexuality, calling the Northern Churches back to 'embrace Christ and the plain teachings of the Bible' against a Northern version of Christianity in which 'there does not seem to be much difference between our old religions and your ... versions of Christianity' (2012:109).

The overseas partner may enter a relationship not quite sure how, or indeed if, to receive such gifts which have the potential to both unsettle and bless the receiver far more deeply than a new altruistic adventure or a new cultural experience. Being in covenant with each other, working out the complex reality of metaphorically becoming 'one flesh' with another, opens the overseas partner to being both strengthened and challenged by these gifts from their African partner.

Relational Resources and Premarital Projects

Gift-giving is an essential part of covenant ceremony, a symbol of how each partner – particularly within the marriage covenant – actually 'gives' themselves to the other in mutuality (Elazar 1995:66). One example of gift-exchange in covenant is from the Hebrews to God, and of God back to the Levites, as an expression of the symbolic Covenant of Salt in Numbers 18:19.

When it comes to the exchanging of gifts today, Western Christians are often outdone by the gift-giving cultures of churches in the Majority World. Whereas northern gift-givers are likely to de-value their gift by saying 'It's really not much' or 'I bought

you a little something,' in Cambodian culture the giver will talk *up* the value of their gift, because the expense and sacrifice of the gift is a direct reflection of the value they place on it's recipient. A valuable gift, in other words, reflects the high value they place on the friendship and the friend. In the context of local-to-local mission, any assistance given by one partner to another becomes a part of gift-giving, a mutual exchange as an expression of the value they place on their covenant partner.

This is not to say that a gift must be large in order for it to communicate how much one partner values the other, or that earlier giving will solidify the relationship earlier. If anything, the opposite may be truer. Kilama observes that in any culture around the world, lavish displays of wealth and profligate spending by strangers will inevitably attract a high percentage of disreputable people with deeply compromised motives (D003); Christian mission and humanitarian engagement is certainly not exempt.

Premature giving (or "doing" of projects) in a local-to-local partnership, then, is akin to sex before the covenant of marriage. Just as partners who co-habitate before marriage are more likely to divorce, so local partners who succumb to the temptation to engage in heavy financial foreplay are doing longer-term harm to themselves and their partner (Meg Jay 2012; McVeigh 2004).

Rather than rush the relationship, it is wiser to allow time for each party to become better acquainted with the other. This progressive period of courtship is vital: the multiple ceremonies, meetings and meals which together form the traditional betrothal process in much of Africa 'offers the opportunity for the parents of the couple, relatives, and significant others, to get acquainted with one another. As the betrothal and marriage process progresses, various gifts are exchanged' (Teh 2005:53). An extended betrothal can help partners answer common questions about the other. 'Are they trustworthy and honest?' the overseas partner often wants to know, while the local partner can better ask and answer 'Are they teachable, non-controlling, and doctrinally traditional?' Only

within a pre-existing covenant relationship can the gift of financial consummation be safely enjoyed, whereas yielding to temptation prematurely only reaps pain and a loss of intimacy in the longer term.

Forsaking All Others, Keeping Only Unto Her: Covenant Faithfulness

I once attended a mission conference in the USA which was graciously hosted by a very large and influential church. At various points around their extensive campus, posters advertised planned mission trips for the coming year, as well as trips that had taken place the previous year. I saw little, if any, overlap between past and planned trips. While almost every corner of the globe was going to see visitors from this congregation, there was little discernible continuity in their missions engagements. In the absence of long-term, relational continuity, there is every reason to fear that these Northern Christians may have fallen into a form of 'religiously themed tourism' (Ross 2008).

The pagan peoples of the ANE had their own version of short-term religious tourism. They entered into short-term relationships with many deities to suit their every need and desire, playing various gods against each other in power matches and tossing their allegiance to whichever god was benefiting them the most at the moment. Such god-man relationships were self-centred, short-term, and highly polygamous.

Contrast that with the Hebrew and Christian Covenants. The covenant treaties formed the bedrock of Hebrew monotheism, and through the incarnation and the indwelling Spirit, God eternally binds himself to man. Calvin, using covenant terminology, describes it this way:

> What likeness is there between God and men? Yet, as if he descended from his heavenly glory, he bound to himself the seed of Abraham, that he might also mutually bind himself. Therefore God's election was like the joining of a mutual bond, so that he did not will to be separate from the people (Parker 1986:181).

There is great faithfulness – and thus great security - in a covenant relationship, and the marriage covenant is a human expression of this profound faithfulness and security.

With that understanding, any western partner who engages in mission as a series of short projects, teachings, or other engagements with different "partners" is really engaged in little more than a series of one-night stands outside of the covenant of marriage and against God's stubborn insistence to limit himself to mission through His covenant bride.

Highly polygamous partnering abounds in Africa as well. Many gospel workers in Mbale are all too quick to seek out bigger and better rewards from the latest stranger in town. Stealing Muzungus and congregations equally fails the test of covenant faithfulness. As has been shown in chapter six, running through partners in search of bigger and better rewards also leads gospel workers to abandon their first love, Christ, and ultimately leads to their own ruin and to Christ's disrepute.

Chapter four shows that church leaders in Mbale prefer one-off visitors to those which come on a regular basis, knowing that repeat visitors 'will get used, familiar with the situation and will be very complicated' (228). The challenge for overseas practitioners is to understand the roots of this unspoken lack of enthusiasm for repeat visitors. Part of this is that both sides wilfully reduce their partner to either a project (the temptation of overseas partners) or a paycheck (a susceptibility of local partners). No marriage can survive such crass de-personalization.

Another contributing factor is that repeated (and extended) visitors can either be stolen, or begin to exert high levels of control in the partnership. For the overseas partner, thinking covenantally should render them less vulnerable on both counts: less susceptible to easy theft and less prone to exercise control over their partner.

So Help Me God: Accountability & Transparency in Covenant

The flip side of security is accountability. The tension between these two sides of the covenant coin has been reflected in the scholarly debate around covenant security and covenant obedience, with questions like 'Are the covenants of Abraham and Israel with God unconditional and unilateral (i.e. the covenants are secure acts of grace)? Or are God's promises conditional upon Abraham's and Israel's obedience to the covenant terms (i.e. the covenants are conditional upon obedience, acts of law)?'

Walter Brueggemann and N.T. Wright dismiss this polarity as failing to capture the profundity of the covenant union, with Brueggemann declaring that 'our relationship to the God of the gospel [is], at the same time, profoundly unconditional and massively conditional' (1999:36). The unconditional-grace side of the covenant is expressed in the very character of God, in the refusal of the wounded lover to abandon His covenant people despite their infidelity. The conditional-law side of the covenant is expressed in the covenant formulary itself, which concludes with a stipulation of curses (and sometimes blessings) to punish infidelity or bless fidelity.

Under this divine covenant, it is our vertical relationship to the Father which, horizontally, transforms Christians into sisters and brothers. Wright stresses the importance of human obedience to the divine promise and sees an 'increasingly clear' and 'quite explicit... relationship between God's promised intentions on the one hand and Abraham's faith and obedience on the other' (2006:205).

The covenant law in turn provides us with accountability to each other as sisters and brothers.[34] Hahn, like Wright, also stresses the "*mutual* obligation [author's emphasis] of the kinship-covenant at Sinai' (2009:48). As Wright says, 'we owe it to one

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[34] Today under the New Covenant, it is the moral law initiated under the covenant (particularly the Sinaitic Covenant), rather than the juridical aspects of the covenant, that provides us with accountability as brothers and sisters.

another—as a covenant obligation—to ... trust one another and to be trustworthy, to love one another, and to do justice' (2011:25).

The stipulations of blessings and sanctions in the covenant formulary brought accountability to each of the covenant makers. Their mutual obligation, nonetheless, is in response to their covenant obligation to God, a human response to God's covenant promises. Accountability *up* to God, in other words, led them into accountability *out* to each other.

Here I turn to examine this accountability *out*. I first look at how covenant can inform mutual accountability by Global Northern partners, and then examine the same among African partners. I have intentionally referred to Northern partners because I believe the normative record of Covenant speaks to both Western and Asian partners across many cultures. What most partners from the North have in common, whether Asian or Western, is that, in most cases, they occupy positions of relative power in their local-to-local relationships in Africa.

Accountability in the Global North

It is abundantly clear that the weaker party is accountable to the stronger, such as Israel's accountability to YHWH, but I want to first dwell on the inverse of that: how the more powerful partner renders account to the weaker partner. There are scriptural examples of the strong rendering service and account to the weak, including the covenantal actions of David towards Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9) and of Isaac towards Abimelech (Genesis 26:26ff).

It is noteworthy when a stronger party such as David or Isaac enters into accountability with a weaker one, but what is truly astonishing is how YHWH himself freely submits to accountability through covenant. After God entered into Covenant with Abram, Abram asks God for a sign to guarantee that God will in fact do all that he has

covenanted to do for Abram (Genesis 15:8). That is a bold request requiring considerable courage, given the relative bargaining positions of God and Abram, and coming as it does after God starts His dialogue with Abram with the words 'Do not fear, Abram' (Genesis 15:1).

Yet God doesn't just meet Abram's request halfway – he fully obliges Abraham. He does so in the rituals of 'cutting' or signing a covenant with Abraham. Appropriating a common ANE practice, YHWH passes between the halves of cut animals, thus saying to Abraham, 'As these animals have been slaughtered, so may it be done to me if I do not fulfil the commitments I have made.'[35] Then he took an oath before Abraham, swearing by the highest authority, the greatest witness that he could – Himself – that he would fulfil His promises to Abram. Whereas other ANE cultures regularly swore by other deities, YHWH swore by himself.

Thus the whole ceremony was intended to convey to Abraham 'Listen, I am spelling out as clearly as I possibly can what I am going to do, telling you the exact extent of the land you will possess, the exact peoples whom you will dispossess, even the 400 years of captivity your offspring will spend in Egypt. I pledge by the most powerful rituals you understand that I will do all I have promised. I swear by the highest authority I can summon that I will be true to our covenant agreement. Rest assured – I am holding myself accountable to you under our agreement.'

Astonishingly, God does not ask Abraham to requite His unilateral declaration of accountability, and Abraham does not follow the normal custom and walk between the halved sacrificial animals as well. The point here is not that Abraham is not accountable

[35] In ceremonies highly reminiscent of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 15, Shenk writes that traditional African Kinship covenants involve sacrifice and bloodletting, and clan members establishing covenant jumping over a disembowelled sheep to symbolically move from feuding to peace (1983:55).

to God – far from it! – but that God, the stronger partner, appropriated the medium of covenant to hold himself accountable to Abraham, the weaker partner.

This is not the usual pattern we see around us. Anyone who has been around mission partnerships has an experiential knowledge of how accountability generally works: the weaker partner (who often receives training or projects or funds or visits) accounts for their use of funds or resources to the stronger partner (usually the northern church/partner). Madden, for example, unabashedly states that the leadership of his American church is successful in their partnership with a Malawian church 'when it holds partners financially accountable and gets solid results.' Covenant accountability offers us an alternative to this norm, pointing towards how an alternative balance of accountability could work where the more powerful party also renders accountability to their weaker partner.

Accountability Comes from Transparency

Rather than avoiding uncomfortable discussions around the disparities of material abundance between partners, affluent world Christians would do well to learn from the example of the covenantal patriarchs, men who 'receive their wealth from God as a token of his blessing, respond in risky faith and costly obedience, and participate in God's mission of blessing others' (Christopher J. H Wright 2006:192). Playing coy with a partner communicates mistrust, whereas transparency communicates exactly the opposite.

It is important that the overseas partner shows as much transparency as possible to their African partner. Of course, hosting the African partner(s) is a great way to open up understanding through transparency. But even if a visa cannot be procured, or if other

obstacles present themselves,[36] overseas partners can still introduce committee members, put their partner in touch with other stakeholders and donors, share how funds are raised, and be clear about how and when funds are authorized, disbursed and transmitted. Christian leader Ivan was very specific in his request for transparency:

> Ivan: Now to be honest, this is where I would really appreciate. If you're talking of the equal partnership, bring for me the full package of your plans, including your budget, put it here.
> Interviewer: Transparency.
> Ivan: Exactly! Put it here. Let me even interact with your local church sending you – 'where's your pastor?' I should be able, as a leader on ground, to even get the information from your church, to talk to me directly, not through you. So that I am able to say, 'This is how much John is doing here. John came, and brought for us these dollars for doing this, is that what you have sent him to do?'
> Interviewer: And don't send it through John's *[bank]* account, establish a proper account!
> Ivan: You can send it to John account, but let it be transparent! I should be able to give feedback direct to the church. I should even be able if we're equal – since you're in my land – let me go *[to your land and]* meet with your church leaders and church elders, and let them ask me questions when you're not there. Ask me questions when you're not there at all: *[elders say to me]* 'this is what *[report]* we received from John.' *[You John]* Present your report, let me also present the independent report. (D003)

Relatively simple steps such as these can go a long way to building mutual accountability and equality through transparency. Brown recommends that partnering congregations 'develop a system for decision-making regarding partnership activities and material resource transfers' so that both partners 'maintain dignity throughout the process' (Brown 2007:271). I agree with Brown's recommendation, but I would argue that establishing transparency, and thus building a sense of equality, is a prerequisite to establish any system for shared decision making. Without it, decision making is more likely to come from quiet acquiescence, a fear 'to turn down the visitor's idea … if they turn down the idea, they might lose everything' (310). Such deferential decision making exacerbates inequality and breeds mistrust.

Growing mistrust is particularly a problem when we consider that overseas partners, by definition, enter into a relationship suffering from a deficit of trust. Mistrust of overseas Christians and New Missionaries is widely, albeit quietly and privately, shared

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[36] If funds are available for overseas partners to travel to Africa, then we can certainly say that, with some re-orientation of priorities, funds are available for the partner to travel to visit their friends overseas.

among church leaders. This is despite the fact that visitors are held in high esteem, enjoy genuine hospitality, and are recipients of a great deal of white privilege during their emotionally and spiritually climactic visit to their partner. Nevertheless, on a foundational level, for a host of legitimate reasons laid out in this research, overseas partners are not fully trusted. Rightly understood, this mistrust should never be taken personally. Rather, overseas partners must understand that it is incumbent upon them to earn trust through pro-active self-disclosure, transparency, and accountability to their partner. These provide the only adequate foundation for the mutual decision making recommended by Brown and Bakker (Brown 2007; Bakker 2014a).

Accountability in Africa

As compared to most of the Western Church, African Christianity possesses a more vital belief in the physical reality of spiritual blessings and curses, all the more so when these oaths occur inside of a covenant commitment:

> Africans regard covenant, oath and taboo breaking, as one of the most serious moral crimes that one can commit. A person who breaks a covenant is regarded as worthless and does not command any respect in the community. The seriousness of covenant breaking is based on the fact that the one who fails to observe the rules of a covenant does not value his fellow humans, the community and the Supreme Being. Keeping an agreed promise shows respect of person to person as well as person to deity relationships. It is thus believed that those who fail to keep the covenant with their fellow human beings will also not be accepted by the Supreme Being (Chepkwony 2005:20).

The divine blessing and cursing in the Abrahamic covenant, then, are not abstractions or a mere historical footnote in Africa. Explicitly and intentionally building a partnership as a covenant relationships can serve as a bulwark against self-serving corruption by incorporating the Biblical record of covenant oaths and the high African regard for keeping those oaths into those relationships.

Understanding that resources come from God leads to accountability with resources in our horizontal partnership. The same connection of vertical and horizontal accountability is expressed well by Director Jeffrey:

So in all these things, it's very important for people to know and understand that whatever resource that comes their way, it is a resource from God. So whether it is coming from John or through John or it's coming from *[myself]*. It's God's resource. So I am responsible to steward that resource, and therefore, the other things is not going to work here. It will be very wrong – I am accountable before the Lord – if I accept that to be misused.' (B004)

Covenant accountability before the Lord is helpful in that this research has shown that Whites are vehicles of temptation. Their cultural naiveté and emotionally super-charged impulsivity has contributed to the ruin of countless Gospel workers in Mbale as across the continent. When a financial resource is viewed as a contribution from comparatively wealthy American or Korean friends, rather than a gift given under a covenant oath, it does not engender the same sense of accountability to the divine covenant keeper and our covenant partner.

Invoking covenant around a shared meal, celebrating the Lord's Table, reminds us that the resources in the partnership belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is present at the meal. In this context, with the witness of the Lord Jesus, no partner wishes to become a Judas to the other because of the temptations of money.

Summary of Covenant Partnership

This study has shown how contested local-to-local relationships are. Divergent goals, power imbalances, cultural misapprehension, and considerable mistrust lay along the path of partnership. Knowing that it has always been thus may seem like small consolation. Yet YHWH has chosen to covenant in marriage to His Church, in all of her messy disarray and outright feuding, to accomplish his mission to the world. This alone should give us unfading hope in pursuing mission partnership. Thus, I conclude with the words of Pastor Mathias in Mbale, who expresses well, in Lugisu, the potential of local-to-local partnership to see that 'it is Jesus who benefits more':

Interviewer: Who do you think benefits more in this kind of partnerships the church has? Is it the pastor? Or the Christians in the church, the community? Or, that partner abroad? According to you, who do you think benefits more?

Pastor Mathias: (Laughter) Hahaha! Now, as me, I have thought in my heart. Due to the way we have many partnerships and join together in unity, I can confirm that when we are together and united, it is Jesus who benefits more. Because one time Jesus said, when He met Peter fishing, He told him to go and fish men for Him. So in this partnership, when people hear that there are partnerships here, they leave the drinking joints *[bars]* and come and get saved. So these people get saved, it is Jesus who benefits more! (L002)

PART 2 – SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

The Research Questions & Argument

This research set out to answer two primary questions. The first is 'when Ugandan churches are engaged in a local-to-local, cross-continental, missional relationship, what are their experiences and perceptions of the relationship?' The second question flows from the first: 'how do these compare to the local-to-local literature presenting the perspective of overseas partners?'

I argue that Church leaders seek out and engage with overseas partners to bring new and greater products to the religious marketplace. When church leaders are able to overcome barriers and establish overseas relationships, they take an instrumental approach in these partnerships, engaging their foreign friends in ways that are consistent with their history, their position in the local religious hierarchy, and their desire to safeguard the relationship while simultaneously avoiding the pitfalls that come with it. Because most of the literature in this still-emerging field is written from a global-western perspective, the voices in this research reveal new perceptions and divergent interpretations in local-to-local encounters. In this contested terrain of local-to-local relationships, I find that the biblical record of covenant has much to offer practitioners as a cross-cultural, relational approach to partnership, and as a foundation for mutual Christian service and growth.

Summary of Research Findings

In answering the first research question above, I have found that local-to-local relationships are wide-spread in Mbale, with chapter two documenting that just under one-third of all churches are currently engaged in some form of local-to-local relationship with a group of Christians outside of Africa. Despite local-to-local relationships having only come into existence after the turn of this century, they have already engendered impacts in Mbale district which extend far beyond the spiritual lives of congregants, and indeed far beyond the borders of the district itself, even into cross-continental, nation-to-nation relationships.

Chapter three reveals how the approach of Mbale church leaders in local-to-local relationships is an outgrowth of local and national histories. The partnership approach of local church leaders is an evolution built on an older foundation, not a revolution that breaks with all that was wrong from before. The social, financial, and political patronage of White missionaries and teachers in the first three decades of the foreign missions and administration in Uganda continues to inform local perceptions of foreign friends. More recently, in the aftermath of the Amin regime, Christian leaders scrambled to rebuild their churches and grow their influence by marketing their stories to sympathetic overseas audiences, bringing both funds and an 'Americanizing' influence to their churches at home.

Then as now, overseas partners have played the historically-informed role of patrons in the local religious marketplace. What has changed in the post-colonial era is that the patronage of Whites has become an ancillary, rather than a direct, patronage. Chapter four shows that these overseas, ancillary patrons supplements the patronage of local pastors. These patron-pastors, who function as the new partnership gatekeepers embedded within the higher levels of the local religious hierarchy, engage in instrumental friendships with Muzungu partners as a means of production for sought-

after goods in the religious marketplace, bringing new teachings, new prestige, and new resources to advance their personal and ministry goals.

Within that larger religious marketplace, this research evidences that churches in Mbale are also operating in a partnership marketplace, one with significant barriers to entry. Chapter five evidences that when a church successfully overcomes these barriers and establishes overseas partnership, they are then in a strong position to continue to accrue more partnership capital, leaving behind those churches with less or none; more specifically, while a majority of churches do not have an overseas partner, those churches which have partners are more likely to have two and even three, than only one.

Despite the frustrations with, suspicions of, and temptations brought by partners, local church leaders actively seek partners because most find that the potential benefits outweigh the known risks. As shown in chapter six, the benefits of local-to-local relationships for Mbale church leaders are that they can operate with a greater degree of autonomy, transparency, and authority relative to more traditional mission practices. Local partners weigh these benefits against the risks – against the financial and doctrinal temptations that come their way, and against the very real possibilities of partnership theft or the seeding of mistrust and conflict with their congregants or client pastors. Ironically, however, I find that partnership-induced mistrust and conflict between local patron-pastors and their clients is evidence of the greater empowerment of these pastors as the new gatekeepers, now that they have taken on the roles of the traditional (often foreign and/or NGO professional) gatekeepers they have often displaced.

This brings us to the second question posed by this research: 'how do the experiences and perceptions of Mbale church leaders compare to the local-to-local literature presenting the perspective of overseas partners?' Most of what has been written about the shift in mission practice towards local-to-local models comes out of the West. Writing and testifying from a western perspective, many has argued that it is

a new and post-colonial break with the past, is marked by mutuality and egality, and is sustained by relational solidarity. I have argued, in chapter one, that much of this literature is incomplete and therefore, when taken as a whole, misleading. When this literature is brought into conversation with the voices of Ugandan partners, the local-to-local model of partnership looks more like a product of history than a break with it. It is sustained more by instrumental friendship than by relational solidarity, and is more hierarchical and clientistic than it is egalitarian and mutual. The voices of Ugandan partners testify that these partnerships can be agents of division and distrust locally, even as they builds community and common purpose trans-nationally.

With few voices from majority world partners in the literature, we are engaged in a monologue rather than a conversation. This research is an attempt, then, to begin that conversation in earnest by bringing new voices to the missiological table.

Hearing from a different voice, one that speaks into our experience from a different vantage point, is always disconcerting and perhaps even depressing. Fortunately, this research does not end on the disrupting clash of viewpoints from different continents. In chapter seven, I find that the Biblical record of covenant, in both the Old and New Testaments, provides a meeting ground for diverse partners to positively engage in purposeful friendships, building solidarity from distrust and difference, gifting growth to each other, and harnesses hierarchy to bring inclusive, Kingdom-directed change.

Implications for Further Study

There are a number of avenues, stemming from this study and its limitations, which beg further inquiry. When I started this study, I planned to include a case studies element into the overall design. Upon commencing my research, however, I saw that the

sensitivity of the topic, the value of partnerships themselves, and my own essential alienness meant that I would not be granted that level of access. A less-foreign researcher, particularly an East African national, could unveil new depths of insight by engaging in closely-attended case studies of local-to-local partnerships. Such a study could, for example, mine the ground for deeper understanding of the displacement,[37] expressions, and facets of power in local-to-local relationships, or probe more deeply into African perceptions of the continuing phenomena of racism among and white privilege granted to visitors.

The few studies of grassroots church partnerships that exist tend to focus of success, rather than failure, simply by choosing to research partnerships that are ongoing – that is largely the approach this research takes as well. Yet many churches in Mbale have experienced partnership failure, as well as failure to launch. It is an area of research that is ripe for study.

Logistical and financial realities effectively limited researchers like Madden (2019), Mensah (2019), Bakker (2010) and Cline (2006) to studying the American side of local-to-local, congregational partnerships. In the same way, my study presents only the Ugandan side of these partnerships, though a concerted attempt has been made to engage with the literature from overseas, much of which emanates from Europe and especially America. There are rich possibilities for researchers who are able to gather primary data and engage in analysis with a partner in Global South and another in the Global North.

While Holslag (2013), Brown (2007), and Vincelletti (2004) have done studies with data from a mix of Eastern and Western European and American partners, there is little literature on local-to-local partnerships from Africa to non-western context. With the

[37] Traditional Gatekeepers are vested with a great deal of power inside of traditional mission relationships. In newer, local-to-local mission partnerships, where and to whom has this power been displaced?

growing footprint of Asian Christians in global mission, there are opportunities for effective study of cross-continental partnerships involving local groups of believers from Asia – such studies could be of great benefit not only to Asian and African Christians, but to their Western co-religionists as well, filling in the many gaps left in research such as this and offering new perspectives and learning for Western scholars and practitioners.

APPENDIX 1 – Telephone Survey Methodology

THE SURVEY UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The unit of analysis for the questionnaire is a local church. Representing this local church for the purposes of the survey is the local leader of these local Christian churches.

THE SURVEY POPULATION

According to Rea and Parker, a survey population must be differentiated into two categories, in order to derive a sampling frame (2005:location 3964). A researcher starts by identifying the *general population*, and from that builds a *working population*.

The General Population

The general population is the population to which the results can be generalized. In this survey, the population is specifically self-identifying Christian churches in Mbale District, Uganda. The results can only be generalized to Mbale district because they cannot be extrapolated to all of Uganda or East Africa with a known level of error (Rea & Parker 2005:location 3964).

Despite this limitation, researchers, missiologists and practitioners may find a great deal of interest in the results, and find them useful in a variety of ways as they look at mission partnerships involving local churches in East Africa and their counterparts in other parts of the world, particularly in the western world.

The Working Population

The working population operationalizes the survey population, rendering it ready for sampling and study. The goal is to acquire and/or to build a list that as represent of the general population as possible. Operationalizing the survey population was relatively straight forward, and required a workable definition of what both a *Christian church* and *Church Leader* for our research purposes. These terms were operationalized as follows

- *Christian Church* – A Christian was based on self-reporting as such. Any other definition would be almost unworkable in the field. As such, there are some groups that Christians of many stripes consider to be fringe or even outside the faith, such as local groups with cultic characteristics and Jehovah's Witnesses Congregations. A *church* was defined as those self-reporting they were a church "a group of Christians who meet together most weeks to worship God."
- *Church Leader* - someone who affirms that they are a "pastor or someone leading this church" who "leads a group of Christians..."

In practice, the working population is never a perfect representation of the survey population, and those differences are almost always systematic in some way(s) (Rea & Parker 2005:location 3996). In this survey, churches which are very small, very new, or which are not well known locally.

One can reasonably project that such churches are less likely to have outside partnerships, since contact with outside world is invariably more limited either by choice or by circumstance. Such groups had a lower, but inestimable, probability of selection via exclusion from the working frame. To minimize their under-representation, site visits to each of 22 sub-counties were conducted and local pastoral contacts were asked to identify other Christian groups/gatherings which they knew of. Particularly towards the end of the survey framing process, such site visits generally confirmed the existence of churches which were already known to us via other means.

Given the steps that were taken, I am confident that they working survey frame was about as representative of the population frame as could be reasonably attained without investing much larger amounts of time and resources.

THE SAMPLING FRAME

As noted above, the working population used to establish the sampling frame was local church leaders. These leaders where surveyed as representatives of their respective

local churches. Local churches were represented variously by the Parish Priest, Father, Bishop, Pastor, Evangelist, or other senior leader. In a few instances, an assistant or associate pastor in large churches was deemed either the best or a sufficient voice to represent the local congregation in the survey. The eventual sampling frame consisted of 594 units/churches.

Process of Establishing the Sampling Frame

My original ambition was to choose four districts in each of the four regions of Uganda, and to then randomly select sub-districts from these four districts for inclusion into the study. However, this ambition was abandoned relatively quickly as the time and difficulties of establishing the frame became apparent. My first attempts to establish the frame were conducted at the national/denominational level, but little headway was made due to busy schedules, missed appointments, and access issues. Without national acquiescence or assistance in establishing the sampling frame, the ground work required to secure the understanding and cooperation of such a diverse group of Christian churches and their leaders was too great to attempt in four separate districts. I had to scale down my plans. With the input of various Ugandan advisors, I decided to concentrate on one district for the survey.

I chose Mbale District in eastern Uganda, which had several attractions as a place to conduct survey research of Ugandan pastors:

- It is big enough to contain churches from most of the major non-Anglican, Protestant denominations present in Uganda, in addition to Anglican and Catholic churches.
- It contains both rural (up on the mountainous foothills to Mt Elgorn) and urbanized sub-districts (the "second-tier" municipality of Mbale).
- It is in neither the richest nor the poorest region (Central and West are generally considered wealthier, while the North Region is considered poorer).

- It is not a highly remote district by Uganda standards, yet it is also a fair distance from the central, urbanized corridor of Entebbe-Kampala-Jinja.
- Through a contact, I had initial access to some key church leaders to kick-start the process.

Changing tack in my approach to framing the sample, I travelled to Mbale district from Kampala, initially with a Christian university professor whose homeland is Mbale. He introduced me to his network in Mbale, and I started making follow-up appointments from those initial contacts. I then proceeded to gain more contacts via a combination of snowball contacting and directly making appointments with local leaders of major denominations and branches. Relatively quickly, I meet with key leaders of various meta-denominational and para-church leaders such as seminary leaders, the district overseer of the Fellowship of Born-Again Pentecostal Churches (NFBAPC), and leaders of the Mbale Elders Fellowship.

Nevertheless, it was clear that it would take me far too long to establish the survey frame. Most pastors wanted to have an extended discussion with me and clearly had various motives in doing so. While this was unsurprising in many ways, it did require that I change tack once again. I decided to recruit and hire a research assistant, local to Mbale district, to assist in establishing the survey frame. Once again, I headed to a local university with which I had contacts, and secured the services of a student who had a bit of experience helping another PhD student. With his assistance, much more rapid progress was made and the frame was completed within two months. The research assistant worked from both the bottom-up (site visits to the sub-counties to inquire about and check on churches) and from the top-down (together with me or alone meeting bishops and overseers, and then working with them to secure a list of their churches in the district). On the ground, there is sometimes a blurry line between a church and a para-church ministry, as between a functioning church and a fellowship or nascent church

plant. In general, we deferred to the views of those to whom we spoke, and made judgement calls when necessary.

Impediments to Establishing the Survey Frame

1. The perceived pressure from the West, including from elements within the western church, regarding human sexuality and the definition of marriage has tensed up the country and particularly churches, making pastors more distrustful of outsiders and particularly white foreigners or 'Muzungus.' It is not unusual for pastors to believe that since a 'Muzungu' is doing the study, that it will be used as a means of influencing the church towards values or behaviours they generally perceive to be un-African and un-biblical. After experiencing this impediment fairly early and repeatedly in the process, I thereafter explained, in every significant introduction to church leaders, that I was not here as a teacher with any outside agenda, but as a learner, and that my study and interaction with their churches and congregants would be strictly guided by the core purpose of this study. I also stated my own views of human sexuality and marriage. My perceptions is that upon hearing this, the 'ice' was often broken and a freer, more open dialogue ensued which inevitably resulted in their willing participation and collaboration in the research.
2. Academic research is a foreign concept to the vast majority of pastors, particularly those with little formal education. Many persistently believed that, by giving us their contact information, they would in turn receive an external partner. Gaining their understanding and then beyond that their trust, took time and more than one visit in many cases.
3. Every pastors knows someone, or at least knows a story of someone, who takes advantage of their and others churches for personal profit. Pastors or church members sometimes believed that my research assistant was among their number. Knowing or discovering that a 'Muzungu' was behind the study made it much more complicated

for the research assistant to finish the sampling frame. Pastors often suspected that the research assistant was trying to use them and their information in some way to benefit himself. Nevertheless, my presence was also needed to secure the cooperation of the heads of denominations and independent church movements, as well as explaining the research to the local Catholic and Anglican (Church of Uganda) authorities.

4. The 2014 national census had just taken place – allegedly, 26 pastors/church leaders were arrested in Mbale during the recent national census for teaching/preaching contra the census exercise. This made some pastors suspicious of a wandering research assistant, with some people conceiving of him as a government agent.

In many cases, with time and attention, these impediments were overcome. In other cases, all or at least the essential information was gathered in other ways, either from their bishop/overseer, from another pastor, or from various pastors' fellowships.

Cleaning the Sampling Frame

Before starting the telephone interviews, the sampling frame was cleaned. Essential missing data was identified (church name, pastor's name, telephone number) and was added as the research went along. Duplicates were identified and removed. Confusing and suspect entries were clarified with the research assistant, mostly before and occasionally during the telephone interviewing process.

Local parish churches under the Catholic and Anglican parish structures were included individually in the frame. The parish priest's/reverend's survey results were then duplicated to each of the parish churches under his care which were randomly chosen for sampling. For example, the Catholic parish of Nyondo has a total of forty five local parish churches; as such, it is the largest parish or related group of churches in the data set. Of these forty five churches, thirty one were randomly included into the actual sample. Nyondo Parish is overseen by two Catholic priests, one of whom I interviewed

over the telephone. The results of that interview were then duplicated across the thirty one churches selected in the sample. The parish priest was then classified as overseeing " 2+ churches" for purposes of analysis.

On the other hand, St Denis Ssebugwawo Catholic Church in Mbale municipality is the only local church in that parish. This church was also randomly included in the sample. In this case, the Catholic Father was categorized as overseeing "1 church." The same process was used for Anglican parishes, though these are considerably more decentralized than their Catholic counterparts.

In the Born Again churches, a few senior pastors and bishop wished to be contacted for all their sub churches, rather than the local pastors. In order to honour their wishes, they were called and asked about the local church where they were most directly pasturing, and their results were then counted as representing all their sub-churches who came up in the sample. The resulting data was listed as coming from a pastor of 2+ churches. If a pastor was listed for 2 or more churches separately, it was because he considered himself to be leading both (or leading one, planting another which was sufficiently established to be listed by the pastors indication). In the case of Jehovah's Witness churches, a church "elder" does not technically have a role above other churches with their own "elders" ; however, one elder requested to speak for all five such churches, and in this instance I decided to give this elder a " 2+ churches" designation.

This means that the *ratio* of "2+ churches" pastors to "1 church" pastors in the sample is not a valid representation of the survey population, since some " 2+ pastors" wished to be notified in place of the "1+ church" pastors underneath them. Nevertheless, the *data* of the " 2+" and the "1" pastors is valid, and the categories can be meaningfully compared to each other for survey *results*.

THE SAMPLE

Because we had built an exhaustive sampling frame, I was able to use probability sampling, specifically using the Simple Random Sampling technique, to establish a sample set (Rea & Parker 2005:location 4038). Non-repeating, quasi-random samples were generated computationally[38] in four rounds (three progressive rounds as the frame grew, and one additional sweep of the whole sample set to "top up" the final number of samples due to an initially higher-than-expected non-response rate).

I chose a large sample because I was unsure of the percentage of units which would report having an outside partnership. If 50% of churches did not have any outside partners, than the sample size for all subsequent questions about that partnership would be only 50% of the original sample size. Wanting to keep as robust a sample size as possible for those central-but-subsequent questions, and to have more robust samples for other segmentation purposes, I opted for a large initial sample.

The 445 units selected for sampling represented 74.9% of the sampling frame. Of these 445 units selected for sampling, we were successful in obtaining a response from 394 of them. This leaves us with a non-response rate of 11.8%. The section entitled *Non-Response* contains more details on the response and non-response rates.

SURVEY METHOD

The chosen method for collecting the required data was an interviewer-administered telephone questionnaire. Other major options were ruled out for logistical reasons[39]. The initial design was presented at an OCMS student seminar in November

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[38] The website http://www.random.org/integer-sets/ was used to generate a quasi-random set of non-repetitive samples. The samples are "quasi-random" rather than completely random because they are generated by the underlying architecture of programmed software, and thus cannot be said to be purely "random."

[39] Web surveys were clearly out of the realm of possibility, and the degree of difficulty in getting self completed interviews returned to the researcher in Uganda ruled that option out. The time and expense of conducing face-to-face interviews, given the required sample size, were prohibitive.

2013 and subsequently underwent extensive revisions in multiple rounds of interview-feeback-revision.

THE SURVEY DESIGN

The survey instrument was *limited* because this survey was one (quantitative) piece of a larger (mostly qualitative) research design. The instrument was intentionally limited to closed, prompted, pre-coded questions. While limiting the richness of the data, this enables a simpler survey design, interviewing technique, coding and analysis. Together, these lower the incidence of errors and increase the reliability of the data (Brace 2013: location 323). The "richness" and depth lacking in this data will develop in the subsequent research. This survey, however, gives me a good vantage point from which to choose places for further focus and deeper study.

The survey questions (Addendum B, see pg 23) variously yielded Dichotomous, Ordinal, Ratio, or Interval data. In the addendum, each question is labelled for both the purpose behind the question, and for the type of data which that question yields.

Ordinal Questions (Q's 12, 13, 15) were given reverse prompts in 50% of the surveys to negate the effects of recency bias (reverse prompt surveys was used in 49.3% of the successful interviews)(Brace 2013:location 2286). The exception to this was question #11. I deemed it more important to put the prompts asking about funding (a sensitive topic for some) behind the other prompts rather than the beginning of the prompts, where it is more likely to induce a refusal to answer. Furthermore, , each prompt for question #11 was answered individually with a "Yes" or "No" which in theory eliminates any recency problems, while (potentially) introducing answer fatigue. However, the prompts here are short and clear and the overall interview averaged about 12-15 minutes, so fatigue did not seem to be an issue.

Survey Objectives

The survey was designed to measure the incidence of external relationships and, more narrowly and indirectly, to measure the incidence of local-to-local overseas mission relationships in Ugandan congregations. Given the work required to answer those primary questions, however, it made sense to leverage the survey to gain additional insight into these external relationships. This added very little additional work and relatively little extra cost to conducting the survey. This is the additional data that I sought to measure:

- continent and country of the outside relationship.
- duration of the relationship.
- major activities of the relationship (also used as a proxy for the purpose/nature of the relationship).
- incidence of funding or material assistance as a feature of these relationships.
- perceived impact of these relationships upon their church and their wider community, from the perspective of Ugandan pastors.
- perceived locus of control in the relationship, from the perspective of Ugandan pastors.
- level of satisfaction in the relationships, from the perspective of Ugandan pastors.

Survey Design Process

The questionnaire was originally developed by myself. It was then pre-testing and revised by myself through five rounds of face-to-face interviews with pastors in Mbale and Kampala. Between each round, the interview was revised. This was then followed by 3 rounds of pre-testing by the original four telephone interviewers themselves, with myself moderating a discussion resulting in a collective revision between each round. After a few "live" interviews yielding research data one further revision was done, which improved the introduction and moving a somewhat-sensitive question further back in the interview, to a point where the interviewer had more time to build trust with the interviewee.

Interviewers Training

Universities are often considered a good source of telephone interviewers (Rea & Parker 2005: location 719). I myself can now concur, having deployed four students as researchers. The four were selected from the student body at a local Protestant, evangelically-minded institution called Africa Renewal University. After interviewing the student body president, I asked him to select three additional students who met the criteria I requested of him. In two meetings, these four students (two male, two female) were then trained to administer the survey. They were first given a fairly detailed explanation of the study, and where the telephone survey fit into that study. The purpose of the telephone survey was then explained, as well as the purpose of every question on that survey. Together we went over the research participant consent form/data sheet, and decided on wording for introduction and revised it together going forward. After working over the survey questions together, the interviewers then practiced the survey on each other, then over the phone to a friend, and then over the phone to a pastor outside the research frame. At the tail end of the survey process, I trained a fifth interviewer (male) in the survey. This interviewer was the research assistant in Mbale who assisted in putting the research frame together; he did interviews over the phone and in person as part of the follow-up effort to gain responses from the original sample units, thus lowering the Unit Non-Response. I myself also did limited interviewing over the phone as well as face-to-face during this same follow-up effort.

Survey Translation

The survey was translated jointly by a native Luganda speaker, then back-translated into English by a different Luganda speaker to check for accuracy and understanding. The Luganda translation was next given to the telephone interviewers for checking and any further revision – they found a few typos and spelling errors, but were otherwise happy with the translation. One telephone interviewer was a native from Mbale

who spoke the local Lugisu language, who was on stand-by should any of the sampled pastors understand neither English nor Luganda. Upon the advice of various people, the survey was not translated into Lugisu, the local language of the Bagisu tribe which predominates in the survey population. During the interviews, the Luganda translation was used eleven times, while Lugisu was spoken on one occasion.

SURVEY RESPONSE AND NON-RESPONSE ERRORS

Statisticians often divide the errors that affect survey research into two categories: sampling errors and non-sampling errors. Sampling errors are the mathematical errors and uncertainties that occur by the very nature of using samples to extrapolate results to a population. Non-sampling errors, on the other hand, are not mathematical errors but very human errors. Non-sampling errors can be further divided into two sub-categories of *response* errors and *non-response* errors (Penwarden 2013). We will first deal with non-response errors.

Minimizing Survey Non-Response

Non-response errors occur when a unit selected for sampling does not respond, and the data cannot be gathered for the research. This usually introduces a bias of some sort in the results. In general, unit non-response error is less likely to introduce a bias if non-response is low, so the first objective is simply to get as many sampled units to respond as possible (Israel 2012). In order to minimize non-response, interviewers sent a text message to each pastor the day before attempting to contact them.[40] The actual calls were made over a six week period from October to mid November, including calling for non-response follow-up.

Pastors were contacted at least 5 times before they were listed as initial non-respondents. The interviewers attempted to call pastors according to these protocols:

- Send generalized SMS text message

[40] The exception to this was the initial trance of calls made

- Call, (Call #1)
- If no response, call back after 1 hr (Call#2)
- If no response, send a personalized SMS text message
- Call back another time of day + another day (if possible) (Call #3)
- No response, call back 2 more times of day on different days for a minimum of 5 attempts (Calls #4 & #5)
- If no response, record as " 5x"

In this research, pastors without a cell phone (we found one such pastor in the survey, but he was included in the frame via his neighbour's phone), or those whose cell phones are often off or uncharged, were more likely to be subject to unit total non-response.

Dealing with Survey Non-Response

Unit Total Non-response

Following the above protocols, the initial rate of unit total non-response was 31%. This was then lowered through non-response follow-up on the ground in Mbale, to a much more acceptable 11.8% overall (18.3% for Born-Again churches). I tracked 3 reasons for the initial non-responses, the first two of which are types of *no-contact* non-response and the third of which is a simple *refusal*:

1. 5x = Call back 4 times (total minimum of 5 calls) before written off as unit total non-response. This was because of a combination of phone being busy, turned off, or network is down. Many in this category received more than 5 call attempts. Cellular networks being "down" was an occasional event which seemed to effect all calls to Mbale over a given network. Two networks were used for the survey, and both were sporadically troublesome. Network issues were never the sole reasons for unit total non-response, however. Some but not all of these were successfully contacted during follow-up, which lowered the number of "5x" unit

total non-response to 48 cases. This category is by far the largest reason for unit total non-response.

2. — = Incorrect or missing phone numbers in the sample. This category was eliminated by follow-up procedures to lower non-response, either by gathering correct phone numbers or interviewing face-to-face. However, it is very possible that there is some of this category are classified as “ 5x” non-response, since the differences are not always clear-cut.
3. X = Refusal to cooperate, after non-response follow up procedures this was lowered to three (3) instances of this in the data, mostly by my engaging them directly in follow-up (i.e. some pastors are happier to cooperate when the senior researcher engages with them). This was more of a problem while establishing the frame, though even then few ultimately declined to participate.

Unit Total Non-Response Substitution.

After the initial calling protocols were finished for all sampled units, I and a research assistant in Mbale began to engage in follow-up to raise the response rate, through correcting/checking phone contacts and calling them and also, as a second step, through conducting face-to-face interviews. Simultaneous to those efforts, I decided to run another trance of the survey frame for an additional sample, to ensure an adequate sample size if our efforts at raising the response rate should prove unsuccessful. As the literature recommends, this additional sample was selected using the same criteria as the original sample (i.e. simple probability sampling), rather than using any of the variety of field substitution techniques (Vehovar 1999).

Unit Partial Non-Response

Partial Non-Response was generally due to refusal or reluctance to specify the number/quantity of outside relationships (question 16). These refusals totalled twelve (12). Of these twelve, five (5) refused to answer that particular question, while an

additional five (5) were willing to answer that they had " more than two" and one (1) respondent answered that they had " more than five." Partial non-response by refusal was 8% of the sample when the "more than two" and " more than 5" answers are counted as non-response, or 4% without their inclusion. The partial non-response from refusal, with one exception, was limited to question 16, and again the data set is too small to look for clear patterns. In practice, however, there is reason to believe that most if not all of these refusals were from pastors whose churches had multiple external relationships, as indicated by the " more than (2 or 5)" answers. An additional ten units failed to have question #16 asked or recorded of them due to a printing error on the response form at one stage. For purposes of analysis, these answers were included in the data as churches which have external relationships (as opposed to churches without), while they were omitted from the data on the number of church partnerships.

Non-response only leads to error when it is systematic in nature(Penwarden 2013). The "5x" non-responses skewed slightly urban and churches under the BAFFE umbrella were overrepresented compared to the population; again, however, the non-responses are too small a data set to read too much into their known characteristics, much less to measure and adjust for the same.

Response Error

It is probable that at least some level of response bias was introduced into the data by respondents insisting that, while their church had external relationships in the past, they had none continuing into the present (question 3). This insistence was a manifestation of a lack of trust in revealing sensitive information to the interviewers. A few respondents (between 3 and 6 in total, I did not keep a discreet tally) seemed either in person or on the telephone to give a dubious or evasive answers to this question – always on the low or "none" side. While we cannot be certain of response error this might have introduced into the data, I believe it to be relatively small given that this evasiveness

answers occurred earlier on in the data collection process (with one exception), when interviewers were still learning how to establish greater rapport with interviewees – this phenomenon seemed to largely disappear thereafter.

Non-response Error

By design, the survey was not particularly prone to non-response errors. I transferred all answers from paper to a computer spreadsheet, double checking as I went. Questionable or unclear responses were given back to the interviewers when appropriate or discarded from the data set. With the assistance of my wife a few key pieces of information that could more easily lead to non-response error (reverse prompt or regular prompt, questions #8-#10, and #16) were again checked for errors[41].

LESSONS LEARNED

My first mistake was the size of my ambition. Somehow, whether in work or research, I (and most people) manage to over-estimate the progress I will make in a given period of time. I do not regret doing this survey; however, I do regret that it could not be done so as to be representative of all of Uganda, with samples from selected districts in each of the four regions. I doubt that the results would have varied widely, but one can never be completely sure of that.

With regard to the questionnaire itself, I made two somewhat minor mistakes which diminished the utility of two questions, both which were of secondary importance:

1. I should have pre-tested question #7 more than I did (see Appendix B). As I recall, this question was a later addition to the survey and, in retrospect, the time intervals for the answer prompts are too short – I should have added one or two prompts for longer time periods (say, "5 to 10 years" and "more than 10 years"), because a full 68% of answers came in at the highest category of "5 years or more.").

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[41] In the initial sample sets; the samples taken during procedures to lower the non-response rate were double checked by myself at the time of transcription from paper into the spreadsheet.

2. Another question whose usefulness was diminished was #10 (see Addendum B, pg 27). It became apparent that the interviewers were not fully confident in asking the question, perhaps because of a lack of understanding and also perhaps because of a bit of laziness. I noticed the answers coming back were usually a "0" or a "5" or a "10", representing the two extremes and the perfect middle point of the possible answers. I made sure the interviewers understood the question and tried to solicit answers across the range of values (from 0 to 10) rather than just the three possible answers which were intended to explain the nature of the graduated nature of the possible responses, rather than to restrict answers to one of those three choices. However, many answers were already in at that point and I did not change the actual wording of the question midstream (i.e. the question gave hypothetical examples of "0" and "5" and "10" as possible answers). So many of those same three answers continued to come in, though one interviewer and myself elicited more varied answers. The end product of this is that the answers to question #10 still provide us with some information, but that the answers skewed to either the extremes (either the 0 or the 10) and skewed towards the " perfect" middle (a 5).

APPENDIX 2 – Telephone Survey Instrument

(English Standard Prompt version)

TELEPHONE SURVEY - PRELIMINARY DATA & INFORMED CONSENT

Interviewer Name:____

Date of Interview: (DD.MM.YY) _____________________________________

Church ID # : ___________________________

i. Introduction: Hello Pastor/Bishop/Father_______________________________, my name is _________. I am a Christian/Born Again student at Africa Renewal University in Kampala. I am part of a team of students that is conducting research by asking a few questions over the telephone from many church leaders in Eastern Uganda. (IF YOU HAVE THE NAME OF THEIR LEADER, YOU CAN TELL THEM THAT WE WERE GIVEN PERMISSION TO CONTACT THEM BY THEIR LEADER. YOU CAN MENTION THAT OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM ARE JOHN TUGGY AND NICHOLAS ABRAHAM WAMBEDE, WHO MAY HAVE MET W/ THEM OR THEIR LEADER IN MBALE)

ii. Have friendly conversation

iii. Do I have your permission to ask a few questions? It will last about 10 minutes.

☐ Yes *(THANK THEM FOR THEIR WILLINGNESS TO HELP, CONTINUE INTERVIEW)*

☐ No *(ARRANGE TO CALL THEM BACK AT A LATER TIME. IF NOT POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE, THEN THANK THEM AND END INTERVIEW)*

iv. Are you a pastor or someone who is leading this church?

☐ Yes

☐ No

v. Do you lead a group of Christians who meets together most weeks to worship God?

☐ Yes *(GO TO Q-ix)*

☐ No

vi. If you are not the pastor, do you know who the pastor is?

☐ Yes

☐ No *(END INTERVIEW, MOVE TO NEXT RANDOM SAMPLE)*

vii. Do I have your permission to call him/her?

☐ Yes

☐ No *(END INTERVIEW, MOVE TO NEXT RANDOM SAMPLE)*

viii. Do you have his/her name and phone number?

☐ Yes

NAME:____

PHONE NUMBER: ____

(THANK THEM, END INTERVIEW, CALL THE PHONE NUMBER & INTERVIEW)

☐ No *(THANK THEM AND END INTERVIEW)*

ix. Do you have any other questions you would like to ask me about this research?

☐ Yes *(ANSWER THEIR QUESTION)*

☐ No

TELEPHONE SURVEY - MAIN SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Survey Objective: Local-to-local (Funnelling, Dichotomous)

(ENGLISH, NON-REVERSE PROMPT VERSION)

1. Has your church ever cooperated to do an activity together with other Churches or Christian Organizations in Uganda?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. In the past, has your church ever cooperated with Christians from outside of Uganda, in order to do something together?

☐ Yes

☐ No *(THANK THEM FOR TALKING TO YOU AND END THE INTERVIEW)*

3. Was that only in the past, or does your church continue on today to cooperate with at least one outside group of Christians?

☐ Yes, continue today

☐ No, only in the past

4. Has your church been involved in any relationships with outside groups of Christians that ended in a way that you were unhappy about?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If your church has cooperated or continues today to cooperate with more than one group, think about any *one* group of Christians *from outside of Africa* your church has worked with. Choose one group only.

5. Do you have a specific group chosen in your mind?

☐ Yes

☐ No (RE-READ THE STATEMENT ABOVE, UNTIL THEY CAN ANSWER “YES” TO THIS QUESTION)

The rest of our questions will be about your church's relationships with this one group of outside Christians. We have 10 short questions we are asking of all church leaders that we call. So when I ask these 10 questions, please think about your relationship with this one group of outside Christians. We don't think about other relationships your church may have, we think only about your relationships with this one group.

Survey Objective: Cross-continental (Ordinal)

6. Which country does the outside group come from?

   (WRITE NAME OF COUNTRY:______________________________)
   (MARK WHICH CONTINENT THE COUNTRY ABOVE BELONGS TO:

   ☐ Europe

   ☐ North America

   ☐ Asia

   ☐ Africa

   ☐ Other____

   ☐ Not sure

Survey Objective: Duration of partnership (Ratio)

7. How long has your church been in relationships with the outside group?

   ☐ Less than one year

   ☐ One year

   ☐ Two years

   ☐ Three years

   ☐ Four years

   ☐ Five years or more

Survey Objective: Local-to-local (Funnelling, Dichotomous)

8. Do you know of anyone who lives in Uganda whose professional work is for the outside group of Christians? This person could be a foreign missionary or a Ugandan who is employed by the outside group.

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

   ☐ Not Sure

9. Have you seen an office here in Uganda with the name or logo of the outside group on it?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

   ☐ Not Sure

10. Have you seen a vehicle here in Uganda with the name or logo of the outside group on it?

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

    ☐ Not Sure

Survey Objective: Missional (Ordinal)

11. I am going to ask you some questions about activities that can be done together with an outside group. *(ASK EACH QUESTION AND PAUSE FOR ANSWER, CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)*

    11.1. ☐ Has the outside group come to visit your church?

    11.2. ☐ Have you or your church members gone to visit the outside group in their home country?

    11.3. ☐ Has the outside group done any training or teaching for either church leaders or other Christians?

    11.4. ☐ Have you together done any Crusades or Evangelism?

    11.5. ☐ Have you together done any other activities, including any development activities, as outreach to the community?

    11.6. ☐ Has the outside group given any fund to assist or help your church or church members?

    11.7. ☐ Has the outside group given any funds for outreach or benefit to the community?

    11.8. ☐ Funds given by outside group for any other activity

Survey Objective: Church benefit (ordinal, semantic, weighted itemized scale, reverse prompts in 50% of surveys to negate recency bias)

12. I'm going to ask about the results or the impact of this relationship has had in your church, and also in the community. So there is a question for church, and a question for community. First, I will ask about your *CHURCH*. There are 5 possible levels of impact in your *CHURCH*. I will read you the 5 statements, and then I will ask you to pick the one statement which most accurately describes your experience. According to your experience, what has been the overall effect on your *church* of this relationship with the outside group? (READ ALL OPTIONS, REPEAT IF NECCESSARY)

    ☐ The church has benefited a very great amount from this relationship

    ☐ The church has benefited significantly from this relationship

    ☐ The church has benefited a little bit from this relationship

    ☐ The church has not really seen any benefits from this relationship

    ☐ The church has been harmed because of this relationship

So let me repeat those 5 options. Has your *church* benefited a very great amount, benefited significantly, benefited a little, not really seen any benefit, or been harmed from this relationship?

Survey Objective: Community benefit (ordinal, semantic, weighted itemized scale, reverse prompts in 50% of surveys to negate recency bias)

13. Now I will ask you the second question. It is almost the same as the first question, but it is asking about the results or the impact of this relationship in the *COMMUNITY*, not in your church. There are 5 possible levels of impact of this relationship in your *COMMUNITY*. Like the first time, I will read you the 5 statements, and then I will ask you to pick the one statement which most accurately describes your experience. According to your experience, what has been the overall effect on the *community* of this relationship with the outside group? (READ ALL OPTIONS, REPEAT IF NECCESSARY)

☐ The community has benefited *a very great amount* from this relationship

☐ The community has benefited *significantly* from this relationship

☐ The community has benefited *a little bit* from this relationship

☐ The community has *not really seen any benefits* from this relationship

☐ The community has been *harmed* because of this relationship

So let me repeat those 5 options. Has your *community* has benefited a very great amount, benefited significantly, benefited a little, not really seen any benefit, or been harmed from this relationship?

Survey Objective: Locus of control in the relationship (Interval scale)

14. On a scale of 0 to 10, who makes the major decisions in this partnership?
    - Choosing "0" means that the outside group makes all the major decisions in the relationship.
    - Choosing "5" means that your church and the outside group both make the major decisions in the relationship.
    - Choosing "10" means your church make all the major decisions in the relationship

On a scale of 0 to 10, you can choose any number. Which number is closest to your experience? (CHOOSE ONE)

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
↑					↑					↑
Outside group decides					Both decide					Your church decides

Survey Objective: Perception of Success (Ordinal, Likart scale, reverse prompts in 50% of surveys to negate recency bias)

15. Has your church's relationship with the outside group made you very happy, somewhat happy, neutral, somewhat unhappy, or very unhappy? *(CIRCLE ONE)*

Old: Overall, how pleased are you with your church's relationship to the outside group?

Very happy	1
Somewhat happy	2
Neutral (not happy or unhappy)	3
Somewhat unhappy	4
Very unhappy	5

16. (ASK ONLY IF " YES" to Q#3 - THEIR CHURCH CONTINUES TODAY TO COOP. W/ OUTSIDE GROUP) Thank you, we have talked about the cooperation your church has with this outside group of Christians. Now I have one last question to ask you. All together, how many groups from outside of Uganda does your church have a relationship with? ____________ (WRITE NUMBER)

17. I have your name written as ________________________. Is that correct? (IF NOT, WRITE NAME CORRECTION:____)

18. THANK THEM FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION; LET THEM KNOW THAT THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY (WHEN COMPLETED) WILL BE GIVEN TO CHURCH AUTHORITIES IN MBALE TO PASS ON TO ANYONE INTERESTED.

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Interview ID	Type or church/ organization	Title/Role	Assigned Pseudonym	Length of Transcript (approx. words)
0032:44	Born Again	Pastor	Ben	5,390
008	Born Again	Pastor	James	8,070
012 A+B	Born Again	Acting Pastor	Paul	12,780
029	Born Again	Pastor	Titus	6,590
071	Born Again	Pastor	Timothy	4,790
077	Ch. of Ug./Anglican	Reverend	Elias	2,650
100	Ch. of Ug./Anglican	Reverend	John	6,220
104	Born Again (1)	Pastor, Elder, Elder	Geoffrey, James, Mary	9,170
150	Born Again	Pastor	Ivan	4,760
170	Born Again	Pastor	Jenneth	7,120
179	Born Again	Pastor	Shadrach	10,860
207 A-D	Born Again	Bishop	Eliab	8,520
228	Born Again	Pastor	Terry	13,390
247	Born Again	Pastor	---	260 *recorded after
259	Born Again	Reverend	Alex	9,760
289	Born Again	Pastor	Stephen	5,810
293	Born Again	Pastor	Noah	3,630
310	Born Again	Pastor	Benjamin	3,420
318 & 320	Born Again	Pastor & Elder	Simon & ---	4,130
333	Born Again	Pastor	Daniel	8,920
339 A+B	Born Again	Pastor & Elder	Nathanael & Timothy	10,410
366	Born Again	Pastor	---	110 *written during
379	Former Rom. Catholic	Elder	Emma	8,430
B001	Anglican	Reverend	Allen	6,420
B002	NGO coalition	Executive Director	Hillary	8,490
B003	University	Dean	Jonathan	8,930
B004	Small Chrstn. Int'l. NGO	Executive Director	Jeffrey	7,230
B005	Pastors fellowship	Chair/Bishop	Ezra	13,260
B006	Catholic	Father	Lucas	2,660
B007	Christian Int'l NGO	Programme Dir.	---	6,390
B008	Churches coalition	Overseer	---	9,160
B009	Anglican	Rev. Canon	Amos	5,720
C001	Born Again	Reverend	Titus	7,410
C002	Born Again	Pastor	---	6,390
C003	Born Again	Pastor	Paul	6,790
L001	Born Again	Pastor	Moses	7,240
L002	Born Again	Pastor	Mathias	5.69
L003	Born Again	Pastor/Overseer	Jonas	5,470
L004	Chinese Missionary	Mr.	---	no transcript
D001	Ugandan Missionaries	Mr. & Mrs.	---	6,770
D002	Ugandan Mission Org.	Ex. Dir. & Dir.Fin.	Carlos & Ivan	9,330
D003	Born Again	Dr. Pastor	Dennis Kilama (2)	6,130
D004	Born Again	Dr. Pastor	---	no transcript

1 - Leaders from 3 local churches came & were interviewed together (1 church from telephone survey)

2 - Not a pseudonym, used with permission

PRIMARY SOURCES – TELEPHONE SURVEY

Raw Data of Survey Sample (anonymized) –request @ jtuggy@ocms.ac.uk or download https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1u8GaBRxsJ2plydtNfUPW9shv67wtrd26/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104651813323752528909&rtpof=true&sd=true
(File: MS Excel format / password protected: JDTuggy / copyright reserved)

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