

GLOBAL, PENTECOSTAL, AND CHARISMATIC STUDIES



WORSHIP, RITUAL,
AND PENTECOSTAL
SPIRITUALITY-AS-THEOLOGY
A Rhythm That Connects Our Hearts with God

MARTINA BJÖRKANDER

BRILL

Worship, Ritual, and Pentecostal Spirituality-as-Theology

Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies

Edited by

William K. Kay (*Glyndŵr University*)
Mark J. Cartledge (*London School of Theology*)

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By

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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

*To my dear children,
Jeremia, Efraim and Filemon*



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Prelude

Every researcher brings their own personal story and preferences to research, some more than others, and some more overtly than others. As I read through what became my thesis—now transformed into this book—it is clear to me that whatever came out of my research was distinctly and unequivocally coloured by me. I admit, I love music. I admit, I love dance. I admit, I love clothes. I admit, I love stories. I admit, I love worship. I admit, I love Africa. There is not much I can do about it. I hope this love permeates my writing, making it better rather than worse. I also hope that it has not hindered me from doing some fine and detailed critical analysis. The two—love and analysis—need not be in tension, but may instead spur each other on. The feelings expressed by ethnomusicologist Samuel A. Floyd resonate strongly with my own. His early introduction to practices and narratives within the African-American community became an important resource for his scholarship, a checkpoint for his ideas and conclusions. As he writes, “The feeling of having such a cultural memory to inform and ignite the intellect is powerfully gratifying; it confirms the validity of new knowledge and new ideas as no amount of rational thought will or can.”¹ In a similar manner, I have found my upbringing in Central Africa, and our family’s continuous contact with African Pentecostalism, a well of inspiration and a compass for my analysis.

At the same time, the love and heritage may at times have made me especially keen to distance myself from a subject that is so close to my heart. One way to do so has been to apply ritual theory to worship practice. Some readers, especially my fellow Pentecostals, may react to my use of the words ‘ritual’ and ‘liturgy’ in this book, and find them provocative. These are not words that we normally use to describe worship. Worship is a practice in which Pentecostals place great value and do not want dissected into pieces by some meddlesome researcher. However, I hope that once I have argued my case, readers will have found the analysis illuminating and explanatory. Failing that, I suggest sceptics should consider it a language game, or a mirror. For a short while we can try out this new language of ritual, look at ourselves in the mirror, and see what we discover. Either we learn something new about ourselves, something important that helps us appreciate our rituals more deeply, or we rework them

¹ Samuel A. Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4.

to bring them more into line with our values. Or, we resolve that this language game is not for us and put the mirror down, no damage done.

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great feedback and our intense discussions have made this text what it is. You have all fostered me and made me a better scholar. Most of all, we have had so much fun along the road, and I will keep the memories close to my heart forever.

Over the years, I have had the privilege to interact with scholars in other academic settings as well: academic conferences arranged by the International Association of Mission Studies, IAMS, the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism, GloPent, the Nordic Network for Theology and Practice, NNTP, and the Christian Congregational Music Conference; academic institutions such as Åbo Akademi University, Akademi för Ledarskap och Teologi, ALT, the Pan African Christian University, PACU, the Africa International University, AIU, the East Africa School of Theology, EAST, Kenyatta University, as well the Fuller Theological Seminar. I have also been able to share my work in joint research seminars within the Nordic Institute for Mission Studies and Ecumenics, NIME, and the Institute for Pentecostal Studies, IPS. It has been an honour to interact with people in such a wide variety of academic milieus, and you have all in different ways helped me develop my ideas.

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Introduction

“How do you keep sane?” the moderator asked at a seminar I attended while preparing this manuscript. She was talking to Dr Denis Mukwege, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and founder of Panzi Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo, who had been telling us about the atrocities committed against women and children in his country: sexual violence that destroyed bodies, souls, and lives, tearing societies apart. Every day he and his team meet victims and see brutality beyond comprehension. How do they keep sane? the moderator wanted to know. The answer was swift and certain: “Each morning we gather for worship.” Together with the staff, the patients, and all the women in their holistic programs of care, they gather to sing, dance, pray, and read the Bible. “I think this moment is really very crucial,” Dr Mukwege said, “when we can come together, and we feel that we are all human and we support each other.”¹

Although Dr Mukwege’s situation is unique, his experience of worship is not. For pentecostal and charismatic Christians around the world, worship is a key spiritual practice, one with ramifications far beyond the spiritual realm. Many bear witness to its importance in their personal lives—for their mental, emotional, and even physical well-being—as well as for their communities: creating fellowship, solidifying identity, and fostering bonds of trust. A wholesome practice, while directed towards heaven it has an effect on earth. The rhythm that connects human hearts with the heart of God transforms them and sets them out to transform the world, Pentecostals assert.

In this book, I dive into the finer details of pentecostal worship, aiming to explain its role in pentecostal spirituality with as much texture as possible. Based on two concrete cases, I discuss worship from various angles—ritual-liturgical, emotional-embodied, doctrinal-theological—and, to present a total picture, I connect them all together, proposing that worship is indeed at the heart of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology.

This introduction sets the stage for the rest of the book by briefly introducing the study and myself as a researcher, meanwhile highlighting some

1 Mukwege, Denis (2023), Seminar on the political role of the church, at Pingst Pastor International, Stockholm, 2023-01-11.

previous research on pentecostal worship, music, and ritual. The chapter ends with a presentation of the book's structure.

1 The Task at Hand

1.1 Background

Vibrant worship music is part of pentecostal spirituality all around the world and has become, in many ways, the hallmark of charismatic Christianity itself. Indeed, it is hard to think about this brand of Christianity without thinking of its music. That so-called 'praise and worship' is central to pentecostal-charismatic church life has been noted by many scholars over the years,² among them Paul Alexander, who says that "music is a crucial aspect of Pentecostalism and part of its phenomenal appeal."³ In their global study of social engagement among Pentecostals, Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori refer to worship as "the engine" of the tradition, saying that "the heart of Pentecostalism is the music."⁴

Despite its centrality, scholarly interest in the specific role of music and worship within Pentecostalism was sparse until around the time when I started

2 Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Mark J. Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007); Mark J. Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology (London; New York: Routledge, 2016); Chris E.W. Green, 'Saving Liturgy: (Re)Imagining Pentecostal Liturgical Theology and Practice', in *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A.J. Swoboda (London; New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2019); Ezra Chitando, 'Singing Culture: A Study of Gospel Music in Zimbabwe' (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002); Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Baker Publishing Group, 2005); Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong, eds., *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015); Douglas G. Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Holy Praiseco: Negotiating Sacred and Popular Music and Dance in African Pentecostalism', *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 32, no. 1 (2010): 16–40; Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Lee R. Martin, 'The Book of Psalms and Pentecostal Worship', in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, ed. Lee R. Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016); Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (University of California Press, 2007).

3 Paul Alexander, *Signs and Wonders: Why Pentecostalism Is the World's Fastest Growing Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Wiley, 2009), 25.

4 Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 23–24.

my own inquiry. Since then, much has happened in the field, especially among ethnomusicologists in the West. For instance, studies have shown that musical ways of congregating are crucial for community and identity, while at the same time often sources of conflict and tension.⁵ Still, there is more to do in order to understand the meaning of worship for pentecostal spirituality more fully, not least from theological and ritual perspectives. Given the centrality of Africa for contemporary pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, and the vitality of the tradition on the continent,⁶ a case study in an urban, African centre is a good place to start such an inquiry.

To me, the Kenyan capital of Nairobi—a city with a vibrant church scene that boasts more than a thousand Protestant churches⁷—seemed like an especially suitable place. According to the World Christian Database, Kenya and other East African countries have the world's highest levels of affiliation with pentecostal-type churches. In their estimation, around fifty per cent of the Kenyan population belonged to churches in the 'Christian Renewal' category in 2010.⁸ The Pew Forum Research's ten-country survey of Pentecostals (2006)

5 Monique M. Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community* (Oxford University Press, 2018); Mark Porter, *Contemporary Worship Music and Everyday Musical Lives* (Taylor & Francis, 2016); Jonathan Dueck, *Congregational Music, Conflict and Community* (Taylor & Francis, 2017).

6 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*; J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (1517 Media, 2013); J. Kwabena (Johnson Kwabena) Asamoah-Gyadu, 'Teaching Pentecostalism in World Christianity: An African Perspective', *The Ecumenical Review* 74, no. 1 (January 2022): 69–83; Elias Kifon Bongmba, *The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*, First edition, Routledge Religion Companions (New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2016); Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*; Nimi Wariboko and Adeshina Afolayan, eds., *African Pentecostalism and World Christianity: Essays in Honor of J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu* (Pickwick Publications, 2020).

7 ACM-FTT Afriserve and Dawn Ministries, *The Unfinished Task: A National Survey of Churches in Kenya* (ACM-FTT Afriserve, in partnership with Dawn Ministries, 2004), 18–19.

8 'World Christian Database [Electronic Resource] / Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary' (Leiden: Brill, 2004). Even if the statistics of WCD can be criticized for various reasons, they remain the most reliable ones available. The category of Christian Renewal/Renewalists includes the subcategories Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Neocharismatics, and more or less overlaps the four-fold typology of global Pentecostalism, as described in Chapter 2. Compare David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, 'Global Statistics', in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 284–302. Statistics were chosen from the year closest to my time in the field, rather than the latest possible.

had similar results, indicating that more than half the population subscribed to forms of Christian faith that emphasize the experience of the Holy Spirit, although belonging to different denominations. Among Catholics (25% of the total population) about a third were Renewalists, and among Protestants (63% of the population) as many as seven out of ten professed a similar faith.⁹

The renewal ethos is spread across denominations through a high level of religious mobility and shared ritual practices. Music is important in this respect, and the same songs and repertoires can be found in Anglican, Pentecostal, Baptist, Catholic, and nondenominational churches with almost no distinction.¹⁰ In Nairobi, charismatic mega churches have established a niche for themselves in catering to the needs of upwardly mobile, urban Kenyans.¹¹ Their attraction is especially strong among young people, largely due to what Ogbu Kalu calls “the charismatic liturgy,”¹² with musical and ritual styles appealing to the young, modern, Kenyan.¹³ In fact, any casual visitor who knows what to look for will notice how suffused Kenyan society is with charismatic Christianity, not least through music. Music stands sell worship music on almost every corner; the big malls have Gospel music sections; Christian artists are played on secular radio; and quotes from worship songs appear on postcards and bumper stickers alike. Charismatic Christianity is everywhere in Nairobi, and so is charismatic music.

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- 9 “Spirit and Power—A 10-country Survey of Pentecostals.” <http://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/spirit-and-power> (accessed 2017-04-07). 83–84. Religious belonging in Kenya is fluid and often categories overlap and people move between different churches; compare Yonatan N. Gez, *Traditional Churches, Born Again Christianity, and Pentecostalism: Religious Mobility and Religious Repertoires in Urban Kenya* (Cham: Springer Nature, Palgrave, 2018).
- 10 Jean Ngoya Kidula, ‘Singing the Lord’s Song in the Spirit and with Understanding: The Practice of Nairobi Pentecostal Church’, in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Monique Marie Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 133–47.
- 11 Damaris Seleina Parsitau, “‘Then Sings My Soul’: Gospel Music as Popular Culture in the Spiritual Lives of Kenyan Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians”, *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 14 (2006); Kyama M. Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020), 131–59.
- 12 Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 121. See also Kalu, ‘Holy Praiseco: Negotiating Sacred and Popular Music and Dance in African Pentecostalism’.
- 13 Wanjiru M. Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective* (InterVarsity Press, 2018), 1–15, 118–29; Parsitau, “‘Then Sings My Soul’: Gospel Music as Popular Culture in the Spiritual Lives of Kenyan Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians”; Damaris Seleina Parsitau and Philomena Mwaura, ‘God in the City: Pentecostalism as an Urban Phenomenon in Kenya’, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 36, no. 2 (October 2010): 95–112.

1.2 *Introducing the Research Study*

1.2.1 Aim and Research Question

This empirical theological study seeks to contribute to the ongoing scholarly dialogue on pentecostal spirituality by offering an in-depth interpretation of worship as it is practiced in two urban pentecostal-charismatic congregations in Nairobi, Kenya, and proposes a pentecostal theology of worship. At the heart of Pentecostalism is its spirituality, which finds one of its major expressions in worship; thus, worship may serve as a window into the very heart of Pentecostalism.

The study combines empirical data with theoretical and theological reasoning and sets out to answer two main questions:

- How and why do pentecostal churches practice worship as part of their spirituality?
- Based on data from two concrete cases, how can worship be theologized from a pentecostal perspective?

The study is designed as a “critical case study”¹⁴ (also known as an “instrumental case study”),¹⁵ where a specific case is chosen based on its theoretical value and used to gain insight into larger issues and general themes. While each case is always unique—and important in its own right—additional scholarly relevance is gained via the dialogue between empirical data and theoretical reasoning. Hence, we may speak of two main aims, one descriptive and analytical, the other creative and constructive. The first aim is to produce a detailed and multi-layered analysis of worship in the two case churches, utilizing a range of theoretical perspectives. The second is to propose a pentecostal theology of worship: that is, to suggest a way in which to theologize around worship from a pentecostal theological perspective. The empirical data thus serve as a springboard for theological construction and interpretation from a pentecostal perspective.

1.2.2 Empirical and Methodological Base

In line with common practice in pentecostal studies,¹⁶ world Christianity studies, and practical theology,¹⁷ as well as in ritual studies¹⁸ and case study

14 Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, Sixth edition (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2018), 49.

15 Jessie Jaison, *Qualitative Research and Transformative Results* (SAIACS Publications, A Division of South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, 2018), 45.

16 Michael Bergunder et al., eds., *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

17 Martha Frederiks and Dorottya Nagy, *World Christianity: Methodological Considerations* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020).

18 Ronald L. Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

research,¹⁹ the methodological approach is interdisciplinary, strategically utilizing methods and theories from several disciplines in order to answer the research questions at hand. Given that worship is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon within pentecostal spirituality, an interdisciplinary design combining empirical methods with theoretical and theological analysis was deemed most appropriate. The study is organized as a critical case study, with a two-case, embedded design. Data were collected during five months of ethnographic fieldwork in Nairobi, conducted in 2013 and 2014, that included participant observation, interviews, surveys, and song collection. The details of this design are discussed in Chapter 3.

Two congregations were selected as the main focus of research; Mavuno Church, Bellevue, and Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM), Woodley, hereafter simply Mavuno and Woodley. In the history of revitalization in urban Kenya, they and their respective mother churches (Nairobi Chapel and Nairobi Pentecostal Church/CITAM) are profiled representatives of the most recent strand of renewal, the Progressive Pentecostal Churches (PPC). In addition to a shared pentecostal ethos, such as preaching Jesus as the only Saviour, confessing the Bible as the Word of God, practicing spiritual gifts, and creatively adopting local cultural elements, this group of churches emphasize clear structures of governance, transparency in terms of finances, deliberate processes of discipleship, and socio-political engagement.²⁰

Both churches have English-speaking, upper-middle-class congregations with multiple Sunday services, and both had around 4,000–5,000 attendees each Sunday at the time. Woodley is an all-generations type of church, while Mavuno targets the young, urban professional. In terms of heritage, Woodley draws on classical pentecostal roots, while Mavuno has greater Baptist and evangelical influences; with regard to current spirituality, both churches belong to the worldwide pentecostal-charismatic church tradition, not least through their musical and liturgical expression. Chapter 4 presents the two churches and their place in the ecclesial landscape of Nairobi.

However, it is not the congregations *per se* that constitute the two ‘cases’, but their respective corporate worship practices (including songs, performance, key agents, theological impulses, and more). In contemporary charismatic liturgy, the first (and sometimes the last) segment of the service consists of communal music-making, led from the pulpit by a band or a choir. The congregation joins

19 Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*.

20 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 131–296. Compare Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 28–31.

in with singing, clapping, praying, and sometimes dancing. Ritually speaking, the section has a specific flow and format, and theologically speaking, it relies on certain kinds of convictions.²¹ It is this ritualized, communal, pentecostal music-making (“musicking”)²² that is the starting point of my examination. In pentecostal idiom, it is known as ‘praise and worship’ or simply ‘worship’. Consequently, the musical genre connected to this particular liturgical format is called ‘worship music’, while those who lead are referred to as a ‘worship band’ or ‘worship leaders’.²³

In his studies of the ritual life of charismatic Christians in the US, Daniel Albrecht has labelled this segment of the service “the rite of worship and praise,”²⁴ but since this designation is a bit burdensome, I often use the simpler ‘worship’. When I say ‘worship’ in this study, it is this practice to which I am referring if nothing else is said. However, in the pentecostal idiom, the word ‘worship’ also has other levels of meaning; it may refer to (1) the liturgy/service as a whole (‘Sunday worship’); (2) a segment of the service (‘rite of worship and praise’); (3) a subsection of that segment (‘worship’ as opposed to ‘praise’); (4), (5) a specific music genre connected with the segment or sub-section (‘contemporary worship music’ ‘worship songs’); (6) any form of concrete offering one makes to God (for example, financial resources); and, most notably, (7) take on a general theological meaning of living one’s whole life as an expression of devotion, love, and adoration for God.²⁵ It is part of the task of this study to explore these different levels of meaning and their interplay.

1.2.3 Theoretical Base

Theoretically, the study combines insights primarily from two academic fields: pentecostal studies—more specifically pentecostal theology—and

21 Lester Ruth and Swee Hong Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* (Abingdon Press, 2017), 2–3.

22 “Musicking” is a concept coined by Small to denote active participation in music, regardless of form or role. Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998).

23 Monique Ingalls, ‘Introduction’, in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 6–7.

24 Daniel Albrecht E., *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 153–54.

25 Compare Albrecht, who identifies three main connotations (1, 2, and 6 in my list), Albrecht, 225. See also discussion in Ingalls, ‘Introduction’; Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Abingdon, 1994), 13–48; James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 17–46.

ritual studies, particularly performance theory. However, insights from other fields are adopted when deemed eligible. The theoretical framework, discussed in Chapter 2, can be summarized as a combination of three approaches: a spirituality approach to Pentecostalism, a practice approach to theology, and a ritual approach to worship.

In the past, pentecostal theologians have often pointed out the close connection between pentecostal spirituality and theology, and how the two cannot be understood apart from each other. Commonly, a tripartite model is used to explain different dimensions of this pentecostal spirituality-as-theology, expressed with the Greek words *orthodoxy* (right doctrine), *orthopraxy* (right praxis), and *orthopathy* (right affections).²⁶ It is in the interplay between these dimensions that pentecostal spirituality 'happens', as it were. Since worship is such an important aspect of pentecostal spirituality, we may assume that these dimensions play out in that practice as well.

In this study I modify and apply this model, by looking at worship ('the rite of worship and praise') from three different angles: (1) *orthopraxis*: ritualization and liturgy (Chapter 5); (2) *orthopathos*: embodiment and affectivity (Chapter 6); and (3) *orthopistis*: theologizing and doctrine (Chapter 7). At the same time I underline the interconnectedness between these dimensions and their relation to larger issues by adding a fourth dimension: (4) *orthodoxa*: transformative holistic integration (Chapter 8). Following Archer, and in accordance with the original Greek meaning, I use the word *orthopistis* (right faith) for doctrinal aspects,²⁷ and reserve *orthodoxa* (right worship) for the holistic and overarching dimensions of worship, both as liturgical practice and as a totality of life lived before God. The argument of this study is that it is only when we understand this connection between worship (as practice) and worship (as a way of life) that we start to understand what worship entails from a pentecostal perspective.

Thus, *orthodoxa* is a way to speak of worship as including and yet superseding all its component parts, highlighting the richness of the practice and its connection to life as a whole. In doing so, I am indebted to ritual theorists

26 Kenneth J. Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness* (Pickwick Publications, 2011); Mark J. Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015); Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010); Amos Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012). See further discussion in Chapter 2.

27 Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 11.

and their understanding of ritual as “embodied, condensed, and prescribed enactment,”²⁸ functioning in complex ways to create meaning, attune bodies, and enact transformation.²⁹ Looking at worship from a ritual perspective emphasizes how complex, rich, and meaningful this practice is for those who participate, and, furthermore, has enabled close examination of the elements, dynamics, and functions of worship.³⁰ I especially utilize a performance perspective onto ritual by concentrating on the way worship is enacted in time and space. This perspective opens to analysis non-intellectual dimensions of worship—emotional, physical, kinaesthetic, and sensual—thereby assigning active rather than passive roles to participants. ‘Ritual’ is thus more about forms and degrees of ‘ritualization’ than a fixed text or format.³¹

1.2.4 Delimitations of Study

This critical case study is theoretically bound to the corporate ritual practice of worship and its role within pentecostal spirituality, temporally bound to the time of fieldwork, 2013–2014, and spatially bound to the two case churches and their respective church premises. As such, it uses ethnographic methods to produce empirical data that serve as a springboard for theological reflections. However, this is not an ethnography in the classical sense, in that it does not aim to describe and analyse the entire religious group, or the everyday life of individuals within it, and only briefly describes their cultural, political, and social context. Nor is it an (ethno-)musicological study, in that it does not focus specifically on musical or artistic aspects of worship, or the general repertoire of each church, although it also touches on these aspects. Furthermore, it is not a longitudinal study as it does not take into account the practice of worship in these two settings across time, but focuses on the narrow time-frame of winter 2013 and 2014. Lastly, it is a meso-level study that addresses the congregational level, rather than the religiosity or spirituality of individuals (micro-level) or denominations (macro-level).

28 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 195, 189–97. See further discussion in Chapter 3.

29 Grimes, 294–328.

30 Grimes, 231–42.

31 Cathrine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 72–83; Ronald L. Grimes, ‘Performance’, in *Theorizing Rituals: Classical Topics, Theoretical Approaches, Analytical Concepts*, ed. Jens Kreinath, Joannes A. Maria Snoek, and Michael Stausberg, *Studies in the History of Religions: 114–1* (Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill, 2008).

1.2.5 Limitations

In comparison to anthropological work, time spent in the field was relatively short—months instead of years—and this may have impinged on the work. Especially problematic is that I did not follow a full liturgical year, since that might have given a more nuanced picture of the ritual practices. I have tried to compensate for this by following the churches on social media and keeping in touch with some of the leaders via email. I have also watched a large number of YouTube videos with East African church music of different types and sought out websites with song collections, lyrics, and the like. Another limitation is the relative scarcity of voices from the ordinary congregation. Most interviewees are leaders, either pastors or part of the worship ministry. This focus is logical given the theological and topical interest of the study, yet the study might have been even stronger had I been able to interview more congregants. I have tried to compensate for this by adding a research survey from each church, giving some indication of who the congregants are and what they think of the worship.

1.2.6 A Word on Terminology

A few words must also be said about terminology. ‘Worship’ and ‘ritual’ have already been introduced above, and are continually discussed throughout the study. The term ‘pentecostal’ is used here to denote churches and movements that are Bible-based in narration, Kingdom-oriented in direction, Spirit-filled in expression, and Jesus-centred in passion. I elaborate on the different layers of this definition and their research foundations in the next chapter.

The related terms ‘Pentecostalism’, ‘charismatic Christianity’, and ‘pentecostal-charismatic tradition’ are used interchangeably and describe the totality of the phenomena or tradition, considered as a diverse and yet distinct current within global Christianity.³² Individuals belonging to this tradition are referred to variously as ‘Pentecostals’ and ‘Charismatics’, and the theology lived and expressed within this tradition as ‘pentecostal theology’. Following Yong, variations of ‘pentecostal’ and ‘charismatic’ are capitalized when used as nouns, while not capitalized when used adjectivally.³³

Other important concepts include ‘spirituality’—one that is often used in the field of theology to underline the integration of convictions, experiences,

32 Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*, 50–61; Allan Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’, in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 13–29. See further discussion in Chapter 2.

33 Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 165.

and practices in Christian faith³⁴—which has been important in the development of academic pentecostal theology;³⁵ and ‘theology’, which in this thesis is seen as a multimodal and interactive process of relating to and reflecting on God and also other human beings in light of text and context. Thus, theology is more about ‘theologizing’ than presenting propositional statements.³⁶ And lastly, ‘liturgy’, a term which I use in a loose way to speak of the Christian church service and not in the narrower sense of a specific text used for worship in the historic churches.³⁷ I return to the theoretical and methodological bases of my research and also discuss definitions and terminology at greater length in the following two chapters.

1.2.7 Summary

Ultimately, this empirical theological study constructs a pentecostal theology of worship based on an in-depth interpretation of empirical data from two concrete congregations, and in dialogue with relevant theory from several disciplines. As such, it seeks to be a contribution to the ongoing scholarly dialogue on pentecostal spirituality, both empirically and theologically. Empirically, it contributes to an enhanced understanding of Pentecostalism in general, and urban, East African pentecostal-charismatic worship practices in particular; theologically, it spurs a deepened reflection on and appreciation of worship as a key component of pentecostal spirituality. Via the concept *orthodoxa*, the study presents a proposal for connecting the ritual practice of worship with worship understood as a holistic and integrated way of life. My hope is that others, both within academia and among pentecostal practitioners, will use this study as a springboard for their own reflections on worship, ritual, and pentecostal spirituality-as-theology.

34 Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*, 11. See also, e.g., Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Arthur G. Holder, *Christian Spirituality: The Classics* (London: Routledge, 2009); Ulrik Josefsson, *Liv och Över Nog: Den Tidiga Pingströrelsens Spiritualitet. Abundant Life: The Spirituality of the Early Pentecostal Movement in Sweden* (Skellefteå: Artos, 2005); Sandra M. Schneiders, ‘Theology and Spirituality: Strangers, Rivals, or Partners?’, *Horizons (Villanova)* 13, no. 2 (1986): 253–74; Sandra M. Schneiders, ‘Spirituality in the Academy’, *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 50, no. 4 (1989): 676–97.

35 James K.A. Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), XIX. See further discussion in Chapter 2.

36 See further discussion in Chapter 2.

37 White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 16.

1.3 *Introducing the Researcher*

Attentive readers have already guessed that the author is a sympathetic insider to the pentecostal-charismatic tradition. All my life I have been affiliated with pentecostal-type churches. Mostly classical Pentecostals, but at times evangelical Charismatics, Neo-Pentecostals, and mainline Protestant Charismatics. I have lived, worked, and travelled in many countries and everywhere I have belonged to a pentecostal church of some sort. I have preached, held workshops and seminars, and taught classes in Bible schools and theological seminars alike. Not least, I have participated in a large number of services, prayer meetings, Bible studies, and worship sessions as a congregant. In every way, my life has been marinated in global Pentecostalism from an early age and continuously. When I write about pentecostal spirituality, I do so as a pentecostal theologian with a critical eye on subjects that are very close to my heart. In many ways, this is my own attempt at grappling with the depths of pentecostal spirituality, theology, and worship.

Especially important in relation to this study is my personal connection to Pentecostalism in Eastern Africa. I grew up as a missionary kid in Rwanda, went to school in Burundi, and travelled extensively with my parents in East and Central Africa. Their roles as Scandinavian pentecostal missionaries meant that we often visited churches in the countryside, participated in services, talked to congregants, and met pastors. It also meant that we often visited social services run by the Scandinavian pentecostal mission: hospitals, schools, orphanages, relief centers, vocational training centers, and many others. This experience has shaped me, my life, my research interests, and my theological convictions. When I write about Kenya, I do so as a Swedish researcher, but one with a keen interest in, a strong commitment to, and a long relationship with Africa. In many ways I am an outsider, of course, in terms of culture, nationality, and ethnicity, but likewise I am also an insider, one whose life has been marked forever by East African Pentecostalism.

Academically, I have spanned more or less the whole spectrum of subjects within the theological field, touching on other fields in the humanities and social sciences as well. As an undergraduate in theology, I was mostly interested in exegesis, especially New Testament Greek, but also studied sociology, philosophy, and Arabic. During my bachelor and masters studies I went into systematic theology and began to specialize in African pentecostal theology, only to shift to Global Christianity and Interreligious Studies for my PhD research. As part of the program I did coursework on fieldwork methodology, ritual studies, African Christianity, pentecostal studies, and missiology, and had supervisors and colleagues from religious studies, anthropology, sociology,

church history, systematic theology, African studies, and more. Today, I am a post-doc researcher in practical theology, continuing to research pentecostal theology and spirituality, with a special focus on Africa. When I write about worship and ritual, I do so as a theologian, but with an openness towards a broad range of academic fields. In many ways this book, based on my PhD thesis, mirrors that eclectic approach and jumbled academic background.

In Chapter 3, I discuss ethical considerations relating to my role as a researcher and my status as an insider-outsider. For now it is enough to say that my background has formed me as who I am, and that person will inevitably have informed the writing at hand.

Now, as the stage is set and both the research issue and the researcher are introduced, it is time to map some previous studies with relevance to my own.

2 **Worship in Pentecostal Spirituality: Previous Research and Study Rationale**

My project starts with a specific practice—worship—and looks at this phenomenon from several different angles; ritualization, embodiment, theologizing, and transformative holistic integration. The strength of such an approach is that it enables a deep and multi-layered analysis of the richness of the practice. The challenge is to keep the different perspectives together and to stay focused on the central research issue, which is also the case when situating my study in relation to previous research. There are many potentially relevant researchers who have done something that relates to some aspect of my work, and yet very few who have studied worship with a similar approach to my own.

In the discussion that follows, I have selected researchers' work based on a few themes and their interplay: pentecostal-charismatic tradition, liturgy/ritual, embodiment, (musical forms of) worship, and African Christianity. These key themes recur in different forms in studies by social scientists, pentecostal theologians, ethnomusicologists, and Africanists, and I discuss the research most relevant to my own, step by step. Not included here are the fundamental theoretical works underpinning my research approach; rather, these are presented in Chapter 2.

2.1 *Ritual Perspectives*

The most comprehensive introduction so far to a ritual perspective on Pentecostalism within the social sciences is the anthology, *Practicing the Faith. The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, edited by Martin

Lindhardt.³⁸ The volume offers a glimpse of the wide variation in pentecostal ritual life: from healing rituals among Catholic Charismatics in Fiji, via evangelical cell group meetings in South Korea, to public prayer marches as part of political positioning by Pentecostals in Venezuela. Joel Robbins' chapter, in which he argues that ritual is an obvious aspect of Pentecostalism, has greatly influenced my own perspective.³⁹ Martyn Percy's contribution on the Toronto blessing,⁴⁰ Thomas Csordas' on the ritualization of everyday life,⁴¹ and Paul Gifford's on the Bible in African preaching are also relevant,⁴² and I return to them at appropriate places in the following chapters.

In his introduction to the volume, Lindhardt argues that studying charismatic Christianity "*from a ritual perspective*"⁴³ is more than simply studying ritual in addition to other important aspects of the tradition; rather, it is a matter of producing original knowledge on well-known features, using an alternative focus. To him, the "potential of this perspective lies in carefully shifting our analytical focus" from *why* and *what*, to "*how* Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity does what it does (or how people do what they do with Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity)."⁴⁴ It is starting with *how* that makes the difference. He continues by showing how infused the tradition is with ritual action, how very central ritual is to every aspect of its life. Music and singing are mentioned briefly in the introduction in relation to popular culture and experiencing the divine,⁴⁵ yet none of the chapters deal specifically with music or worship, despite their importance in the ritual life of so

38 Martin Lindhardt, ed., *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

39 Joel Robbins, 'The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalization', in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, ed. Martin Lindhardt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 49–67.

40 Martyn Percy, 'Adventure and Atrophy in a Charismatic Movement: Returning to the "Toronto Blessing"', in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, ed. Martin Lindhardt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 152–78.

41 Thomas J. Csordas, 'Ritualization of Life', in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, ed. Martin Lindhardt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 129–51.

42 Paul Gifford, 'The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism', in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, ed. Martin Lindhardt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 179–97.

43 Martin Lindhardt, 'Introduction', in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, ed. Martin Lindhardt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 7. Emphasis in original.

44 Lindhardt, 7. Emphasis in original.

45 Lindhardt, 8–13, 21–25.

many charismatic Christians. There seems to be a “lacuna”⁴⁶ in research on ritual in general, music rituals in particular.

If there is a nestor in the field of charismatic ritual, then anthropologist Thomas Csordas certainly qualifies. His work on Catholic Charismatics in the United States spans several decades and has inspired countless others. Central to his understanding of charismatic ritual is his concept ‘somatic modes of attention’, which combines Bourdieu’s ideas on practice/*habitus* with Merleau-Ponty’s notion of perception as a pre-objective embodied process.⁴⁷ To Csordas, human experience—including religious experience—is only obtainable through the body and its senses, and is, therefore, also culturally defined, since all perception begins in the socially informed body.⁴⁸ In later writings Csordas shows how the body and techniques of the body⁴⁹ are central to the radicalization of charisma in the group he is studying. Paying attention to bodies—how they move, position themselves, dress, feel, and interact—as well as to the rhetoric, both theological and otherwise, explaining these body techniques, is crucial to understanding ritual within a charismatic context.

A number of authors have elaborated on Thomas Csordas’ embodiment perspective in relation to pentecostal-charismatic ritual.⁵⁰ Tuija Hovi’s work on Finnish Neo-Charismatics, for example, relates directly to my own interest in the role of music and singing, describing as it does the “neocharismatic culture of celebration ... aiming at religious experience through collective bodily practice,”⁵¹ especially through what she labels “praising.”⁵² What is interesting about her study is that she focuses not on the musical aspect alone, but sees praising as a holistic practice that also includes dance, dress, and body movement. “The culture of celebration is not just the collective animated singing in the pew, but a complex set of practices, experiences, styles and embodied

46 Joel Robbins (2014), quoted in Lindhardt, 1.

47 Thomas J. Csordas, ‘Somatic Modes of Attention’, *Cultural Anthropology* 8, no. 2 (1993): 135–56.

48 Thomas J. Csordas, ‘Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology’, *Ethos* 18, no. 1 (1990): 5–47.

49 The concept is borrowed from Marcel Mauss, ‘Techniques of the Body’, *Economy and Society* 2, no. 1 (1 February 1973): 70–88.

50 See discussion in Lindhardt, ‘Introduction’, 19–21, 25–29.

51 Tuija Hovi, ‘Praising as Bodily Practice: The Neocharismatic Culture of Celebration’, in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck (Åbo, Finland: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, 2011), 130.

52 ‘Praising’ is a direct translation from the Finnish *ylistys*. In both Finnish and Swedish, the first part of ‘praise and worship’—i.e., praise/praising—is used to denote the practice as a whole, while in English ‘worship’ is the common term.

meanings.”⁵³ Admitting her own previous ignorance of the multidimensional meanings that acts of praise had for neo-charismatic believers—merely understanding them as a matter of trading Lutheran hymns for lively songs—she now underlines the importance of further investigations into the role of praising in charismatic spirituality.⁵⁴

Another example of a Nordic scholar utilizing Csordas’ ritual and embodiment perspective is psychologist of religion, Dagfinn Ulland, who described the Toronto revival as an “illustration of a globalized bodily spirituality in the post-modern society.”⁵⁵ As Tuija Hovi notes in relation to Ulland’s work, the term ‘bodily spirituality’ can sound almost paradoxical in the Western and Christian context of separating the body and mind/spirit, but is typical of charismatic worship rituals.⁵⁶ Ulland’s interest does not particularly lie in worship or ritual, but rather in the psychology of religion, yet he also comments on what he calls “the warming-up sequence,” concluding that it is a point where, through music and singing, “the body is engaged in a somatic mode of attention.”⁵⁷

A different but related perspective in the social sciences is presented by Margaret M. Poloma. In her book, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, she discusses religious experience in revivalist settings, highlighting links between biopsychological processes, pentecostal spirituality, ritual, and mysticism. Speaking of the pentecostal-charismatic movement as a whole, she states, “At the heart of this movement are dramatic experiences of God underlying a common spirituality and worldview that might be described as a ‘shared mysticism.’”⁵⁸ Throughout pentecostal history, Poloma asserts, music has played an important part in renewal rituals, as it “offers experience-evoking sounds wed to accepted metaphors and myths,” and thus “serves as a facilitator of mystical experience.”⁵⁹

Later chapters will flesh out these discussions in fuller detail. For now, I register that social scientific researchers have pointed out the importance of singing, dancing, and other bodily forms of spirituality, and have indicated the

53 Hovi, ‘Praising as Bodily Practice: The Neocharismatic Culture of Celebration’, 139.

54 Hovi, 137–39.

55 Dagfinn Ulland, *Guds Karneval: En Religionspsykologisk Studie av Toronto-Vekkelsens Ekstatiske Spiritualitet*, Lund Studies in Psychology of Religion: 9 (Centrum för Teologi och Religionsvetenskap, Lunds Universitet, 2007), 221.

56 Hovi, ‘Praising as Bodily Practice: The Neocharismatic Culture of Celebration’, 138.

57 Ulland, *Guds Karneval: En Religionspsykologisk Studie av Toronto-Vekkelsens Ekstatiske Spiritualitet*, 221.

58 Margaret M. Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism* (Walnut Creek (Ca.): AltaMira Press, 2003), 32–33.

59 Poloma, 33.

potential of a ritual perspective on pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. I also note that the ritual perspective is generally not informed by a theological one, the prime exception being *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* by pentecostal theologian Daniel Albrecht. His study has been a major inspiration for my own work, and is presented in the next chapter and discussed continually throughout the book. Albrecht is informed by ritual theory, especially performance theory, and thus provides an important example of how ritual studies and pentecostal studies may be combined in the study of charismatic worship.⁶⁰

2.2 *Theological Perspectives*

Within the theological field, practical theologian Mark Cartledge is one of the most prolific voices in the study of pentecostal liturgy and has written extensively on the matter. For instance, in his work *Testimony in the Spirit. Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*,⁶¹ he has continued to build on Albrecht's work, exemplifying how a ritual perspective can be combined with a theological one. This empirical study of a British Assemblies of God church analyses key elements of local theology, what he refers to as 'ordinary' or 'espoused' theology. In one of the chapters he discusses worship from a ritual perspective, showing both similarities and differences vis-à-vis Albrecht's findings. Theologically, Cartledge highlights the role of Christology, soteriology, and eschatology in pentecostal theology of worship. His findings have many similarities with my own and I return to them at appropriate places.

Another important contribution is *The Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*,⁶² where Cartledge sets out to propose a distinctly pentecostal perspective on practical theology by probing the relationship between the Bible, human experience, and the Holy Spirit. His particular interest lies in how the Spirit is mediated to human beings, arguing is that there is "an implicit sacramentality"⁶³ in pentecostal spirituality. Among other things, Cartledge elaborates on the role of the body and emotions. He regards affections or emotions as part of the direct object of practical theology, since "beliefs and practices are intimately connected to feelings and desires, even when that connection is not fully acknowledged,"⁶⁴ while self-critically asserting that his work thus far has not developed the affective dimensions "in any great detail."⁶⁵

60 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*.

61 Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*.

62 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*.

63 Cartledge, 69.

64 Cartledge, 24.

65 Cartledge, 29.

For my purposes, Cartledge's understanding of mediation, affection, and sacramentality becomes important at several points in the following discussions, not least in the final chapter.

Further, Cartledge is the editor, together with A.J. Swaboda, of the most comprehensive anthology on pentecostal liturgy so far, *Scripting Pentecost. A Study of Pentecostals, Worship, and Liturgy*,⁶⁶ as well as the author of a concise, yet informative, introduction to the liturgical life of pentecostal-charismatic Christians, *Encountering the Spirit—The Charismatic Tradition*.⁶⁷ In the latter, Cartledge provides a quick overview of charismatic spirituality and its place in church history, as well as an introduction to core aspects of the tradition, such as inspired speech, community life, empowered witness, and holiness ethics. Freedom, participation, spontaneity, and intimacy are recurrent themes in his description of charismatic liturgy. He also emphasizes how important music is for memorizing and internalizing the oral liturgy, noting the connection between Pentecostalism and African-American music in this regard.⁶⁸

In *Scripting Pentecost*, a range of authors from across the theological field, many of them pentecostal practitioners and leaders themselves, provide perspectives on different aspects of pentecostal liturgy and worship. The book includes global case studies from around the world, as well as historical explorations and constructive theological contributions. Especially relevant to my own study are Andy Lord's chapter on the theology of sung worship,⁶⁹ Wolfgang Vondey's chapter on pentecostal sacramentality,⁷⁰ and Samuel W. Muindi's chapter on ritual and spirituality in Kenyan Pentecostalism.⁷¹ The former two offer constructive theological perspectives, while the latter provides a case study of an African-initiated church (also known as AIC), and shows the close affinity between African native spirituality and pentecostal spirituality. Describing local ritual patterns, Muindi underlines the centrality

66 Green, 'Saving Liturgy: (Re)Imagining Pentecostal Liturgical Theology and Practice'.

67 Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*.

68 Cartledge, 51–68.

69 Andy Lord, 'A Theology of Sung Worship', in *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A.J. Swaboda (London; New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2019).

70 Wolfgang Vondey, 'Pentecostal Sacramentality and the Theology of the Altar', in *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A.J. Swaboda (London: New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2019).

71 Samuel W. Muindi, 'Ritual and Spirituality in Kenyan Pentecostalism', in *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A.J. Swaboda (London: New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2019).

of oral-narrative theology and experiential-expressive liturgical forms in both traditions and calls for further research on these matters.

The oral and embodied character of pentecostal liturgy, as well as its connections to African-American music and culture, were first highlighted by Swiss theologian Walter Hollenweger. In his influential study, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*,⁷² he argues that the global pentecostal movement has had multiple roots, one of which is a “black oral root.”⁷³ Doctrinally the movement was, and is, diverse, but liturgically it shares some common traits. These include “orality of liturgy,” “maximum participation,” and “an understanding of the body/mind relationship that is informed by experiences of correspondence between body and mind.”⁷⁴ Through oral liturgy, mind and body are integrated into one holistic spiritual experience.

According to Hollenweger, “black music”⁷⁵ was an essential feature of this matrix, since Pentecostalism and black music were born in the same social and cultural context. The musical and cultural traditions of African Americans affected the way pentecostal spirituality and liturgy developed. The oral character of black music and of pentecostal liturgy allowed participants to join in fully with their whole selves, to “take the chorus home,”⁷⁶ and by so doing, to take pentecostal spirituality home. This gave a freedom to the liturgy and music that is similar to other forms of folk and black music.⁷⁷

In North America and Europe, Hollenweger says, Pentecostalism has discarded some of these oral liturgical traits. It is, instead, developing into an “evangelical middle class religion,” replacing many of these elements with “efficient fund-raising structures, a streamlined ecclesiastical bureaucracy, and a Pentecostal conceptual theology.”⁷⁸ One could add that even in Africa, in a

72 Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*.

73 Hollenweger, 17–141. 17–141. Compare discussions on the connection between Pentecostalism and African-American history, music, and culture in Alexander, *Signs and Wonders: Why Pentecostalism Is the World's Fastest Growing Faith*; Amos Yong and Estrelida Y. Alexander, *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture* (New York London: NYU Press, 2011).

74 Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, 18–19. This book was first published in 1997 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. and has had a wide appeal among pentecostal theologians and social scientists alike. See also Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (SCM Press, 1972); Walter J. Hollenweger, ‘After Twenty Years’ Research on Pentecostalism’, *Theology* 87, no. 720 (1984): 403–12.

75 Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, 277.

76 Hollenweger, 278.

77 Hollenweger, 278. Compare discussion on black music and culture in Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*.

78 Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, 19.

city like Nairobi, Pentecostalism is well on the way to becoming a middle-class religion. It remains to be seen how much of the oral, embodied, and affective dimension of spirituality is lost in this development. My own study indicates that this is not yet the case.⁷⁹

For pentecostal theologians, orality has become an important foundational theme, as exemplified by the second chapter of Amos Yong's *The Hermeneutical Spirit: Theological Interpretation and Scriptural Imagination*.⁸⁰ In conversation with African Pentecostalism, Yong develops the concept of orality for biblical hermeneutics, arguing that there is a "pentecostal way of reading and interpreting Scripture."⁸¹ This way of reading is connected to oral culture and requires a different set of hermeneutical guidelines, as well as access to a different set of sources—such as liturgies, songs, and sermons—than is the case for theological interpretations based solely on textuality and literacy. Yong emphasizes that "theological and other content cannot just be extrapolated from oral literatures" without paying attention to their form, since the form "is intrinsic to any message that might be deciphered."⁸² Therefore, "how something is uttered and heard is not to be subordinated to *what* is said."⁸³ My work does not deal explicitly with biblical hermeneutics, but the interpretation of oral material and the interconnectedness of Scripture, liturgy, and theology are relevant throughout the study.

Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace,⁸⁴ another book from Amos Yong's vast production, connects with my work in a different manner. In it, Yong weaves together earlier work by pentecostal theologians on *orthopathy*, findings from the social sciences on pentecostal praxis, and elaborations on biblical material. Love, desire, and longing are central to Yong's description of pentecostal spirituality and, although music and singing are not his primary interest, he does mention them as important means of expressing such

79 Compare Mugambi who argues that orality is a feature that is retained and cultivated in urban Pentecostalism even in its middle-class format, Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 287–96.

80 Amos Yong, *The Hermeneutical Spirit: Theological Interpretation and Scriptural Imagination for the 21st Century* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017), 43–76. See also discussion on orality and preaching in Yong "The Spirit and Proclamation. A Pneumatological Theology of Preaching". <https://www.pulpit.org/the-spirit-and-proclamation-a-pneumatological-theology-of-preaching-part-i> (accessed 2023-10-11).

81 Yong, 44.

82 Yong, 49.

83 Yong, 49.

84 Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*.

longing. “Pentecostals,” Yong says, “meet God not merely as rational creatures but as embodied, feeling and desiring ones.”⁸⁵ In order to understand worship fully, we must, therefore, take seriously the role of embodiment, feelings, and desires.

Although Hollenweger and the pentecostal theologians building on his results have noted the oral, affective, and embodied character of pentecostal spirituality, not many have worked with actual, detailed descriptions of how this is expressed in contemporary ecclesial contexts, or theologized the role of the body and emotion in worship based on such descriptions. I find it ironic to think that, although Pentecostals have a heritage of bridging the mind/body divide through their liturgy, academic pentecostal theology has become an utterly philosophical affair. One example is the anthology on worship, *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, edited by Lee Roy Martin,⁸⁶ to which a number of prominent pentecostal theologians have contributed. Most mention somatic, sensory, and affective aspects in passing,⁸⁷ but only one chapter offers a glimpse of how worship is embodied in actual church contexts in contemporary times.⁸⁸ The rest of the chapters proceed in classic philosophical style, with theology built on exegesis of biblical texts and rational argumentation, without attending to concrete ‘bodies’ (ecclesial or physical). Of course, the insights and elaborations constitute helpful intellectual voices from within the

85 Yong, 55.

86 Lee R. Martin, ed., *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016).

87 See, e.g., chapters by Johnathan E. Alvarado, ‘Pentecostal Worship and the Creation of Meaning’, in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, ed. Lee R. Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016), 223–24; Melissa Archer, ‘Worship in the Book of Revelation’, in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, ed. Lee R. Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016), 115, 121, 135; Jerome Boone, ‘Worship and the Torah’, in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, ed. Lee R. Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016), 23–24; R. Hollis Gause, ‘The Nature and Pattern of Biblical Worship’, in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, ed. Lee R. Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016), 148–49; Frank D. Macchia, ‘Signs of Grace: Towards a Charismatic Theology of Worship’, in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, ed. Lee R. Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016), 157–58; Martin, ‘The Book of Psalms and Pentecostal Worship’, 77–80, 86–88; Lee R. Martin and Daniel Castelo, ‘From “Hallelujah!” To “We Believe” and Back: Interrelating Pentecostal Worship and Doctrine’, in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016), 288. Several of these authors build on the work of Walter Hollenweger and Steven Land in their discussions of pentecostal liturgy and worship.

88 Peter Althouse, ‘Betwixt and Between the Cross and the Eschaton: Pentecostal Worship in the Context of Ritual Play’, in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, ed. Lee R. Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016).

pentecostal tradition; still, I cannot but wonder why their (presumed) experiences of an embodied pentecostal spirituality have not been allowed to inform their theological methods.

Another example, slightly closer to pentecostal realities on the ground, is *The Holy Spirit in Worship Music, Preaching and the Altar: Renewing Pentecostal Corporate Worship*, by Josh P.S. Samuel.⁸⁹ The book starts by expressing the promising ambition to elaborate on “three key worship expressions”⁹⁰ in pentecostal corporate worship: music, sermon, and altar call. However, the description that follows does not supply much flesh and blood to such worship; instead, it elaborates solely from literary sources, discussing pentecostal worship in general rather than in specific terms. The most relevant aspect of his work is the background he provides to contemporary worship leaders and their songs, songs that are used globally and that I too encountered in my research.

The third example of recent philosophical elaborations on worship is not an emic pentecostal but a critical evangelical one, the book by Wesleyan theologian Michael A. Tapper, *Canadian Pentecostals, The Trinity, and Contemporary Worship. The Things We Sing*.⁹¹ The volume presents an impressive lyrical analysis of worship songs sung within the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), examining theological views of the Trinity via the content of lyrics. The study is relevant to my own in a number of ways: as methodological inspiration for my own lyrical content analysis, and as a point of comparison between what CITAM, the Kenyan ‘daughter’ denomination, sings/believes and what the ‘mother’ denomination in Canada sings/believes. Yet the analysis stays on the theoretical and intellectual, rather than the practical or embodied side of things.

My own study proceeds in a different manner, theologizing on the basis of empirical data, allowing the “lived and the local”⁹²—even local, living bodies—to play centre stage. It has been a deliberate choice to allow the subject matter of the research to inform the methods used both to analyse and describe what is at hand. It is an attempt to do what Amos Yong has called

89 Josh Samuel P.S., *The Holy Spirit in Worship Music, Preaching, and the Altar: Renewing Pentecostal Corporate Worship* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2018).

90 Samuel, 4.

91 Michael A. Tapper, *Canadian Pentecostals, the Trinity, and Contemporary Worship Music: The Things We Sing* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

92 Pete Ward, ‘Introduction’, in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2012), 9.

for: to allow pentecostal processes of musicking and theologizing to resonate with each other. To me, it is a way to allow how Pentecostals “do’ praise and worship” also inform how I “do’ theology.”⁹³

Having explored the fields of the social sciences and theology in search of perspectives on pentecostal ritual, liturgy, and worship, it is time to take a look at recent developments in the study of contemporary worship music in ethno-musicology.

2.3 *Congregational Music Perspectives*

The last few years have seen a boom in the literature on contemporary worship music, primarily among ethno-musicologists. The interdisciplinary conference, *Christian Congregational Music*, held bi-annually at Ripon College, England, has been instrumental in this development. Their publications include Mark Porter’s ethnographic work on evangelical Christians in England, *Contemporary Worship Music and Everyday Musical Lives*;⁹⁴ Jonathan Dueck’s research on the conflicts that threaten to tear congregations apart in Canada, *Congregational Music, Conflict and Community*;⁹⁵ and three edited volumes on congregational music in which several contributions deal with contemporary worship music.⁹⁶ Other recent publications in the field include *Music, Branding and Consumer-Culture in Church*, by Tom Wagner,⁹⁷ and *The Hillsong Movement Examined*, by Wagner and Tanya Riches,⁹⁸ both focusing on the Australian Hillsong Movement and its role in the development of global charismatic worship. The common denominator in these publications, naturally, is

93 Amos Yong, ‘Conclusion: Improvisation, Indigenization, and Inspiration: Theological Reflections on the Sound and Spirit of Global Renewal’, in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Monique Marie Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 286.

94 Porter, *Contemporary Worship Music and Everyday Musical Lives*.

95 Dueck, *Congregational Music, Conflict and Community*.

96 Monique M. Ingalls, Muriel S. Reigersberg, and Zoe C. Sherinian, eds., *Making Congregational Music Local in Christian Communities Worldwide* (Taylor & Francis, 2018); Carolyn Landau, Monique Ingalls, and Tom Wagner, eds., *Christian Congregational Music: Performance, Identity and Experience* (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013); Tom Wagner and Anna Nekola, eds., *Congregational Music-Making and Community in a Mediated Age* (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015).

97 Tom Wagner, *Music, Branding and Consumer Culture in Church: Hillsong in Focus* (Taylor & Francis, 2019).

98 Tanya Riches and Tom Wagner, *The Hillsong Movement Examined: You Call Me Out Upon the Waters* (Springer International Publishing, 2017).

music-making in Christian congregations, thus ethno-musicology has a strong voice, although theological, sociological, historical, and anthropological perspectives are also included. Another common denominator is that they almost exclusively deal with Western contexts.

One of the leading scholars in this development is the ethno-musicologist Monique Ingalls, who has edited several volumes, among them the most comprehensive introduction so far to music and worship within the charismatic tradition, *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*.⁹⁹ The volume has a multidisciplinary approach and a global reach. It includes many excellent essays that have shaped my understanding of worship, among them Ingalls' thorough introduction and Yong's thoughtful conclusion, Miranda Klaver's essay on worship as an aesthetic domain, Peter Althouse and Michael Wilkinson work on musical bodies, and Jean Ngoya Kidula's "Singing the Lord's Song in the Spirit and With Understanding."¹⁰⁰ The latter is a reflection on the repertoire and musical practices of Nairobi Pentecostal Church, NPC, Woodley's mother church, where Kidula used to serve as a music director, and so is directly related to my study. Much like Hollenweger above, Kidula emphasizes the connection between African and pentecostal forms of musicking, saying that "the Pentecostal approach to and beliefs about musicking have resonated with practices in many African culture groups."¹⁰¹ For instance, communal participation is a key characteristic of both African cultural and pentecostal performance spaces. In communal gatherings, "it is not just special artists who perform; any and all participants are technically licensed to musick," Kidula states. "Thus, there is room for the specialists, but there is opportunity for everyone else."¹⁰²

Apart from the above edited volumes, Ingalls has also published a monograph on the role of contemporary worship within evangelical Christianity in North America. In *Singing the Congregation. How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*,¹⁰³ she explores how the shared repertoire of contemporary worship music ties together different performance

99 Ingalls and Yong, *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*.

100 Kidula, 'Singing the Lord's Song in the Spirit and with Understanding: The Practice of Nairobi Pentecostal Church'.

101 Kidula, 134.

102 Kidula, 134.

103 Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*.

spaces into something that participants perceive as “experientially linked and continuous.”¹⁰⁴ Via a shared set of “musical modes of congregating,”¹⁰⁵ participants become community, a congregation. Here Ingalls argues for a redefinition of the conceptual category of congregation, expanding it beyond the confines of the local institutional church to denote “any gathering where participants understand the primary activity as being religious worship.”¹⁰⁶ Instead of focusing on the institutional structures of worship, the activity itself is brought to the fore. Although set in a different cultural milieu and with a different focus, Ingalls’ exploration nevertheless resonates with many of my own questions.

Lastly, the work of Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*,¹⁰⁷ must be mentioned. The book is a historical account of contemporary worship: tracing its diverse musical and liturgical roots, situating it in time and space, examining the theological ideas behind it, and explaining each step of the development in a thorough manner. With insight and detail, the writers show how the multi-dimensional phenomenon has links to the Jesus movement, African-American Pentecostalism, and the Vineyard Movement, and follow its later development in different cultural and denominational spaces across the Western world. They do not address developments in Africa (or other non-Western areas of the world), yet many of the insights also shed light on worship practices in urban Kenya. I find it especially helpful that they look at worship in a holistic manner, taking into account theology, liturgy, music, and technology.

As can be seen from the above, most studies of contemporary worship are conducted in a Western context, and take their starting point in the musical genre, or musical practice, of contemporary worship. My own study contributes with a combination of ritual and theological perspectives from an African pentecostal-charismatic context. Although the churches I study do use some of the same repertoires as their Western counterparts, they also use other types of music and congregate musically in slightly different manners.

104 Ingalls, 23.

105 Ingalls, 23.

106 Ingalls, 23.

107 Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*. See also: Lester Ruth and Swee Hong Lim, *A History of Contemporary Praise & Worship: Understanding the Ideas That Reshaped the Protestant Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021).

2.4 *Africanist Perspectives*

What about Africa then? To list everything that has been written on African Christianity,¹⁰⁸ African theology,¹⁰⁹ African music,¹¹⁰ or African

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- 108 See for example: John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African History* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines, 2013); Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh University Press, 1995); Bongmba, *The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*; Joseph D. Galgalo, *African Christianity: The Stranger Within*, Book Collections on Project MUSE (Zapf Chancery, 2012); Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (Hurst, 1998); Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Development and Modernity in Africa*. (Oxford University Press, 2016); G. Haar, *How God Became African: African Spirituality and Western Secular Thought* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 2009); Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Ogbu U. Kalu, ed., *African Christianity: An African Story* (Pretoria: Dept. of Church History, University of Pretoria, 2005); Karen Lauterbach and Mika Vähäkangas, eds., *Faith in African Lived Christianity: Bridging Anthropological and Theological Perspectives* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020); Jesse N.K. Mugambi, *Christianity and African Culture* (Nairobi: Acton, 2002).
- 109 See for example: Kwame Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience* (Orbis Books, 2004); Elias Kifon Bongmba, ed., *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology* (Routledge, 2020); Clifton Clarke, *African Christology: Jesus in Post-Missionary African Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011); Joseph Healey and Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996); Knut Holter, *Yahweh in Africa: Essays on Africa and the Old Testament*, Bible and Theology in Africa (New York: Lang, 2001); Knut Holter, 'Does a Dialogue between Africa and Europe Make Sense?', in *African and European Readers of the Bible in Dialogue: In Quest of a Shared Meaning*, ed. Hans de Wit and Gerald O. West (Leiden: Brill, 2008); Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan: HippoBooks, 2012); Jesse. N.K. Mugambi and Laurenti Magesa, eds., *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, African Christianity Series (Nairobi, Kenya: Acton Publishers, 2003); Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1984).
- 110 See for example: V. Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions*. (Routledge, 2003); V. Kofi Agawu, *The African Imagination in Music, Oxford Scholarship Online (Music)* (Oxford University Press, 2016); Francis Bebey, *African Music: A People's Art*, 1976; Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*; Samuel A. Floyd Jr., Melanie Zeck, and Guthrie P. Ramsey, *The Transformation of Black Music: the Rhythms, the Songs, and the Ships That Make the African Diaspora*, Oxford Scholarship Online (Music) (Oxford University Press, 2017); John Gray, *African Music: A Bibliographical Guide to the Traditional, Popular, Art, and Liturgical Musics of Sub-Saharan Africa*, African Special Bibliographic Series: 14 (Greenwood Press, 1991); Kiiru, *Music and Dance in Eastern Africa*. (Africae, 2018); J. H. Kwabena Nketia, *The Music of Africa*. (Gollancz, 1975); Mai Palmberg and Annemette Kirkegaard, eds., *Playing with Identities in Contemporary Music in Africa*. (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet in cooperation with the Sibelius Museum [&] Dept. of Musicology, Åbo Akademi, 2002); Ruth M. Stone, ed., *The Garland Handbook of African Music* (Taylor & Francis, 2010); Henry Weman, *African Music and the Church in Africa*, Uppsala Universitets Årsskrift, volume 3, 1960.

Pentecostalism,¹¹¹ is just not doable, so the description below is considerably narrower, highlighting only their intersection, with a geographical focus on Eastern Africa and Nairobi.

The most thorough introduction to African Christian music so far is *Music in the Life of the African Church*, by Roberta King and co-authors Thomas Oduro, Jean N. Kidula, and James R. Krabill.¹¹² The book discusses the interplay of music, culture, and Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa, dealing with historical as well as contemporary issues. The authors argue that music is a vital force in African Christianity and has been instrumental in the spread of the church in Africa over the last century. “One of the untold stories of the church’s phenomenal growth,” they say, “is the central role of music and its dynamic interaction with African cultures.”¹¹³ Yet the story has often been one of tensions and conflicts, with Western mission ignoring or rejecting local indigenous music and instead introducing its own styles, instruments, and repertoires. The chapter by King on musical encounters with the Bible is especially relevant, dealing as it does with questions of orality, theology, and Scripture in relation to music. King emphasizes music’s theological role, observing that song “provides a locus for interacting with foundational questions about the Christian faith.”¹¹⁴ For me, this indicates the importance of asking theological, not merely musical or cultural questions of African church music, something that has not been done sufficiently in the past.

111 See for example: J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments Within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Brill, 2005); Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context*; J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (1517 Media, 2015); J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostalism in Africa: Experiences from Ghana’s Charismatic Ministries* (Oxford: Regnum, 2021); Dena Freeman, *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa*, Non-Governmental Public Action (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*; Martin Lindhardt, ed., *Pentecostalism in Africa: Presence and Impact of Pneumatic Christianity in Postcolonial Societies*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies: 15 (Brill, 2015); Vinson Synan, Amos Yong, and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, eds., *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future. Volume 3: Africa* (Charisma House, 2016); Wariboko and Afolayan, *African Pentecostalism and World Christianity: Essays in Honor of J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu*; Nimi Wariboko, *Nigerian Pentecostalism*, Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora: V. 62 (University of Rochester Press, 2014).

112 Roberta R. King et al., *Music in the Life of the African Church* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008).

113 King et al., xi.

114 Roberta R. King, ‘Bible: Lex Canendi, Lex Credendi’, in *Music in the Life of the African Church* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008). 118.

As we have seen above, ethno-musicologist Jean Kidula is one of the main scholars in the field of African Christian music and also the author of several other publications, most notably *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song*, the only book-length study so far on Christian music in Kenya.¹¹⁵ It concentrates on the way a particular ethnic group, the Ava-Logooli of Western Kenya, have interacted with Christianity in colonial and postcolonial times by means of music. Pentecostal churches are among the Christian groups that flourish among the Logooli, and so Kidula's study is an important one when it comes to describing musical interaction between Pentecostalism and African culture, although her focus is the historical and cultural context of music, rather than spirituality or theology. Nevertheless, the study is relevant to my work, and I return to it at appropriate places.

Within the field of religious studies, the most influential work on contemporary Christian music in Africa is Ezra Chitando's *Singing Culture: A Study of Gospel Music in Zimbabwe*.¹¹⁶ Tracing its historical development during the 1990s, Chitando portrays gospel music as a religious phenomenon that has become part of mainstream culture to such a degree that it shapes Zimbabwean identity. His main contribution is that he places Christian music in its cultural, economic, and political context, interpreting songs with a deep understanding of both theology and culture. Although his focus is not specifically on pentecostal music, the prominence at the time of evangelical and neo-pentecostal groups in Zimbabwe shapes his portrayal. For example, he notes the importance of dance and rhythm in their music, their use of media and technology, the roles of children, youth, and women, as well as theological issues that relate to economy, prosperity, and socio-political engagement. Towards the end of his study, Chitando calls for "more scholarly examination of African cultural products,"¹¹⁷ among them contemporary religious music.

While King, Kidula, and Chitando are not specifically interested in African Pentecostalism, or African pentecostal theology, scholars who are, often have less to say about music.¹¹⁸ In the anthology, *Charismatic Renewal in*

115 Jean Ngoya Kidula, *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013). A more limited study has been conducted by Parsitau, "Then Sings My Soul": Gospel Music as Popular Culture in the Spiritual Lives of Kenyan Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians'.

116 Chitando, 'Singing Culture: A Study of Gospel Music in Zimbabwe'.

117 Chitando, 96.

118 For example, Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. says very little about the role of music, but see Kalu, 'Holy Praiseco: Negotiating Sacred and Popular Music and Dance in African Pentecostalism'.

Africa: A Challenge for African Christianity, edited by Mika Vähäkangas and Andrew A. Kyomo, several African theologians contribute their perspectives on pentecostal-charismatic renewal.¹¹⁹ While most omit the role of music, liturgy, and worship from their presentations, some mention this aspect briefly, but do not explore its theological potential. Another example is the book, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*,¹²⁰ in which Paul Gifford, the doyen of pentecostal studies in Eastern Africa, writes extensively about what he calls “middle class Pentecostalism”¹²¹ in churches including Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Nairobi Baptist Church, and Nairobi Chapel, but has virtually nothing to say about pentecostal music. Instead, he focuses his attention on the prosperity gospel, issues of power and money, and transatlantic links to North America. Important as these issues are, in my view they do not adequately describe the life of these churches. To paint a fuller picture, other perspectives are needed, including a ritual-theological perspective on music.

There are exceptions, however, encouraging examples where pentecostal musicking and theologizing have been allowed to interact in an African context. In the edited volume, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*,¹²² Clifton Clarke sets out to draft an African pentecostal theological method after the musical/socio-cultural motif call-and-response. This is a theological method that exists within, and draws upon the African socio-cultural and epistemological context, yet at the same time acknowledges the connection to the universal Church and context-transcending aspects of Christian faith.¹²³ According to Clarke, there is “a lack of explicit concentration on and investigation into a theological analysis of Pentecostal theology in Africa,”¹²⁴ especially of studies that take African cultural patterns and cultural products into account. Clarke’s model has some similarities with my own understanding of theology as an ongoing interaction between text and context, relating and reflecting, described in Chapter 2. The difference is that, to me, this kind of understanding of theology also has

119 Mika Vähäkangas and Andrew A. Kyomo, eds., *Charismatic Renewal in Africa: A Challenge for African Christianity* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003).

120 Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: C. Hurst, 2009); compare Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*.

121 Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 109.

122 Clifton R. Clarke, ed., *Pentecostal Theology in Africa* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

123 Clifton R. Clarke, ‘Call and Response: Toward an African Pentecostal Theological Method’, in *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, ed. Clifton R. Clarke (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

124 Clarke, 23.

concrete methodological consequences as it drives us to explore new research methods, especially empirical ones.

Lastly, it is appropriate to present the research that has been done specifically on Mavuno/Nairobi Chapel and Woodley/CITAM. Kyama Mugambi's book, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*,¹²⁵ is the most recent contribution. His is a combined study of the history of charismatic renewal movements in Kenya and some case studies on different themes, including chapters on CITAM and Nairobi Chapel. His work is presented in Chapter 4. Two more studies should also be mentioned. In *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*,¹²⁶ Wanjiru M. Gitau has conducted a thorough empirical investigation of Mavuno, a church where she was formerly a leader. Gitau paints a vivid picture, tracing the history of the church and its leaders, explaining its development into a mega-church, and describing its ethos and methods. Her focus lies on the social and cultural situation of urban African youth ('the millennials') and how mega-church Christianity seeks to respond to their needs. In his description of Christ is the Answer Ministries, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness: The Amazing Story of Christ is the Answer Ministries*,¹²⁷ CITAM pastor, Justus Mugambi, has a different approach. The book primarily portrays the internal affairs of the denomination, tracing its history back to Canadian mission, and describing its structures and leaders, but unfortunately without much analytical depth or critical distance. As historical documentation, however, it is still valuable, since Mugambi has done solid work on the historical sources.

Although K. Mugambi, Gitau, and J. Mugambi touch on issues of theology, music, liturgy, and worship in their presentations of each church, none has this as their main agenda. Thus, my own study in no way repeats what has already been done. Nevertheless, all three books give valuable insights into the life of my two case churches and have provided important background.

2.5 *Study Rationale*

To summarize the discussion on previous research in the field, I conclude that there is indeed a gap to be filled here.

125 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*.

126 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*.

127 Justus Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 2009).

There is research with a ritual perspective onto the pentecostal-charismatic tradition, but not much of it focuses on music or links ritual and theology. Something similar can be said of theological perspectives: there are studies on worship among pentecostal theologians, but most of them, surprisingly, do not explore the theological potential of ritual or music. On the other hand, there are scholars of Christian congregational music who dig deeply into contemporary charismatic worship, but they are often more interested in music as a social or cultural phenomenon than music as part of pentecostal theology and spirituality. In all three perspectives described above—ritual studies, pentecostal studies, and ethno-musicology—the overwhelming majority of in-depth studies have been undertaken in a Western context. Africanist researchers seem to be interested either in Christian music (as a historical, social, and cultural phenomenon), or in Pentecostalism (as a historical, social, and cultural phenomenon), but not in the link between music and Pentecostalism, or pentecostal worship more specifically.

My study contributes with a unique combination of perspectives;

- it is a theological enquiry
- that utilizes an empirical method
- to explore a ritual phenomenon
- that involves congregational music
- in an African
- pentecostal-charismatic setting.

3 Step by Step through This Book

Now, as the stage is set and all the preliminary things have been said and done, the only thing that remains is to take the reader step by step through the content that follows.

This monograph has three main parts: Part 1 deals with introductory matters, especially theory and method, Part 2 introduces the two cases and their Kenyan ecclesial context, while Part 3 constitutes the main body of the text and is organized around four analytical themes. Here, the cross-case analysis is presented in dialogue with theological and theoretical voices.

The Introduction, naturally, presents the study. Above, I introduced the research, giving a brief overview of the task at hand, including some important caveats, and presented myself as the researcher. Then I explained the rationale for the present study by providing an overview of previous research in ritual studies, pentecostal studies, congregational music studies, and studies of African Christian music and Pentecostalism.

The following chapter deals with the theoretical framework, laying a foundation for what comes next. Here, I outline what a spirituality approach to Pentecostalism, a practice approach to theology, and a ritual approach to worship entail and how they are combined in this work. Among other things, I discuss a novel way to define the term 'pentecostal', outline why worship can be regarded as a mode of theology, establish the necessity of empirical research methods in theology, and discuss key terms such as ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing. The *orthodoxa* model for pentecostal spirituality-as-theology is also introduced.

Chapter 3 deals with concrete methodological issues, including questions of positionality, reflexivity, and research ethics. Detailed accounts of research procedures for fieldwork, data collection, and analysis are given and the research design explained.

Chapter 4 gives a brief history of Pentecostalism in urban Kenya, and introduces the two case churches, Mavuno and Woodley, along with their place in the ecclesial landscape.

Then comes an interlude. Here I present the reader with ethnographic vignettes: in-depth, 'thick' descriptions of Sunday worship in Mavuno and Woodley.

The following four major chapters constitute my analysis. The first three focus on ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing, respectively and, in the last, the three perspectives are woven together under the umbrella term *orthodoxa*. All chapters combine empirical data with theoretical perspectives, albeit in different manners.

Chapter 5, *Orthopraxis*, analyses worship as ritualized practice, showing how this operates in these contexts. Here, I situate the rites of worship and praise in the larger liturgical system. Different aspects of ritualization are highlighted: ritual dynamics such as sequencing and core elements including ritual actors, languages, objects, and sounds.

Chapter 6, *Orthopathos*, analyses worship as embodied practice, showing how embodiment and emotion are integral to ritual practice in a pentecostal milieu. Different aspects of embodiment are discussed: dance and movement, identity and community, dress and clothing, and emotion and affective states.

Chapter 7, *Orthopistis*, analyses worship as theologizing practice. The discussion concentrates on two main aspects of the sung theology: the Bible re-oralized in song and Christology as the hub of theology. The connection between lyrics and biblical texts become clear, as well as the centrality of Jesus Christ to worship.

Chapter 8, *Orthodoxa*, summarizes and concludes the endeavour. Here, I look at worship as a unified whole, seeking to bring together the different

aspects and yet show that the whole is bigger than its parts. To aid understanding, I use the concepts of transformation and integration; worship is a practice that is intended to bring about change, and it integrates several different dimensions. In addition, I discuss local conceptualizations of the word 'worship' and widen the perspective to see how the ritual practice of worship relates to worship as a way of life. Towards the end, I situate the rite of worship and praise in the larger scheme of 'pentecostal spirituality-as-theology' and conclude that worship, in local pentecostal understanding, is *orthodoxa*, a holistic, integrated, transformative spirituality.

The book can be read in several ways. Pentecostal practitioners in search of profound reflection on the theology of worship may want to start with the last chapter, while story-lovers (like myself!) are recommended to begin with the Interlude. Students developing their research methodology may want to consult Chapter 3 and then the appendix for inspiration, while readers specifically interested in charismatic Christianity in Kenya can jump directly to Chapter 4. Theoretically inclined readers may instead want to start with Chapter 2 and then dive into any of the analytic chapters depending on their specific scholarly interests. I imagine that ritual scholars, social scientists, and ethno-musicologists will feel most at home in Chapters 5 and 6, while theologians, whether specialized in systematics, missiology, or practical theology, more so in Chapters 7 and 8. Scholars of pentecostal-charismatic Christianity will hopefully find the entire book worth reading.

PART 1

Theory and Method



Worship, Ritual, and Pentecostal Spirituality-as-Theology

I started to ponder the relationship between pentecostal worship practices and pentecostal theology long before my fieldwork stints in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2013 and 2014. Inspired by such theologians as Robert Schreiter, Steven Land, and Ulrik Josefsson,¹ I had found it important to search for theology not only in academic texts but also in unconventional sources (for theologians), such as communal activities, songs, testimonies, and Christian journals. With the help of Daniel Albrecht² and others, my eyes were opened to the ritual qualities of praise and worship and the central role it has in contemporary charismatic liturgy. I soon started to ask theological and theoretical questions when listening to worship songs or participating in church services in my home church and elsewhere. In heading for the field in Nairobi, my goal was to search for the theology that is expressed in worship, as well as the theology that underpins worship. Increasingly, however, I came to think of the songs as not merely expressing theology (as if theology were something already given and static), but as also crafting theology, constantly re-creating and moulding the very faith that they express. I am now convinced that this process takes place not just when the song is composed, but even more so as the song is sung in a liturgical context. To me, communal singing is thus a creative activity that both shapes and conveys theological knowledge. This study is an attempt to take seriously the relationship between pentecostal ‘theologizing’ and ‘musicking’,³ and to do so as part of a theologically informed empirical investigation.

Having briefly introduced this study and its place within current research in the last chapter, it is now time to give a deeper thought to its theoretical base. I do so in three steps, beginning by establishing the connection between

1 Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985); Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*; Josefsson, *Liv och Över Nog: Den Tidiga Pingströrelsens Spiritualitet (Abundant Life: The Spirituality of the Early Pentecostal Movement in Sweden)*.

2 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*.

3 See Yong, ‘Conclusion: Improvisation, Indigenization, and Inspiration: Theological Reflections on the Sound and Spirit of Global Renewal’. Yong discusses seven possible resonances between ‘theologizing’ and ‘musicking’ in renewalist/ pentecostal-charismatic tradition and challenges renewalist theologians to explore this relationship further.

spirituality and theology in the pentecostal tradition, and introducing the concepts that form the arc of my argument in this book: *orthopraxis*, *orthopathos*, *orthopistis*, and *orthodoxa*. The next step is to explain what it means to start with practice, and why I think worship can be seen as a mode of theology, *a modus theologicus*. Relating to that is a methodological discussion addressing the use of empirical tools in theological research. Third, ritual theory is introduced as a lens through which to examine pentecostal worship as embodied, liturgical practice. At each step of the argument I introduce and define related concepts. The theoretical framework can be summarized as: a spirituality approach to Pentecostalism, a practice approach to theology, and a ritual approach to worship.

1 A Spirituality Approach to Pentecostalism

1.1 *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Tradition*

Many scholars have tried to define *Pentecostalism* as a global phenomenon, sparking a sometimes heated debate as to what criteria should be used and what churches should be included in the category. Can we even speak of Pentecostalism in the singular anymore? The well-known expert on global Pentecostalism, Allan Anderson, has provided a brief yet comprehensive overview of this discussion and proposed a four-fold typology.⁴

Anderson divides global Pentecostalism into four overlapping types: (1) *Classical Pentecostals*: movements, churches, and denominations with diachronous and synchronous links to the pentecostal revivals and missionary movements of the early 20th century in North America and Europe, (2) *Older Independent and Spirit churches*: movements originating in independent revivals in Sub-Saharan Africa, India, and China, usually without synchronous links to classical Pentecostals, (3) *Older Church Charismatics*: Charismatic renewal movements in the established churches (Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, etc.), practicing spiritual gifts and forming their own networks inside those churches, and (4) *Neo-Pentecostal and Neo-Charismatic churches*: a wide variety of independent charismatic churches and ministries, emerging since the 1970s and often marked by their charismatic preachers, a willingness to embrace contemporary culture (including music and media) and their appeal to a young, urban generation.⁵ In Africa, the second group frequently goes under the label

⁴ Anderson, 'Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions'.

⁵ Anderson, 16–20.

AIC, which can be read variously as African Independent/Indigenous/Initiated Churches,⁶ and it has been argued that this group should be seen as akin to but not part of Pentecostalism.⁷

However, it is not always clear how to categorize a specific church or individual since categories overlap and churches and people change over time. For example, how are we to categorize Woodley, and other churches belonging to Christ is the Answer Ministries? Are they still classical Pentecostals because of their roots in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) and their theological and ritual affinity with classical Pentecostalism? What about Mavuno, is it to be called an evangelical, even Baptist, church due to its roots in Nairobi Baptist Church and Nairobi Chapel? Or should both Woodley and Mavuno be categorized as neo-charismatic because of their use of media, their church-planting strategies, and their urban, elite memberships? Are these churches developing within their own category, even changing the category itself, or are they becoming yet another type, as Mugambi has proposed?⁸ Many more churches and individuals do not fall into any self-evident category, even from an etic researcher's perspective, while the situation is complicated further when including an emic perspective, taking into account the self-identification and self-definition of churches and individuals.⁹

Today, a shift in terminology is happening, with scholars seeking to replace 'Pentecostalism' as an overarching term, although there is still no consensus on the matter. For example, Mark Cartledge refers to the total phenomenon variously as simply 'P/C'¹⁰ and 'the charismatic tradition',¹¹ while Monique Ingalls opts for 'pentecostal-charismatic Christianity',¹² Douglas Jacobsen speaks of 'the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition' as the fourth major tradition within global, contemporary Christianity¹³ and James K.A. Smith employs "the convention of small-*p* 'pentecostalism' to refer to the broader 'renewal'

6 Allan H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 2001).

7 Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 65–83.

8 Namely, 'Progressive Pentecostals'; see discussion in Chapter 4 on how to situate Mavuno and Woodley. Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*.

9 For a more extensive discussion, see Martina Prosén, 'Pentecostalism in Eastern Africa', in *The Routledge Companion to Christianity in Africa*, ed. Elias Kifon Bongmba (New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2016), 297–316.

10 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, x11.

11 Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*.

12 Ingalls, 'Introduction', 3.

13 Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*.

or Pentecostal/charismatic traditions.”¹⁴ Nevertheless, the question of defining what the movement is, and who belongs to it, remains.

Anderson identifies four common approaches to the definitional task: the typological, the social scientific, the historical, and the theological. Each approach has its own priorities but all are dependent on each other. The typological approach is concerned with delineating different types of churches and movements within Pentecostalism, opting for an inclusive definition of the term itself. Here any movement that emphasizes “the *experience* of the working of the Holy Spirit and the *practice* of spiritual gifts”¹⁵ is considered pentecostal, regardless of historical origins or self-definition. The social scientific approach concentrates on social and cultural criteria—such as the use of mass media or a global orientation—while the historical approach defines the movement in terms of diachronous and synchronous links. For example, churches with roots in the early 19th-century pentecostal revival are considered pentecostal, regardless of their contemporary teaching or praxis. Lastly, the theological approach—which regards the doctrinal content as what defines the movement—often concentrates on a single doctrine, such as viewing *glossolalia* as the ‘initial evidence’ of Spirit baptism.¹⁶

Anderson himself endorses an inclusive understanding of Pentecostalism, saying “[t]he term itself is one with shortcomings but despite its inadequacy refers to churches with a family resemblance that emphasize the working of the Holy Spirit”.¹⁷ The problem as I see it with such a definition is that it is both too narrow and too wide. Or, rather, precisely because it is so narrow, it also becomes too wide and therefore fails to adequately describe what Pentecostalism is. By concentrating on a single aspect, namely the working of the Holy Spirit, many other important traits are left out and a highly diverse collection of groups are included under the same umbrella term. Indeed, the definition becomes so wide and inclusive that it may refer to almost any type of movement; the question is whether they have anything in common other than simply this focus on the Spirit. And if not, is the term really helpful, or does it disguise more than it reveals?

The inclusive use of the term also fails to take self-definitions into account, since a large proportion of people that scholars subsume under the umbrella of ‘Pentecostalism’ have not heard of the term and would never call themselves

14 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, xvii.

15 Robert Mapes Anderson (1979) cited in Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’, 17. Emphasis in original.

16 Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’.

17 Anderson, 15.

'pentecostal'. At the same time, people who do call themselves 'pentecostal' may be surprised to find themselves described as belonging to the same movement as groups that to them are questionable or even syncretistic. On the other hand, there are indeed similarities in emphasis between many of the churches that are commonly viewed as 'pentecostal' or 'charismatic', including those that do not call themselves such; furthermore, having an even narrower set of criteria where only self-definitions, historical links to Azusa Street, or a certain doctrine on Spirit baptism counts as 'truly pentecostal' is not a better option.

Instead, I propose using a wider set of criteria in order to form a tighter definition. The definition then does a better job at describing the movement and yet still allows for diversity in form and content. Therefore, the term *pentecostal* is used in this thesis to denote churches and movements that are: Bible-based in narration, Kingdom-oriented in direction, Spirit-filled in expression, and Jesus-centred in passion.¹⁸ Much could be said in connection to each part of the definition, but here is a brief explanation. Pentecostals are:

- *Bible-based in narration.* A common characteristic in pentecostal ritual praxis is orality, especially narration. Whether sharing one's own testimony in a prayer meeting or preaching for the masses, narration is ever present. And so is the Bible. Biblical texts have a central role in pentecostal spirituality and are used as a reference point for both life and faith. Pentecostals tell their life stories to mirror those of biblical characters, they preach their sermons based on biblical stories, they make ethical choices that are deemed biblical, and seek to organize their church according to a biblical model, to name a few examples. Both in communal and individual practice, Pentecostals are encouraged to keep their Bibles ready to hand.¹⁹
- *Kingdom-oriented in direction.* Pentecostals are known to be missional, entrepreneurial, and innovative. They are always heading somewhere, directing their lives to higher goals, ceaselessly moving forward. In doing so, Pentecostals orient themselves toward the Kingdom of God. Some concentrate on longing for the eschatological Kingdom, understanding salvation as a journey towards a different world, while others concentrate on manifesting the immanent Kingdom, perceiving salvation as a new way to live within this world. Most see the two as intertwined in a holistic manner and engage

18 The related terms 'Pentecostalism', 'charismatic Christianity', and 'pentecostal-charismatic tradition' are used inter-changeably and describe the totality of the phenomena or tradition, considered as a diverse and yet distinct current within global Christianity. Individuals belonging to this tradition are referred to variously as 'Pentecostals' and 'Charismatics', and the theology lived and expressed within this tradition as 'pentecostal theology'.

19 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 225–28.

in spreading the Kingdom, reaching out with salvation to the ends of the earth.²⁰

- *Spirit-filled in expression.* The centrality of the working of the Spirit for pentecostal faith cannot be contested; it remains a core characteristic. This includes yearning for an infilling of the Spirit/Spirit Baptism; interceding for each other in the search for miracles and healing; receiving dreams, words and visions; singing and speaking in tongues; as well as many other forms of experiencing divine presence in an immediate way. Pentecostals are known for having an expressive faith, one where the experience of being born again and filled with the Spirit take vivid expression. Timidity, introspection, and reflection are not their strong points; theirs is a spirituality that is both seen and heard.²¹
- *Jesus-centred in passion.* Lastly, Christology and soteriology are central in pentecostal doctrine, and conversion—being born again and receiving Jesus as one’s Lord and Saviour—is central to pentecostal experience. Indeed, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been called the ‘hub’ of pentecostal theology.²² Moreover, Pentecostals are known to be passionate about Jesus: they speak of him, sing to him, pray in his name, and attribute their very existence and the miracles of their lives to his grace. Not only do they believe in Jesus, they love him, they admire him, they long for him, even desire him with their whole beings. Pentecostals are known for their love and passion for Jesus, but also for their passion for each other as a community and their passion for the weak, the poor, and the marginalized.²³

It is worth noting here that while I only mention the Spirit and the Son in my definition, most Pentecostals are indeed *Trinitarian in doctrine*. For while creeds are not often used in liturgy, and the exact interpretation and relative importance of different doctrines may vary between churches, the doctrinal content in general is not contested.²⁴ This may seem like an obvious remark,

20 Anderson, 206–24. See also discussion in Martina Prosén, ‘Abundant Life—Holistic Soteriology as Motivation for Socio-Political Engagement: A Pentecostal and Missional Perspective’, in *The Routledge Handbook of African Theology*, ed. Elias Kifon Bongmba, Routledge Handbooks in Theology (Routledge, 2020).

21 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 187–205.

22 Ted Peters (1992) cited in Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 14.

23 Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 39–56, 59–91; Margaret M. Poloma and John C. Green, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism* (New York, London: NYU Press, 2010).

24 Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008), 29–38.; see also discussion in Martina Prosén, ‘En Treenig Gud. Kärlekens Verklighet

but it is important since it positions Pentecostalism as a major tradition within Christianity, rather than an exotic anomaly on its fringes.²⁵ The exception is the group called Oneness Pentecostals, who baptize in Jesus' name (only), and see God as "radically one in His transcendence, but threefold in His immanence."²⁶ I return to doctrinal aspects of pentecostal faith in Chapter 7.

In the above definition I seek to balance common traits and characteristics that have been described in many cultural contexts and across time as essential to pentecostal spirituality and theology.²⁷ Mine is a multidimensional approach that integrates thought, passion, and action, and allows the holistic character of Pentecostalism to come through even in the definition.

1.2 *Pentecostal Spirituality as Theology*

The holistic character of pentecostal faith has been pointed out by many scholars, often by referring to Pentecostalism "as primarily a *spirituality*."²⁸

One of the most influential among them is pentecostal theologian Steven Land, who defines spirituality as "the integration of beliefs and practices in the affections which are themselves evoked and expressed by those beliefs and practices."²⁹ Spirituality is thus an integrated and holistic way to look at faith;

och Mysterium', in *I Ljuset av Återkomsten: En Bok om Tro och Liv*, ed. Jan-Åke Alvarsson and Martin Boström (Örebro: Libris Förlag, 2010).

25 Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*.

26 Reed, David A. in Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal. How God Used a Handful of Christians to Spark a Worldwide Movement*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2001), 144. See also page 141–147, 400; compare Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 46–57, 74–78.

27 For more examples of the different traits and characteristics, see: Alexander, *Signs and Wonders: Why Pentecostalism Is the World's Fastest Growing Faith*; Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*; Donald W. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Hendrickson, 1987); Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Petersen, eds., *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999); Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*; Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*; Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*; Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal. How God Used a Handful of Christians to Spark a Worldwide Movement*; Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*; Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*; Amos Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014).

28 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, Xix. Emphasis in original.

29 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 1.

it is the combination of beliefs, practices, and affections that together make up Pentecostalism. No single aspect can account for what pentecostal faith is, but together they come close to the heart of the matter. In order to appreciate pentecostal tradition fully, one must look at all aspects of it in an integrated and holistic manner, an example of which can be found in Ulrik Josefsson's study of the Swedish Pentecostal movement. Josefsson defines spirituality as "lived religious life" and analyses what he calls "identity-bearing elements"³⁰ (*identitetsbärande element*) of the Swedish Pentecostal movement: the doctrines, patterns of behaviour, and basic attitudes (*läror, handlingsmönster, grundhållningar*).³¹

Steven Land uses three Greek concepts to explain the different aspects: "orthodoxy (right praise-confession), orthopathy (right affections), and orthopraxy (right praxis)",³² with *orthopathy* as the integrating centre for the other two. According to Land, the affective dimension is what connects confession to praxis, cognition to behaviour. This way of looking at spirituality is closely related to theology, in that it restores "*theologia*" to "its ancient meaning"³³ of knowing God through prayer.³⁴ At the heart of pentecostal spirituality is a "passion for the king,"³⁵ a love and desire for God. Here, life becomes a constant prayer: a "moment-by-moment abiding in Christ through the Spirit and the Word."³⁶

If Land regards affections as the central aspect, and Josefsson sees the three as equal in weight,³⁷ philosopher James K.A. Smith rather starts with practice, formulating a pentecostal philosophy that seeks to make explicit the implicit worldview of Pentecostalism. "Pentecostalism," he argues, "is not first and foremost a doctrinal or intellectual tradition; it is an affective constellation of practices and embodied 'rituals'. In Wittgensteinian terms, we could say that pentecostal spirituality is 'a form of life'".³⁸ This form of life carries in it

30 Josefsson, *Liv och Över Nog: Den Tidiga Pingströrelsens Spiritualitet (Abundant Life: The Spirituality of the Early Pentecostal Movement in Sweden)*, 413.

31 Josefsson, 26–39, 413.

32 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 31. Emphasis mine. See also McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*.

33 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 30. Emphasis in original.

34 Land, 24.

35 Land, 175.

36 Land, 175.

37 Josefsson, *Liv och Över Nog: Den Tidiga Pingströrelsens Spiritualitet (Abundant Life: The Spirituality of the Early Pentecostal Movement in Sweden)*, 41, fn. 55.

38 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, xx. Quote from Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1958).

a certain understanding of the world, “a social imaginary,”³⁹ which is latent in ritual and other forms of practice and provides Pentecostals with a story about life and reality, a worldview that guides the way they live in and relate to the world.⁴⁰ These “implicit theological and philosophical intuitions” are “embedded within, and enacted by, pentecostal rituals and practices.”⁴¹

Because of this lived and affective nature of Pentecostalism, Smith sets out to build a philosophy based on the ‘reading’ of pentecostal practices, rather than texts.⁴² While this reading in his case becomes a rather distanced activity (he does not offer any in-depth analyses of real-life cases, but discusses generic pentecostal spirituality), his ambition nevertheless resonates with my own. This is especially so in that the starting point for analysis is practice rather than text, and that practice is seen as integrative to belief and affection. I too believe that Pentecostalism is best understood as a spirituality, and that implicit in the worship of a pentecostal church is also its worldview or theology. Following Steven Land, we may even say that pentecostal spirituality *is* theology.⁴³ Therefore theology can be read from practice.

1.3 *Worship as Orthodoxa*

Pentecostal theologian Kenneth Archer later revised Land’s *ortho*-terminology and proposed that we reserve the word ‘*orthodoxa*’ for right praise/worship, in accordance with its original Greek meaning, and instead use ‘*orthopistis*’ to denote right doctrine or belief.⁴⁴ He says, “Orthodoxy has more to do with our primary way of doing theology, which is worship, than the secondary critical reflective activity—the production of official dogma or right believing (*orthopistis*). Worship is our primary way of doing theology.”⁴⁵ In order to research this “affective-experiential theological tradition”, Archer calls for “an

39 Smith, 30. The concept is borrowed from Charles Taylor.

40 Smith, 30. Compare Cartledge who sees charismatic spirituality as a combination of narrative, symbol and praxis. Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*, 28–32.

41 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, xix.

42 Smith, xx. Compare pages 1–47.

43 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 1–48.

44 Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 10–11. This terminology is borrowed from Aidan Kavanagh, see Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine*, 40. *Dóxa* in New Testament Greek means ‘glory’, ‘praise’, ‘worship’, while *pístis* means ‘faith’, ‘belief’; see: Strong’s Greek Lexicon—G1391—*Dóxa* <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1391/kjv/tr/o-1/>, and; Strong’s Greek Lexicon—G4102—*Pístis* <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4102/kjv/tr/o-1/> (accessed 2023-03-16).

45 Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 11.

integrative methodology contextualized in an actual worshipping community".⁴⁶ He underlines the importance of seeing theory and practice as integrated and mutually enforcing in this work, since "[a]ctions give rise to and shape beliefs, and beliefs shape and inform activities."⁴⁷

Although Archer himself does not revise Land's understanding of spirituality as such, I also find the impetus to revise the model itself in his correction of terms and his insistence on a methodology that starts in an actual worshipping community. To me, pentecostal spirituality is a holistic integration of practices (ritual and social action), affections (embodied experiences and emotion), and doctrines (theological ideas and convictions) that together create a larger whole: a 'form of life'. For the adherents, this life is lived in the presence of God, in love and passion for the King, and so can be justifiably called '*orthodoxa*', right worship.

The word 'right' must be qualified in this context. By using the prefix *ortho-* in connection with worship I do not mean to say that there is only one correct way to worship God at all times and places, nor that Pentecostals in Nairobi worship God in a better way than other communities. What I want to do is draw the reader's attention to two aspects of the way worship functions in an actual faith community. On the one hand, worship is rule-bound: just like all other ritual practice it follows certain structures, builds on certain convictions, and lives within certain boundaries. In a local context, these rules and structures are constantly negotiated and yet at every given time there is still a 'right' way to do it from a local perspective.⁴⁸ On the other hand, worship forms and shapes normative faith and practice. Through participating in worship, adherents are familiarized with theological narrative, learn theological concepts, and are shaped in theological thoughtforms. What the community believes to be 'right'—their normative faith—is both conveyed and formed through the act of worship.⁴⁹

46 Archer, 11.

47 Archer, 11.

48 See further discussion in Ute Hüsken, ed., *When Rituals Go Wrong: Mistakes, Failure and the Dynamics of Ritual*, Numen Book Series. Studies in the History of Religions 115 (Brill Academic Publishers, 2007); Kathryn McClymond, *Ritual Gone Wrong: What We Learn from Ritual Disruption* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016). See also Björkander, Martina. 'Who Got the Rite Wrong? The Mavuno Alternative Christmas Service and Charismatic Ritual'. In *Handbook on Rituals in the Contemporary Studies of Religion: Exploring Ritual Creativity in the Foot-steps of Anne-Christine Hornborg*, eds. Paul Linjamaa, Ivo Brissman, and Thykier Makeeff (Leiden: Brill, 2024).

49 Terje Hegertun, *The Spirit Driven Church: Signs of God's Graceful Presence* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017), 162–82; see also: James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*, Cultural Liturgies: 1 (Baker Academic, 2009).

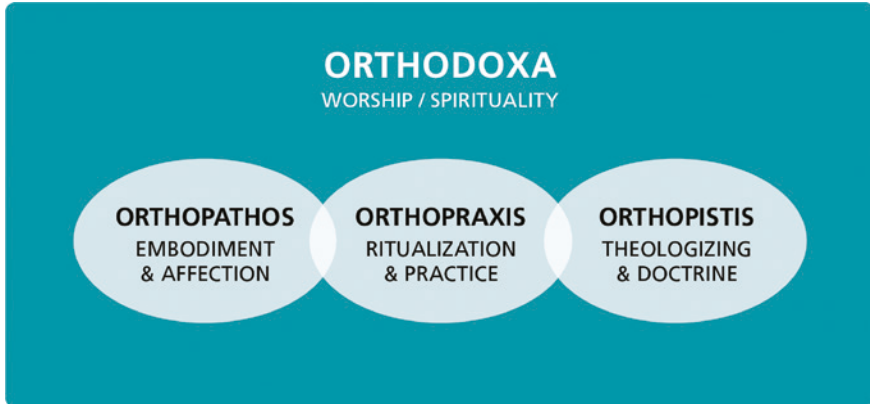


FIGURE 1 The *orthodoxa* model

Figure 1 may serve to illustrate the way I think of spirituality and the relationship between *orthopathos*, *orthopraxis*, *orthopistis*, and *orthodoxa*.

Unlike Land, and in line with Smith, I put *orthopraxis* at the centre. It is in concrete practice that doctrines and affections find a way to correlate and merge. Both generally in social and religious practices, and specifically in ritual practices, pentecostal theological convictions of the head meet throbbing feelings of the heart. Without practice there is no way to express either conviction or emotion. In principle, *orthopraxis* could refer to any type of practice, including liberating praxis in line with the way liberation theology has utilized the word,⁵⁰ although in the current study, it refers narrowly to ritualized action. My argument is that in pentecostal worship, ritualization forms a bridge between embodiment and theologizing in concrete communal-liturgical settings.

At the same time, it is not enough to say that the different aspects intersect and interact through concrete ritual practice. We must also say that in pentecostal understanding, worship is much more than congregational singing, it is a way of life. Life naturally includes all aspects—embodiment, ritualization, theologizing—and yet supersedes them all. The whole is larger than the sum. From a pentecostal perspective, life itself is a spiritual life. It is a life lived in community with Father, Son, and Spirit, and a life that cannot be separated

50 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 423–47; Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, Rev. version (London: SCM, 1988).

into compartments. Life is holistic and integrated and expressed in essential ways as *orthodoxa*, ‘right’ or ‘true’ worshipping.

In this study, the task at hand is to investigate how the ritual practice of ‘worship’ (i.e. singing and making music as part of a community’s liturgy) in Mavuno and Woodley relates to the larger picture of ‘worship’, understood as *orthodoxa*. The basic idea is that the ritual practice of worship constitutes a microcosm of pentecostal spirituality in that it connects cognitive-doctrinal aspects of pentecostal faith with affective-experiential aspects into a larger whole. And so, worship—understood at both concrete and abstract levels—in a sense sums up pentecostal spirituality-as-theology.

I have used this model to structure my ideas throughout the book, discussing in turn ritualization/practice, embodiment/affection, and theologizing/doctrine as key aspects of musical worship practices. Ultimately, I return to a discussion of the integrated whole: the sum-total of pentecostal worship in its local, contextual, and communal configuration. In line with Smith, Land, and Archer, I maintain that understanding pentecostal spirituality-as-theology calls for a theological method that integrates “knowing, being and doing.”⁵¹

In the next sections I discuss ways in which the holistic and integrative character of pentecostal spirituality presents both conceptual and methodological challenges in the theological field. If indeed “Pentecostalism represents a paradigm shift that unshackles theology from rationalistic/scientific ways of thinking ... and accords a new emphasis on the realm of human experience,”⁵² as missiologist Ogbu Kalu states, then theological research must follow suit and find ways to explore practice theologically.

2 A Practice Approach to Theology

How, then, are we to investigate concrete communal-liturgical worship practices as expressions of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology? In what way can this be researched as theology within the theological field? One of the key issues, as I see it, is to open up our conceptual understanding of what theology is and how it is done. In what follows, I argue that theology is a process as much as a product; it is *theologizing* as much as theology. Theology can take many forms, many modes, and academic theology is just one of them. An

51 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 30.

52 Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 250. Compare Clarke, ‘Call and Response: Toward an African Pentecostal Theological Method’, 35.

investigation like my own is a second-order theological reflection on first-order lived theology.⁵³

2.1 *Starting with Practice*

Understanding religion in terms of ‘practice’ and ‘practices’ is widely established in the social sciences, not least through the so called “lived religion” paradigm.⁵⁴ In the volume *Practice, Practice Theory and Theology*, edited by Kirstine Helboe Johansen and Ulla Schmidt,⁵⁵ a range of authors explore what a practice perspective may bring to the table for the theological field. Referencing Nicolini, Ulla Schmidt explains:

The novel contribution of practice theories, [Nicolini argues] is that they describe social realities and social phenomena as routinely made and remade through practices, by use of tools, bodies, discourses, actions and many more components. The social world is at the same time something which already exists and which we encounter and live in as a continuous, social reality of patterned practices, [and] something we do, make and produce anew.⁵⁶

Practice theories put practice at the centre of attention. Not only do they make ‘practice’ the basic unit of analysis, they also see the social world (including religion) as fundamentally made up of a web of interrelated practices. This points to an understanding of social realities and social life wherein materiality and embodiment take centre stage and the concrete and mundane are given sensitive thought. Practices are made up of diverse elements—bodies, tools, discourses, actions, and so on—and these are all necessary; they contribute to and produce the practice. At the same time, making practice the centre of attention also highlights the processual character of social reality,

53 An earlier version of this section has been published in Martina Prosén, ‘Pentecostal Praise and Worship as a Mode of Theology’, in *Faith in African Lived Christianity: Bridging Anthropological and Theological Perspectives*, ed. Karen Lauterbach and Mika Vähäkangas (Leiden: Brill, 2020). Published with kind permission from Brill.

54 See for example: Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

55 Kirstine Helboe Johansen and Ulla Schmidt, eds., *Practice, Practice Theory and Theology: Scandinavian and German Perspectives, De Gruyter EBook Complete*, Praktische Theologie Im Wissenschaftsdiskurs (Practical Theology in the Discourse of the Humanities), volume 28 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022).

56 Ulla Schmidt, ‘Introduction’, in *Practice, Practice Theory and Theology: Scandinavian and German Perspectives*, ed. Kirstine Helboe Johansen and Ulla Schmidt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 1.

accounting for both durability and fluidity, as well as its relational character, whereby human beings together encounter, share and produce their common world. For religion this means that beliefs and practices are fundamentally intertwined.⁵⁷ “There is no forming of beliefs, knowing of, speaking about or acting within reality that is not already embedded in preceding practical involvement with the world and other people, and thus constituted by pre-existing patterns and forms of being in the world.”⁵⁸

For practical theology this insight has resulted in a renewed interest in ‘practice’ as a theoretical concept, and concrete ‘practices’ as objects of research. The terminological distinction (and one that I utilize in this study) is that ‘practice’ (or ‘praxis’), as an uncountable noun, refers to human activity more generally—“human acting as opposed to thinking”—while ‘a practice/practices’ refer to “socially habituated patterns of activities,”⁵⁹ subsuming all sorts of activities, from eating to gardening to praying and countless others. Even human ‘thinking’ is a practice embedded in a web of other practices and must be understood accordingly. The key here is that practice entails ‘doing’. Practice, Schmidt explains, “actually means practicing”;⁶⁰ thus, practices exist only in so far as they are performed and enacted.

The insight has also led to a renewed interest in exploring the integration and interaction between beliefs, intentions and practices, as well as the material, social and embodied dimensions of faith. An ambition that concurs very much with my own. “Practices are therefore an object of practical theological research, not simply as an external expression of inner, preconceived beliefs and ideas, or as a means or ways to intended ends, but as constitutive of beliefs—indeed of religious faith and life.”⁶¹ This means that when we think about the relationship between practice/praxis and doctrine in order to map out what comes first in the life and faith of the church, historically and philosophically, then Christian practices take logical priority over more distanced forms of theology such as an academic investigation or other analytic and

57 Schmidt, ‘Introduction’; Ulla Schmidt, ‘Practice and Theology—Topic in Dialogue with History’, in *Practice, Practice Theory and Theology: Scandinavian and German Perspectives*, ed. Kirstine Helboe Johansen and Ulla Schmidt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 11–34; Ulla Schmidt, ‘Practice, Practice Theory and Theology’, in *Practice, Practice Theory and Theology: Scandinavian and German Perspectives*, ed. Kirstine Helboe Johansen and Ulla Schmidt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 35–56.

58 Schmidt, ‘Practice and Theology—Topic in Dialogue with History’, 11.

59 Schmidt, 12.

60 Schmidt, ‘Practice, Practice Theory and Theology’, 38.

61 Schmidt, ‘Practice and Theology—Topic in Dialogue with History’, 12.

doctrinal explorations. In real life, the two go hand in hand: practices affecting doctrine and doctrine affecting practices.

The ancient principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*⁶² captures this priority of practice. In words borrowed from evangelical theologian William A. Dyrness, “This priority of practice means that a person’s prayer may be a better indicator of her beliefs than her explicit statements of faith. Show me a person’s practice of prayer, and I will show you her theological convictions.”⁶³ Prayers reveal a lot about someone’s theological convictions, often more than we realize. Through practice, including the words we use, our beliefs become apparent. The reverse is also true; through continuous praxis, theological convictions are formed in us. This is especially applicable at the group level, for a church’s common theology is formed over time via its corporate life, which includes a whole range of practices: liturgical, musical, missional, and diaconal, among others. At an individual level, we may well go to church and sing and say things we do not believe, or we may understand the words we use very differently; we may even believe different things on different days. However, at a group level, the best indicator of a community’s theological convictions, of local theology, is its practice.

Explaining the close link between songs and theology, ethnomusicologist Roberta King says that in the African church, “the maxim shifts more to *lex canendi, lex credendi*: how one sings is how one believes ... What is sung becomes a people’s everyday working theology.”⁶⁴ This, I believe, could also be said of Pentecostalism, where considerable theologizing takes place in oral and communal settings, not least through musicking. As Lester Ruth has said, “Songs will form faith one way or the other.”⁶⁵ It follows that the prayers, including sung prayers, of a local church can be analysed to unpack their theologizing practice or ‘working theology’.

The relationship between prayer and doctrine is a complex one; the two intertwine and affect each other in multiple ways. Methodist theologian Don E. Saliers expresses the principle of *lex orandi* in the following way in his classic book *Worship as Theology*:

62 Literally: ‘Law of Prayer, Law of Belief.’ Translated by McGrath as “the way you pray determines what you believe” Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 222.

63 William A. Dyrness, *A Primer on Christian Worship: Where We’ve Been, Where We Are, Where We Can Go* (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 6.

64 King, ‘Bible: Lex Canendi, Lex Credendi’, 117–18.

65 Lester Ruth (2006) quoted in Tapper, *Canadian Pentecostals, the Trinity, and Contemporary Worship Music: The Things We Sing*, 3.

What we believe, acknowledge, and become by praying are deep features of what we profess about God. The human activity of listening for and addressing God shows something of what may be said and known about God. In this way the language with which we address God gives more than a hint of the shape that theological doctrine about God must take. That is, praying to God and speaking about God in relation to the affairs of the world are intimately related ... but in complex ways.⁶⁶

If indeed the way we address God gives more than a hint of the shape of theological doctrine about God, it is paramount in an investigation like my own to unpack the doctrinal content of worship songs, as well as the theologizing processes that take place as part of a church's liturgical and singing practice. One cannot be done without the other, for worship consists of both. Using the terminology of anthropologist Roy Rappaport, we can say that rituals transmit both *canonical* and *indexical* messages.⁶⁷ Glenn Packiam explains the difference:

Indexical messages are those message transmitted by the performers' body, emotions, cognitive state, and more. They fluctuate with each performance, but a message is being sent nonetheless. Canonical messages are fixed, pre-encoded messages that are highly invariant from performance to performance. In the context of congregational worship, liturgical texts and song lyrics are both examples of canonical messages. The tone of the priest's voice or the attire, physical expressiveness, or extemporaneous exhortations of the worship leader and [*sic*] are examples of indexical messages.⁶⁸

In my study this complex interrelation is reflected in an analysis of concrete liturgical practices, including the songs that are sung, looking simultaneously at ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing, yet integrating them into a larger whole.

66 Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine*, 69.

67 Glenn Packiam, 'Worship', in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Theology and Qualitative Research*, ed. Knut Tveitereid and Pete Ward (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2022), 323. Compare Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 52–58; Roy A. Rappaport, 'Obvious Aspects of Ritual', *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* vol. 2, no. 1 (1974): 3–69.

68 Packiam, 'Worship', 323.

2.2 *Researching the Lived and the Local*

However, if practices are to take priority, yet exist only in so far as they are enacted and performed, then theology needs a method that can grasp them as such. Changing the unit of analysis from ideas, language, and text to practices requires what Geir Afdal calls a “social science mode of theology.”⁶⁹ Hence, it is no coincidence that the ‘practice turn’ in theology corresponds with an ‘empirical turn’.⁷⁰

Traditionally, theology has been seen as an intellectual reflection on the nature, purposes, and activity of (the Christian) God, and a systematic study of Christian doctrine. Later on, theology developed into an academic discipline analyzing religious belief systems more generally, Christian and others.⁷¹ In both cases, theology was a text-bound activity, done by and for a well-educated male elite: the clergy and academia. The foundational sources for theological reasoning (their relative importance was, however, debated) were Scripture, tradition, reason, and human existential experience.⁷² During the latter part of the 20th century, liberation theology paved the way for a major shift in how theology is understood, including as a legitimate source of theology the experiences of the poor in their socio-political context, and insisting on praxis as both the starting point and the goal of theological reflection.⁷³ This gave rise to a whole field of discussion of contextual theology, black theology, and different forms of feminist/womanist theology, and highlighted the situatedness and particularity of all forms of theology. That also led to an opening, at least in theory, for more voices to be heard in the theological conversation, female voices as well as those of the poor and the oppressed.

I have elsewhere argued that the “charismatization”⁷⁴ of Christianity has the potential to generate a new shift in theology whereby not only the socio-political context but also the communal-spiritual experience is allowed to

69 Geir Afdal, ‘From Empirical to Impure Theology: Practice as a Strong Programme’, in *Practice, Practice Theory and Theology: Scandinavian and German Perspectives*, ed. Kirstine Helboe Johansen and Ulla Schmidt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022), 92.

70 Schmidt, ‘Practice, Practice Theory and Theology’, 35; Paul S. Fiddes, ‘Ecclesiology and Ethnography: Two Disciplines, Two Worlds?’, in *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, ed. Pete Ward (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2012).

71 McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 141–42.

72 McGrath, 181–232.

73 McGrath, 116–18.

74 Moritz Fischer, “The Spirit Helps Us in Our Weakness”: Charismatization of Worldwide Christianity and the Quest for an Appropriate Pneumatology with Focus on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania’, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no. 1 (2011): 95–121. Compare discussions in Vähäkangas and Kyomo, *Charismatic Renewal in Africa: A Challenge for African Christianity*.

count as a valid source for theologizing.⁷⁵ This widens the ‘data’ from which we create ‘theory’ in theology to include not only Scripture, tradition, reason, and socio-political contexts, but also the communal life of local churches and the spiritual experience of ordinary believers. Again, there is a potential for new voices to be heard in theology as the thoughts, experiences, faith—indeed, the theology—of lay Christians is taken into account.

In the pentecostal-charismatic tradition, theology and spirituality are intimately connected, as described above. Since its inception, pentecostal theology has been expressed in testimonies, rituals, sermons, songs, devotional literature, magazines, TV and radio programs, and in many other ways, but not until quite recently has it also been formulated in academic literature. The source material for an investigation of contemporary pentecostal theology will naturally, therefore, be different from the source material of, for example, medieval Catholicism, thus dictating a move beyond traditional exegetical, hermeneutical, and philosophical methods in academic theology. As a matter of fact, it requires theologians to start discussing issues of method, data, and theory in a whole new way, rather than just presuming that we know what we are doing and how to do it. Too much academic theological research is focused on the hands-on work of analysing and interpreting specific texts, while not many theologians ask themselves the basic methodological questions of how and why things are done in the way they are.

Things are changing, however. One example is the volume on practice theory mentioned above, another one is the anthology, *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography*, in which a range of authors discuss and exemplify how ethnographic methods can be used when studying the Christian church (universal and specific), and how data generated by such research can form the foundations of theological reasoning and reflection. Based on the idea of the church as simultaneously theological and social/cultural they argue that ecclesiology must make use of ethnographic methods in order to speak credibly and justly about it. To do so is a way to take seriously the situatedness of the church as the Body of Christ on earth.⁷⁶ In his introduction, Pete Ward says, “The turn toward the ethnographic represents a strategic intervention in Christian theology. Methods of research are never neutral ... Whatever the disciplinary field and whatever the particular point at issue, the ethnographic ‘voice’ focuses attention on the lived and the local.”⁷⁷

75 Prosén, ‘Pentecostal Praise and Worship as a Mode of Theology’.

76 Ward, ‘Introduction’, 2–5.

77 Ward, 9.

Taking the life of the church seriously is, however, not something new in theology. Neither is the use of songs or rituals as a basis for theological reflection. Some of the most important Christological texts in the New Testament—for example, Philippians 2, Hebrews 1 and Revelation 5—are doxologies that were most probably sung in the early church. No theologian would dream of dismissing them as a basis for theological reflection just because they are songs. The early church was aware of the close connection between worship and theology, as captured in the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, described above. This shows us that the life of the church and its rituals, including songs, have always been intimately connected to theology. The new element is that we now turn to contemporary songs and contemporary practices instead of the historical or biblical, and that, too, urges us to search for new methods in theology, as well as providing material for continuous reflection on the nature of theology itself.

Practical theologian Mark J. Cartledge highlights the need for theologians to take into account contemporary worship practices, noting, “practical theology should be interested in the nature, function and significance of worship among congregations, especially the relationship between narratives, symbols such as the sacraments, and praxis.”⁷⁸ I do not discuss narratives and symbols as much as praxis, but I do agree that the nature, function, and significance of worship in concrete congregations is essential for understanding pentecostal-charismatic Christianity.

Here ethnography and, indeed, other empirical methods help us focus our attention on ‘the lived and the local’ and to do so in an academically credible way. The question is whether theologians will be prepared to take up the task and enter into dialogue with the anthropologists and social scientists who so far dominate the field of pentecostal studies in Africa. I think this is a crucial issue for the future of theology itself, due to the rapid shift of focus within Christianity from the North to the South and from mainline churches to pentecostal-charismatic churches. If theology is to be relevant and plausible within the contemporary church (not only as an academic discipline), and if there is to be any connection between the way we think of the church doctrinally and how life in the local church is actually lived, then theologians need to take the challenge of the ‘ethnographic turn’ seriously, as Pete Ward and his colleagues argue.⁷⁹

78 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 114, see also Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*, Studies in Pentecostal and Charismatic Issues (Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2012).

79 Ward, ‘Introduction’, 9.

2.3 *Worship as a Modus Theologicus*

In this section thus far, I have argued that practices are suitable—indeed necessary—objects of research for theology, especially when researching Pentecostalism and pentecostal spirituality, and that the shift in focus from ideas to practice also requires a shift in methodology. In a final step I argue that the shift in method also has consequences for how we conceptualize theology itself.

According to Edward Farley, the term *theology* is “fundamentally ambiguous”⁸⁰ as it refers to things of entirely different genres. This ambiguity, he argues, is due to pre-modern understandings of theology as both a salvation-oriented knowledge of God (theology as wisdom) and a discipline, a scholarly enterprise (theology as science). When the two ways of understanding theology drifted apart, and yet the same concept continued to be used for both, the present ambiguity of the term arose.⁸¹

Another perspective is offered by Catholic theologian Robert Schreier in what he calls “a sociology of theology”⁸² which divides theology into four different types or styles. These are: (1) theology as variations on sacred text (commentaries, narratives, sermons, etc.), (2) theology as wisdom (the mystical search for knowledge of self and God), (3) theology as sure knowledge (a systematic, philosophical, and critical discipline), and (4) theology as praxis (a dialectical process of reflection and action aimed at social transformation). The strength of Schreier’s model is that it discusses the cultural and social conditions under which different types of theology thrive and does not judge any of them as being more or less sophisticated or ‘real’ theology.⁸³

Helen Cameron and her colleagues in the ARCS (Action Research Church and Society) project also propose a four-part model—the four voices of theology—implying that theology may take different forms (speak with different voices) within the same cultural and historical context. The four voices they identify are: (1) *normative theology* (Scriptures, creeds, liturgies, official church teaching), (2) *formal theology* (academic theology, theology of theologians), (3) *espoused theology* (theology embedded in a group’s articulation of its beliefs), and (4) *operant theology* (theology embedded within the practices of a group).⁸⁴ This model has much to offer theologians who work with

80 Edward Farley, ‘Theologia: The History of a Concept’, in *Readings in Christian Theology*, ed. Peter Crafts Hodgson and Robert Harlen King (London: SPCK, 1985), 1.

81 Farley, 1–3.

82 Schreier, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 80.

83 Schreier, 80–93.

84 Helen Cameron et al., *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2010), 53–56.

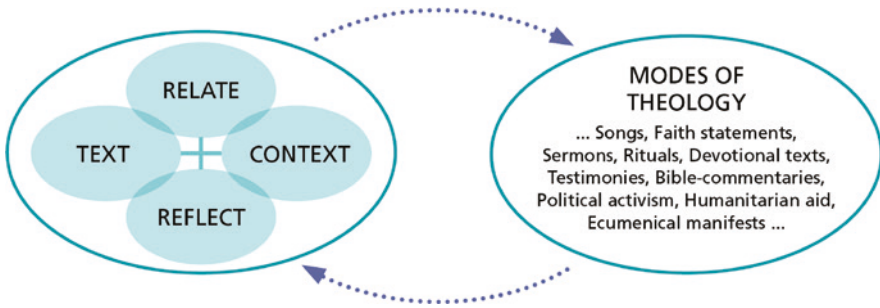


FIGURE 2 Theology as process

empirical research methods as it presents theology as “properly complex,”⁸⁵ neither discounting any of the four voices, nor seeing them as unrelated and independent of each other. This allows us simultaneously to read theology in the everyday activities of any faith community, as well as their official teachings, their sermons, and their narratives, while at the same time acknowledging the academic discipline of theology as something distinct and yet related.

Theology thus has at least two levels, the constructive and the analytical, and may take at least four different formats. But how do the different levels and forms relate, and how does constructive theologizing happen in the first place?

For me it is fruitful to look at constructive theologizing as an ongoing process of interaction between text and context and between relating and reflecting. This process of interaction generates a whole range of different forms or modes of theology, all with their specific emphases, and takes place wherever Christian faith is lived, expressed, and reflected upon. The model seeks to acknowledge the communal-spiritual experiences of believers as sources of theology and to delineate theology itself as a multi-modal and interactive process.⁸⁶

To explain the model in Figure 2, I briefly switch to the voice of an insider-pentecostal theologian. The model has two axes and starts with the vertical one, with the self-revealing God, who is in himself relational and seeks to *relate* to his creation. He reveals himself to humanity through nature, history, human personality, and Scripture, but most of all through his Son, Jesus Christ. Responding to God’s self-revelation, humans seek God and start to live in a personal relationship with him. Through the Holy Spirit they are born again,

85 Cameron et al., 53.

86 See further discussion in Prosen, ‘Pentecostal Praise and Worship as a Mode of Theology’.

filled with his love and power, and by baptism taken into his Church, the Body of Christ. Living now in this new state, they start to *reflect* on who God is and what implications that has for them as human beings and as an ecclesial community. This deepens their faith and understanding as well as their relationship with God and with each other. And thus, it goes on, in a continuous move back and forth between relating and reflecting, and this, I would say, is the embryo of all Christian theology.

More explicit forms of theology arise when the first axis is combined with a second, namely, that of *text* and *context*. For as God revealed himself to humanity, he did so through the Word, Christ, and the written word that bears witness of him. Therefore words—that is, texts—are central to Christian theologizing, both as sources and as expressions of theology; however, no text can be read and understood apart from its context and no text can be made relevant for new readers unless it also relates to their context. Therefore, it is part of theology's task to reflect on the various contexts of biblical texts, as well as on the many texts and contexts of the church, both historical and contemporary. Then a new cycle begins, in which the text is understood from its own context, as well as from the context of the contemporary church. At the same time, the text is allowed to speak in and to our current context, to correct and challenge our way of life.

In my understanding, this ongoing interaction between relating to God and fellow humans, and reflecting on those relationships in the light of both text and context, generates a whole range of different expressions that may all be seen as valid *modes of theology*. Examples include philosophical or devotional texts, oral testimonies, songs, sermons, ecumenical manifests, church statutes, ethical guidelines, creeds, catechisms, political activism, humanitarian work, liturgies, and many other forms of expression. While belonging to different genres, they may still be regarded as outcomes of a communal, creative, and constructive theology-making process. Even the biblical texts are in some sense the result of such theologizing processes. Paraphrasing the well-established term *loci theologici* (theological topics or content categories), I propose that the above examples and many other theological expressions may be viewed as different *modi theologici* (theological modes) in their own right, enabling us to build a theoretical frame for investigating them as theology (and not, for example, as folk belief or religious practices). Thus, first-order theologizing can become an object of study for second-order academic theological investigation. Figure 3 illustrates what this looks like when combined with Cameron's model of the four voices of theology, referred to above.

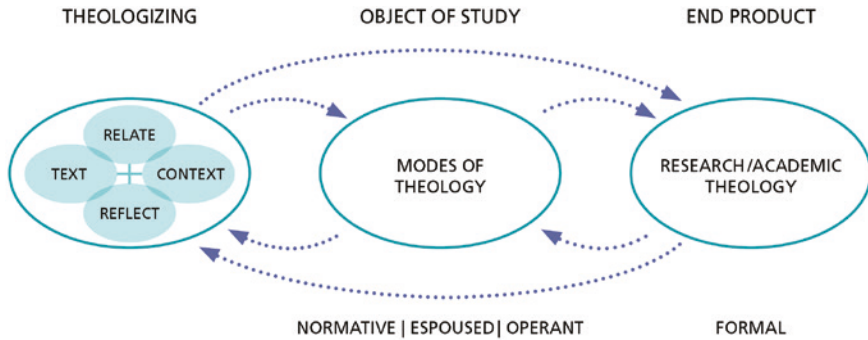


FIGURE 3 First and second-order theology in relation to theologizing as process

This ties into the discussion that started off this section. Viewing theology as *theologizing* (as practice) has methodological consequences, for if theology is processual and interactive and creatively expressed in many different modes, then theology as a discipline (theological research) must work accordingly, finding the most suitable method to examine the theological mode under study.

I conclude that pentecostal worship, as communal-spiritual practice, is a *modus theologicus* comparable to other forms, and therefore suitable for critical theological examination using appropriate methods for data collection and analysis. The spirituality approach to Pentecostalism very naturally leads to a practice approach to theology, forming a theoretical basis for utilizing empirical methods in research.

3 A Ritual Approach to Worship

Before moving into a concrete description of method and research design in the next chapter, an exploration of one more step of theory is required, namely, the ritual approach to worship. For, in this study, it is not pentecostal practice in general, but ritual practice that is the focal point, and even more specifically, the ritual practice of worship as manifested in ‘the rite of worship and praise’. In this section I argue that a ritual approach to the study of pentecostal spirituality is both fruitful and valid as it sensitizes us to aspects of ritualization and embodiment that are central to the tradition. Taking a close look at performance and practice levels of worship, as well sensory and affective dimensions, in conjunction with theological and doctrinal aspects, takes us closer to answering the research questions that guides this study.

3.1 *The Lacuna in Pentecostal Studies*

Ritual—in the sense of ‘fixed’ liturgy, symbolic actions, and sacred language—might not be the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. Rather, Pentecostals are well known for their spontaneous prayers, vibrant music and the absence of traditional Christian symbols and ritual paraphernalia in their churches. On the surface, it might look as if Pentecostals do not have a liturgy and do not engage in rituals. At least, this has frequently been part of the self-perception of Pentecostals. For Pentecostals, the words ‘ritual’ or ‘liturgy’ have had a negative ring to them.⁸⁷

On digging deeper, however, it becomes apparent that ritual is actually at the centre of pentecostal spirituality; it is one of the movement’s “obvious aspects”,⁸⁸ as anthropologist Joel Robbins has convincingly argued. Pentecostal believers engage in ritual whenever and wherever they meet. They pray (together and alone, short and long, night and day), sing worship songs, listen to worship music, participate in a choir, meet in cell groups, and put Bible verses on their walls.⁸⁹ All of these practices can be seen as ritual acts, although having more of a performative, non-formalized nature than a fixed, written and liturgical one.⁹⁰

Connecting ritual to the global spread of Pentecostalism and its institution-building capacity, Robbins says, “It is ... Pentecostalism’s promotion of ritual to the centre of social life that has allowed it to travel so well and to build institutions so effectively, even in socially harsh environments.”⁹¹ Drawing on Randall Collins’s theory of interaction ritual chains,⁹² Robbins argues that it is the pentecostal mastery of ritual production, not pentecostal doctrine, that makes church institutions work and Pentecostalism spread. Through chains of

87 Lindhardt, ‘Introduction’; Mark J. Cartledge and A.J. Swoboda, ‘Introduction’, in *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A.J. Swoboda (London: New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2019).

88 Robbins, ‘The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalization’. The expression was coined by Rappaport, ‘Obvious Aspects of Ritual’.

89 For a close description of pentecostal everyday ritual life, see Jessica Moberg, *Piety, Intimacy and Mobility: A Case Study of Charismatic Christianity in Present-Day Stockholm*, Södertörn Doctoral Dissertations (Huddinge: Södertörns Högskola, 2013), 75–124.

90 Compare the typological difference between performance-centred and liturgy-centred rituals suggested in Caroline Humphrey and James Alexander Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual: A Theory of Ritual Illustrated by the Jain Rite of Worship*, Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 6–12.

91 Robbins, ‘The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalization’.

92 Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Princeton Studies in Cultural Sociology (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

successful interaction rituals, a high quantity of positive emotional energy is produced in pentecostal churches and the desire and the search for more keep people involved long before they are convinced, or even aware, of the content of pentecostal faith.

Moreover, the comparatively simple frames—sometimes referred to as “portable practices”⁹³—used in pentecostal rituals are easy to learn across cultures and create a sense of global belonging through shared bodily styles. The argument suggests “not only that we should study ritual, but that we should explore making it central to our approach to Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity.”⁹⁴ This has not been done sufficiently in the past, Robbins says. In fact, despite the abundance of studies on pentecostal-charismatic Christianity, the scarcity of detailed studies of pentecostal ritual is the “greatest lacuna in the work done so far.”⁹⁵ There are notable exceptions, though, as the following discussion demonstrates.

The most referenced study in pentecostal studies that applies ritual theory to pentecostal spirituality is *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality* by pentecostal theologian Daniel Albrecht. His now classic study draws on data collected through ethnographic fieldwork in three pentecostal (classic and neo-charismatic type) congregations in Northern California over the course of more than two years.⁹⁶ In explaining his choice of ritual theory as a lens, Albrecht notes that “authentic ritual expressions are not peripheral actions for Pentecostals but represent fundamental elements of an authentic Pentecostal spirituality. Thus, to study Pentecostal rites with the best approach possible promises access to experience that is primary to Pent/Char spirituality.”⁹⁷ Given that ritual action is integral to pentecostal spirituality and constitutes an “efficacious dynamic”⁹⁸ within it, he concludes that a ritual approach may serve as an important lens and make pentecostal spirituality more understandable and accessible.

Other theologians have worked in a similar vein. Mark Cartledge analyses a classical pentecostal church in England using ritual theory as one of his theoretical lenses,⁹⁹ and Samuel W. Muindi discusses ritual and spirituality in an

93 Thomas J. Csordas, ‘Introduction: Modalities of Transnational Transcendence’, *Anthropological Theory* 7, no. 3 (2007): 261, see also Lindhardt, ‘Introduction’, and Cartledge and Swoboda, ‘Introduction’.

94 Robbins, ‘The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalization’, 65.

95 Joel Robbins (2004), quoted in Lindhardt, ‘Introduction’, 1.

96 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 13–16.

97 Albrecht, 14.

98 Albrecht, 14.

99 Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, 39–43.

African-independent denomination in Kenya.¹⁰⁰ Both underline the importance of a ritual perspective to understanding pentecostal spirituality, but before presenting further studies on the theme of ritual and pentecostal spirituality, ritual theory must be introduced.

3.2 *Perspectives in Ritual Theory*

Within ritual theory there are several different approaches, all with their specific perspectives onto the subject; structuralist, functionalist, symbolist, and linguistic, to mention a few.¹⁰¹ Those that come closest to what I do in this study are practice and performance perspectives in ritual theory. Both take seriously the fact that ritual action is action (and not primarily, for example, language or symbol) and that acting individuals are “bodies and not just minds”.¹⁰² Both perspectives are concerned with what ritual does—as opposed to trying to decipher what it means—although on different levels. While a practice perspective is interested in cultural activity in general and studies ritual as a creative strategy for shaping and reshaping social and cultural environments, a performance perspective focuses on specific types of ritual acts and attempts to describe them in detail, often concentrating on their physical, sensual, processual, and dramatic aspects.¹⁰³ The latter perspective is often associated with Ronald Grimes, who is also the theorist to whom I am most indebted in my analysis. His way of asking basic questions of ritual¹⁰⁴—who, when, what, how—as well as his reflexive and imaginative way of writing have inspired me in countless ways.

To Grimes, performance is “inevitable” for “whenever ritualists (‘people who engage in ritual’) enact (‘put into force’), they also perform (‘show what they are doing’).¹⁰⁵ In this way, rituals are similar to theatre and other performing arts, a comparison Grimes frequently makes. He continues, “Although practitioners may not label what they do as either art or performance, they attend to the *how*, the art or technique of their activities.”¹⁰⁶ The word ‘perform’ is etymologically derived from the Latin words *per* ‘through’ and *forma* ‘form’.¹⁰⁷

100 Muindi, ‘Ritual and Spirituality in Kenyan Pentecostalism’.

101 See for example Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), where the different theories are presented and discussed. See also Anne-Christine Hornborg, *Ritualer: Teorier och Tillämpning* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2005).

102 Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 76.

103 Bell, 73–76.

104 See for example Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 207–8.

105 Grimes, ‘Performance’, 381.

106 Grimes, 380. Emphasis added.

107 Grimes, 381.

The form of a specific ritual may be implicitly or explicitly stipulated, regulated loosely or strictly, but all rituals have a form that can be observed by the senses. They are ‘performances’. It is this formal, surface level of worship that is the focus of Chapter 5, while Chapter 6 deals with embodiment and affection (see below).

However, the word ‘performance’ might be misunderstood when used in the context of worship. I do not mean to say that worship is ‘just a performance’, as if questioning its authenticity and value by calling it ‘mere entertainment’. Worship is not an artistic performance, but in many ways it resembles one; it is produced and designed in a well-thought-out way, it is sometimes highly entertaining, it gives people something to look at, it requires space and time, it involves some people performing in front of others, and it includes music and singing, to mention a few similarities.¹⁰⁸ There are differences as well, perhaps the most important one being the difference between an audience and a congregation. The congregation participates in a ritual, while an audience is primarily there to watch and listen. As Rappaport says, “[The audience] is present for the performance, but is not part of it.”¹⁰⁹ At the same time he notes that at modern day performances, notably rock concerts, there seems to be a transformation of audiences into, or in the direction of, congregations, with the active participation of those gathered becoming part of the performance itself.¹¹⁰ In charismatic worship, a reverse move often takes place as music is professionalized and services streamlined into productions. To mark this ambiguity, I sometimes speak of the gathered congregation as ‘audience’. In charismatic Christianity in general, lines are often blurred between artistic and ritual performances and one affects the other.¹¹¹ There are some clues to framing an event as either/or, but there are also important and interesting overlaps.

Taking a performance perspective on ritual is a way of focusing my investigation on the fine details and allowing the specific, empirical, ecclesial reality to play centre stage. Grimes calls this an “elemental analysis”, one

108 See discussion in Grimes, ‘Performance’; Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 211–12.

109 Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 135.

110 Rappaport, 137.

111 See discussion in Andreas Häger, ‘Christian Rock Concerts as a Meeting between Religion and Popular Culture’, in *Ritualistics: Based on Papers Read at the Symposium on Ritualistics Held at Åbo, Finland, on the July 31-August 2, 2002*, ed. Tore Ahlbäck and Björn Dahla (Åbo and Stockholm: Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History; Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003); Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*, 39–71; Pete Ward, *Selling Worship: How What We Sing Has Changed the Church* (Paternoster Press, 2005).

that disassembles the “designed assemblage”¹¹² that ritual constitutes. This is important as it helps the scholar resist oversimplification in order to account for the complexity of ritual action.¹¹³

What then do we mean with the word ‘ritual’? What exactly are we talking about here? There are numerous debates within ritual theory about the definition of ritual, and I do not intend to iterate them all. A good overview is given by Grimes in *The Craft of Ritual Studies*.¹¹⁴ He says that it is first of all important to understand that the concept of ‘ritual’ is context-bound, and that a student of ritual must learn to know the language game of both the field and the academy. A ritual might not be called ‘ritual’ by the people involved, but it can nevertheless be understood and analysed as such by a scholar, as long as he or she knows the difference.¹¹⁵

The first definition of *ritual* to which I want to draw attention is that of Roy Rappaport. Although it has been criticized for being too stiff and not allowing for ritual change and development,¹¹⁶ it nevertheless captures something important about what ritual is. He defines it as “the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers”.¹¹⁷ We may note from this definition that ritual has to do with both actions and words, which come in a specific order and follow a certain pattern. Sequencing and repetition is thus important, together with a combination of people, language, and action, and the analytic chapters present numerous examples of all these features. We may also note that it is part and parcel of ritual that it is performed and yet not completely verbalized or coded by practitioners. Thinking of the pentecostal aversion to calling their worship ‘ritual’, one could assume that this has to do, at least in part, with a sense in which the mystery of worship disappears or diminishes when the ritual is encoded in words and its acts and utterances are put on display as if they were mere human endeavours. While refusing to reduce worship to its elements, I nevertheless think there is a point in trying to encode it for the purpose of academic research. This does not take away the possibility of God’s acting within the ritual, or of ritual having more layers than an observer or

112 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 232–34.

113 Grimes, 234.

114 Grimes, 185–210; see also Jan A.M. Snoek, ‘Defining “Rituals”’, in *Theorizing Rituals: Classical Topics, Theoretical Approaches, Analytical Concepts*, ed. Jens Kreinath, Joannes A. Maria Snoek, and Michael Stausberg (Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill, 2008).

115 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 186–87.

116 Grimes, 189.

117 Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, 24.

participant can grasp, meaning that, theologically speaking, it maintains its mystery.

However, trying to capture what 'ritual' means using a tight definition might actually be less fruitful than taking a broader stance. Ritual theorist Catherine Bell suggests a practice-oriented approach, wherein finding a universal definition of ritual is less important than seeing how actions are ritualized in any given context. She says, "Clearly, ritual is not the same thing everywhere; it can vary in every feature. As practice, the most we can say is that it involves ritualization, that is, a way of acting that distinguishes itself from other ways of acting in the very way it does what it does; moreover, it makes this distinction for specific purposes."¹¹⁸ This means that analysing pentecostal praise and worship from a ritual perspective involves paying attention to the way things are done, how actions are ritualized in this specific context and why. And this, in turn, involves paying attention to bodies and how bodies move in space according to learned schemes and strategies. Bell adds, "The most subtle and central quality of those actions we tend to call ritual is the primacy of the body moving about within a specially constructed space, simultaneously defining (imposing) and experiencing (receiving) the values ordering the environment."¹¹⁹ Charismatic worship has its own set of embodied practices, and analysing them in detail helps us see how congregants simultaneously shape and are shaped by pentecostal values. As this book progresses, it will become evident how much ritualization and embodiment is involved in praise and worship.

Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw also point out the importance of ritualization for understanding ritual action, which, to them, is characterized by being non-intentional, stipulated, and archetypal. By this they mean that the intentions of an individual performing a ritual are not the key to understanding the identity of her action, which is, rather, fixed by prior stipulation, follows certain rules, and appears to come from outside of herself.¹²⁰ At the same time, this does not exclude a person's own intentions, in the sense that she is still conscious and aware of what she is doing and can reflect on it. Hence, "it is important not to describe ritual as if the person performing it becomes an automaton or unaware", rather, they "remain human agents."¹²¹ This dual approach is important to remember in relation to praise and worship;

118 Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 81.

119 Bell, 82.

120 James Laidlaw and Caroline Humphrey, 'Action', in *Theorizing Rituals: Classical Topics, Theoretical Approaches, Analytical Concepts*, ed. Jens Kreinath, Joannes A. Maria Snoek, and Michael Stausberg (Leiden and Boston: Koninklijke Brill, 2008), 276–79.

121 Laidlaw and Humphrey, 279.

congregants' actions can only be understood with reference to the ecclesial, cultural, and theological framework in which they take place. Nonetheless, congregants are human beings, and their own individual reflections and intentions should not be overlooked.

A fourth perspective on ritual and ritualization is offered by Ronald Grimes, who lists a number of characteristics that ritual acts share with each other, which he suggests we use in order to quantify the extent to which an event is ritualized—the *degree of ritualization*—rather than debating the binary options of whether something is ritual or not.¹²² Listing characteristics of ritual is “a way of circumventing formal definitions by appealing to a ‘family resemblance’ or ‘fuzzy set’ theory.”¹²³ No specific case of ritual manifests all characteristics, but all events that we identify as ritual have at least several of them to some degree. According to Grimes, actions can become ritualized by:

- traditionalizing them, for instance, by claiming that they originated a long time ago;
- elevating them by associating them with sacredly held values;
- repeating them—over and over, in the same way;
- singularizing them, that is, offering them as rare or even one-time events;
- prescribing their details, so they are performed in the proper way;
- stylizing them, so they are carried out with flare;
- entering into them with non-ordinary attitude, or in a special state of mind;
- invoking powers to whom respect or reverence is due;
- attributing them special power or influence;
- situating them in special places and/or times;
- being performed by specially qualified persons.¹²⁴

Thinking of charismatic worship as it is practiced in my two case churches, I find it attractive to be able to embrace a broad spectrum of criteria to describe the degree of ritualization and the unique mix of characteristics that charismatic ritual displays in these particular settings. Rather than debating whether it is indeed (theologically or analytically) correct to call worship a ritual, we

122 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 193–94. Compare Ronald Grimes L., *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990). His original list included sixteen items, and was more or less a summary of what other people defined as ritual. He has since recast the list so it mirrors his own views better, and it now includes eleven items.

123 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 194. Compare Jan Snoek's discussion on “fuzzy sets” and “polythetic classes” in Snoek, ‘Defining’ rituals’.

124 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 194. This list includes all eleven items, but explanation is slightly abbreviated.

may investigate in what way and to what extent it is ritualized. I return to this list in Chapter 5's conclusion in order to summarize the ways in which worship is ritualized in the contexts under discussion.

A note on terminology is in order. Following Grimes I use 'ritual' as a mid-level unit from which one can shift attention "to either small-scale micro units (elements) or large-scale macro units (traditions or systems)."¹²⁵ And although Grimes uses 'element' to denote both time units (phases) and other categories, such as actors, actions and languages, I prefer to use the word 'rite' for phases/sequences, following Albrecht (see below), and retain 'element' for other aspects—or constituent parts—of the ritual.¹²⁶ Following both Grimes and Albrecht I occasionally use the term 'ritualists' to denote participants in ritual, especially in cases where I want to refer to both congregants and leaders together.

In the Interlude the reader will be presented with two detailed narratives: descriptions of specific Sunday services in Woodley and Mavuno, respectively, focusing on the role of music and singing within the liturgy. Both are attempts to paint a careful picture of the audio-visual-emotional landscape—"the ritual field"¹²⁷—that charismatic worship constitutes, and to invite the reader to come alongside me in observing it. The analysis in this book builds on the whole of my collected data, although I often exemplify by referring to these two ethnographic vignettes. I regard these descriptions as important documentation of actual church settings, and have done my best in both gathering and presenting the data in a fair and detailed way. At the same time, the descriptions are evidently my own narrations: based on my observations, written from my perspective, and with my research interests in mind. I have underlined this fact by including notes of a reflexive character in the descriptions—again, inspired by Grimes, who says "theorizing, like ritualizing, is a personal, bodily action."¹²⁸

125 Grimes, 232.

126 However, unlike Grimes, I will not try to uphold a division of labour between, on the one hand, 'rite'/'a ritual' for the specific, concrete enactments, and, on the other, 'ritual' as the general or abstract idea of which a rite is a specific instance, as I find this almost impossible to do in practice. Grimes, 192–93.

127 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 122. Compare Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, 39–43; Ronald L. Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, 3. ed. (Ritual Studies International, 2013), 10.

128 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 334.

3.3 *Embodiment and the Study of Pentecostal Ritual*

Since the inception of ritual studies in the 1970s scholars have continued to draw attention to the physicality and bodiliness of ritual. According to Ronald Grimes, bodies are methodologically primary to ritual studies, for it is only as embodied human activity that ritual can be studied. If there is no human body acting, or deliberately refraining from acting, there is no ritual. The researcher therefore does well to start by observing ritual action, using his or her own body and senses as an instrument.¹²⁹ In his definition of ritual Grimes says:

Ritual is *embodied*. An obvious feature of ritual is that it is a human activity. People do it, and they do it in overt, bodily ways. Because it is in and of bodies, ritual is also cultural, since bodies are enculturated. Ritual is not only in the mind, or the imagination, even though it can be both mindful and imaginative. If an action is purely mental, it is not ritual even though mental processes clearly underlie ritual action.¹³⁰

To Grimes, ritual is by definition embodied. While mental processes underlie ritual action, they do not constitute it, neither do ritual scripts nor sacred texts. Ritual, inasmuch as it can become the object of study, is embodied human action and, as such, it is also connected to culture and enculturation. Note that Grimes prefers the plural 'bodies' to the singular 'the body', since the latter is an abstraction that too easily serves individualism and mind-body-dualism, while the former reminds us of the social and concrete reality. "Whereas bodies, mine and yours, are tangible and distinct ... 'the' body belongs to no one."¹³¹ As a core analytic theme, embodiment thus reminds us to pay attention to concrete individual bodies acting in time and space, as well as linking them to the collective social body: group, society or culture.

Practice perspectives in ritual theory (briefly introduced above), have emphasized this latter aspect. Here ritual is regarded as one of the primary ways in which cultural meanings come to be taken for granted in a group. Pierre Bourdieu's theory on *habitus* explains how societies reproduce their values in individuals, to the point where these values and beliefs come to seem natural and obvious. This process of 'habituation' or socialization takes place from birth and continues throughout life, not just in ritual. Nevertheless, because of the way ritual repeatedly places bodies in prescribed positions, thereby evoking associated feelings and states of mind, it is especially powerful in creating

129 Grimes, 44–45, 194–97, 242–48, 306–7.

130 Grimes, 195. Emphasis in original.

131 Grimes, 307.

the mental structures and dispositions known as *habitus*. To Bourdieu, bodily space is seamlessly integrated into social and cosmic space through ritual.¹³² Grimes, however, is critical of the way Bourdieu seems to imply that people ritualize without thinking, as if ritualization and habituation were one and the same thing. In an attempt to separate the two processes analytically he says, "Habituation is a sociobiological process that begins at, or even before, birth and is carried out automatically, much as one breathes. Habituation happens. Ritual, on the other hand, happens deliberately, at least partly by design. Someone or, more typically, some group constructs it, even if they later forget or obscure this fact."¹³³

There is an element of design, construction, re-construction and creativity in ritual that is not there in habituation. People who engage in ritual can think both critically and analytically about what they are doing. They can 'practice' their ritual as one would practice a musical performance or sport, and evaluate the result. At the same time, ritual can be 'practice' also in the theoretical sense of "actions repeated for the sake of deepening a ritual's permeation of body and psyche,"¹³⁴ actions that sometimes become so habitual that their constructed nature and constitutive force are rendered invisible.¹³⁵

Closely related to the embodiment perspective is a focus on the senses: how does the ritual mobilize the senses? In what way is the ritualist attuned to or disattuned from his or her senses? What sensory information is deemed important/unimportant? Since all human experience is mediated by the senses, there is no way to speak of what people experience in ritual without also discussing the role of sensory information and how to go about researching them.

The embodied and multisensory character of ritual has methodological consequences in ritual studies, leading to a prevalence of fieldwork methods.

Ritual studies is rooted in the senses. For both good and ill, it tends to start with the visible and audible appearance of bodies in motion enacting meanings in social contexts. The discipline of ritual studies is enhanced by field methods because a ritual can be more fully understood by asking

132 Grimes, 244–45. 'Habituation' is Grimes's expression, not Bourdieu's, although Grimes reads Bourdieu as having a processual understanding of *habitus*. Compare Jessica Moberg, who attributes this expression to Saba Mahmood, reiterating her critique of Bourdieu's much-too-static understanding of *habitus*. See discussion in Moberg, *Piety, Intimacy and Mobility: A Case Study of Charismatic Christianity in Present-Day Stockholm*, 36.

133 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 246.

134 Grimes, 245.

135 Grimes, 245–46, 342.

participants questions, listening to their responses, participating alongside them, observing their interactions, audio-visually documenting their rituals, and receiving what they offer as gifts or critique.¹³⁶

Fieldwork, combining participant observation, interviews, and audio-visual documentation, is a much better way for a researcher to grasp the deep layers of ritual and what it means for participants than examining a liturgical text or interview alone.

Although Christianity has periodically railed against the senses, it has also ritually utilized them, especially audition—hearing—which has been valued almost unequivocally in Christian liturgy across the spectrum; the use of sight, taste, smell, and touch is more debated and has met with suspicion in some traditions.¹³⁷ However, the role of the body and senses is sometimes overlooked in general theological elaborations on Christian liturgy. For example, in the classic *Introduction to Christian Worship* by liturgical historian James F. White, which explores and thematizes different aspects of Christian worship and liturgy across the denominational board, only a few scattered paragraphs take an embodiment or sensory approach to worship, and none of them under a subheading of its own.¹³⁸

Yet, as Chapter 6 demonstrates, charismatic worship is replete with sensory stimuli, engaging participants' senses in several ways at the same time. It is also thoroughly embodied, involving the whole body in singing, dancing, praying, interacting, and responding. This has led scholars interested in pentecostal ritual and spirituality, both social scientists and theologians, to place particular focus on its embodied, sensory, and affective character.

Pentecostal theologian Steven J. Land's study, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, has already been mentioned as a major theoretical influence in this current work. Land builds his understanding of the affections on the work of Methodist theologian Theodore Runyon, who sees 'orthopathy' as providing the necessary link between 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxy' in John Wesley's theology.¹³⁹ To Runyon, 'orthopathy' is "religious experience as an event of knowing between

136 Grimes, 78.

137 Grimes, 247.

138 White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 32, 78, 89–90, 115–16.

139 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 32–33. A similar discussion can be found in Gregory S. Clapper, 'Orthokardia: John Wesley's Grammar of the Holy Spirit', in *The Spirit, the Affections, and the Christian Tradition*, ed. Dale M. Coulter and Amos Yong (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 259–78. Clapper states that Runyon in fact has based this understanding of John Wesley and 'orthopathy' on his own concept 'orthokardia', developed in his 1985 PhD thesis, later published as *John Wesley on*

the Divine Source and human participant.”¹⁴⁰ Land develops the concept further, showing how pentecostal spirituality is heavily indebted to the Wesleyan Holiness tradition and yet has its own flavor and energy. According to him, ‘orthopathy’ is the “personal integrating center of orthodoxy and orthopraxy” and refers to “the affections which motivate the heart and characterize the believer.”¹⁴¹ These affections are not fugitive feelings or moods, but are stable in a person over time and, although personal, they are shaped and determined by the biblical story in a communal, historical setting. He states,

Love in particular and Christian affections in general are not passing feelings or sensate episodes. Affections are abiding dispositions which dispose the person toward God and the neighbor in ways appropriate to their source and goal in God. Feelings are important but they come and go, are mixed, and of varying degrees of intensity. Moods too are variable, but affections characterize a person.¹⁴²

According to Land, affections are shaped and expressed through fellowship, especially prayer. Corporate and individual prayers, including songs, in conjunction with the preaching of the Word and other communal activities, form an individual in fundamental ways, even to the point where she can be said to be characterized by certain affections. This is a process that includes fellowship within the church family, but most of all fellowship with the Spirit of God. In Land’s case, studying the early pentecostal movement in the U.S., he identifies gratitude, compassion, and courage as important affections shaped by the Spirit-human community.¹⁴³ But most important is love or passion: “The heart of Pentecostal spirituality is love. A passion for the kingdom is a passion for the king.”¹⁴⁴

The centrality of love for pentecostal theology has been developed further by Amos Yong who underlines that the encounter with the Spirit can be understood as an experience whereby “God is perceived to break through into the very depths of the human domain and awaken people’s affections.”¹⁴⁵ This

Religious Affections: His Views on Experience and Emotion and Their Role in the Christian Life and Theology; see page 274, fn 1.

140 Theodore Runyon quoted in Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 32.

141 Land, 33–34.

142 Land, 132.

143 Land, 163–80.

144 Land, 175.

145 Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 55.

is a deep and holistic experience, involving the whole person. He continues, “Thus Pentecostals meet God not merely as rational creatures but as embodied, feeling and desiring ones.”¹⁴⁶ Pentecostal spirituality is one of love and desire. Prayer, and especially glossolalic prayer, is described as expressing the individual’s existential longing for God, while praise and worship expresses the corporate desire of the church. Yong says,

If prayer manifests the affections of the human heart in longing for their Creator, then praise and worship unfolds the congregational or corporate affections of the church, understood according to the New Testament metaphor as ‘the bride of Christ,’ for their groom. ... praise and worship articulates a desiring heart in response to the reception of divine love.¹⁴⁷

These affective dimensions of worship are thus in line with the Wesleyan Holiness heritage of pentecostal spirituality, as presented by Land, where God’s love and love for God plays a central role.¹⁴⁸ Music and singing expresses and manifests a corporate longing and desire for God, and at the same time mediates divine love through the Holy Spirit to the congregation.¹⁴⁹ From a theological perspective, understood as an ideal type, pentecostal worship is affective and affectionate. It mediates an intimate and emotional relationship of love that is at the same time communal and personal. In practice, of course, people can experience worship in a range of ways, and it is part of the task of the current study to investigate this in concrete contexts.

Daniel Albrecht has worked in a similar vein when analysing contemporary pentecostal-charismatic ritual. If Land is interested in the affections characterizing an individual, Albrecht is more concerned with the community and what embodied attitudes are at play in the liturgy. Instead of speaking of ‘the affections’ as Land does, Albrecht prefers the term ‘modes of ritual sensibility’ (borrowed from Ronald Grimes), although he sees the two as overlapping.¹⁵⁰ Modes of ritual sensibilities are the embodied attitudes with which the participants “perform and experience the ritual”¹⁵¹ and, as such, they “help orient and

146 Yong, 55.

147 Yong, 53.

148 See also discussion in Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*. On holiness heritage, page 59–74, and on Land, page 76–80.

149 Compare Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*.

150 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 177–78.

151 Albrecht, 179.

animate"¹⁵² each of the rites, actions and acts included in the liturgy. Albrecht argues that it is impossible to yield a proper understanding of pentecostal ritual without probing into the embodied attitudes with which rites are performed. Even though pentecostal rites do maintain a structure, a structural analysis alone will not suffice, since it is the sensibilities that give pentecostal ritual its vitality and authenticity.¹⁵³ As he writes, "By 'sensibility' I mean an embodied attitude that is the result of abilities to feel or perceive, as in a receptiveness to impression or an affective responsiveness toward something. Ritual sensibilities both orient and animate a spirituality's beliefs and practices."¹⁵⁴

Thus sensibility has to do with both perception and feelings—with both sensory receptivity and affective responsiveness—and these abilities are understood as connected to the body in fundamental ways, so as to form 'an embodied attitude'. In line with Hollenweger's views of pentecostal spirituality as one bridging the mind/body divide (see Introduction), Albrecht looks at ritual sensibilities as the combination of body ('embodied') and mind ('attitude'). There is also considerable overlap with the way anthropologists and religious studies scholars describe charismatic ritual in terms of 'somatic modes of attention' and 'metakinesis', a discussion to which we now turn.

In the Introduction I referred to the anthropologist Thomas Csordas as a nestor in the study of pentecostal-charismatic ritual, and many other scholars have taken up his formulations, especially his term 'somatic modes of attention'. He coined it as a way to speak of the interrelation between collective practice (as per Bourdieu) and perceptual consciousness (as per Merleau-Ponty), between the social, enculturated body and the individual, perceiving one. Csordas defines the concept thus:

Somatic modes of attention are culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others. ... To attend to a bodily sensation is not to attend to the body as an isolated object, but to attend to the body's situation in the world. ... Attention *to* a bodily sensation can thus become a mode of attending to the intersubjective milieu that give rise to that sensation. Thus, one is paying attention *with* one's body.¹⁵⁵

152 Albrecht, 177.

153 Albrecht, 194.

154 Albrecht, 177, fn. 1.

155 Csordas, 'Somatic Modes of Attention', 138. Emphasis in original.

The point is that there are ways in which human beings experience their social world through bodily sensation, and these ways are culturally constituted. Some of the examples he gives of this embodied subjective/intersubjective process are taken from the charismatic milieu. He describes how a person, upon praying for someone else, may experience 'anointing' as a feeling of heaviness, lightness, or heat (among other things). Or the intercessor may receive 'a word of knowledge', through, for example, sensing a similar pain as the person being prayed for.

In his study of the Toronto Blessing, Dagfinn Ulland borrows the term from Csordas and uses it to describe what happens in worship, what he calls 'the warming-up sequence' of charismatic ritual.

During the warming-up sequence in the meetings, the ritual actions, the singing and music, the bodily movements and the repetitive verbal elements prepare the people and surround them with a receiving atmosphere. Here the body is engaged in a somatic mode of attention. These experiences are learned and stored and can be activated in a later ritual context. The intense bodily engagement in worship and surrender can also be interpreted as sacramental actions of love to God.¹⁵⁶

Several things are important here: first, the basic observation that in pentecostal-charismatic corporate worship there is a simultaneous combination of ritual action, singing and music, bodily movements and repetitive verbal elements that together create a 'receiving atmosphere'. This observation is so obvious that it may seem almost superfluous to anyone familiar with this type of Christianity. Second, these experiences are learned, or at least the interpretation of them is culturally specific. Third, the bodily engagement in worship is a form of sacramental action.

The first observation corresponds to Joel Robbins' argument that mutual ritual performance is the reason behind Pentecostalism's globalizing and institution-building capacity, referred to above. To argue his point Robbins builds on Randall Collins' theory of interaction ritual chains according to which human beings "are creatures who go through life trying to participate in as many successful interaction rituals as they can, using the energy generated in each such interaction ritual to fund the next one."¹⁵⁷ Hence, a long chain of interactions is created. For Collins, any interaction between people can

¹⁵⁶ Ulland, *Guds Karneval: En Religionspsykologisk Studie av Toronto-Vekkelsens Ekstatiske Spiritualitet*, 221.

¹⁵⁷ Robbins, 'The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalization', 57.

become a successful interaction ritual, as long as it involves two components: a “mutual focus of attention” (a shared definition of what participants are doing together) and “a high degree of emotional entrainment”¹⁵⁸ (a sense built up through rhythmic synchronization of bodies). Any institution or organization that is able to provide people with such successful ritual experience will likely draw more people into its orbit.

For Robbins, pentecostal communities do just that. Mutual focus is ensured by a set of basic ritual frames (such as prayer, worship, healing, testimony, etc.) that orient pentecostal social interaction, while a range of shared bodily practices (practices that are not dependent on a shared culture, language, or social status) facilitates rhythmic synchronization. He says, “Drawing on their trained ability to fall into states of mutual attention and push such states forward through bodily synchronization, Pentecostals go through life producing an unusually high percentage of social occasions that qualify as successful interaction rituals.”¹⁵⁹ And since the emotional energy produced is “its own reward”,¹⁶⁰ people will keep coming back for more. One could probably add that in churches where worship has stagnated and the service no longer creates an abundance of emotional energy, people will leave to find themselves a new “ritual hotspot.”¹⁶¹

The second part of Ulland’s argument, the notion that embodied experiences in worship are learned, corresponds to Tanya Luhrmann’s observations among contemporary (charismatic) Evangelicals in the U.S. She describes a process in which new converts come to see God as an intimate and personal friend: “a buddy, a confidante, the ideal boyfriend”.¹⁶² This process takes place on several levels and involves learning of different kinds: cognitive/linguistic, metakinetik, and relational. It is the *metakinesis* aspect that interests me at this point. Luhrmann borrows the term from dance criticism, where it is used “to depict the way emotional experience is carried within the body so that the dancer conveys the emotion to the observer and, yet, does it by making the expressive gesture uniquely his or her own.”¹⁶³ Transferred to the evangelical charismatic context, it describes a process whereby new believers “learn to identify bodily and emotional states as signs of God’s presence in their life”.¹⁶⁴

158 Collins (2004) quoted in Robbins, 57.

159 Robbins, 58.

160 Robbins, 59.

161 Robbins, 61.

162 Tanya M. Luhrmann, ‘Metakinesis: How God Becomes Intimate in Contemporary U.S. Christianity’, *American Anthropologist* 106, no. 3 (2004): 519.

163 Luhrmann, 519.

164 Luhrmann, 519.

According to Luhrmann, this can be described in psychological terms as “trance”, “absorption”, “hallucinations”, and “altered states”,¹⁶⁵ and is a process that takes place inside the person. To the congregants themselves, it is a matter of “falling in love with Jesus” and “getting to know Jesus”,¹⁶⁶ thus referring to a spiritual, metaphysical reality outside of them.

The third part of Ulland’s observation, that the intense bodily engagement can be interpreted as a sacramental action, corresponds to that of theologian Mark Cartledge who speaks of an “implicit sacramentality”¹⁶⁷ in pentecostal-charismatic worship rituals, whereby the presence of God is mediated through the intermediaries of people.¹⁶⁸ In his view, there is both “a ritual pole” and “an emotional or affective pole”¹⁶⁹ in pentecostal worship, and the two are dependent on each other; thus, mediation takes place via both external and internal means, via both divine intervention and created elements.

In her study of charismatic revival and mysticism, sociologist Margaret Poloma has underlined that the “extended time of music” in charismatic liturgy, in particular, “is catalytic for a sense of close communion with the divine.”¹⁷⁰

Engaging the whole person, including emotions and the physical body, revitalized P/C worship requires more than a cognitive assent. It is during the worship time that many appear to enter into the ‘collective effervescence’ that Emile Durkheim recognised to be the heart of ritual. Praise and worship of God is believed to be the medium through which the presence of God is made manifest, as reflected in the oft-cited scripture verse, ‘God inhabits the praises of His people.’¹⁷¹

165 Luhrmann, 523.

166 Luhrmann, 523. See also Tanya M. Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012); Tanya M. Luhrmann, ‘How Do You Learn to Know That It Is God Who Speaks?’, in *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. David C. Berliner and Ramon Sarró (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007). For theological responses to Luhrmann, see Timothy Jenkins, ‘Theology’s Contribution to Anthropological Understanding in T.M. Luhrmann’s *When God Talks Back*’, in *Theologically Engaged Anthropology*, ed. J. Derrick Lemons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Ben M.D. McNamara, ‘A Theology of Wisdom as the Imago Dei: A Response to *When God Talks Back*’, *Evangelical Quarterly* 87, no. 2 (2015): 151–68.

167 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 69.

168 Compare discussion on sacramentality and pentecostal liturgy in Lord, ‘A Theology of Sung Worship’; Vondey, ‘Pentecostal Sacramentality and the Theology of the Altar’.

169 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 68.

170 Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 38.

171 Poloma, 41.

With philosopher James K. Smith we may say that pentecostal musicking has a “*mystical function*”:¹⁷² it serves as a vehicle, a facilitator of recurrent divine encounters. This is further discussed in Chapter 8; it suffices to say at this point that the embodied and communal character of pentecostal worship has a sacramental side to it.

Although expressed in theological terms, and with an openness to divine and transcendental realities, the perspectives of pentecostal theologians are nevertheless similar to the anthropological views quoted above. Where anthropologists see a strictly psychological or socio-biological process of habituation or ritualization, theologians see a metaphysical and ecclesial process of spiritual formation. Where anthropologists tend to interpret religious experience in terms of ‘altered states’ and ‘sensory hallucination’, theologians are happy to see it as ‘an event of knowing between the Divine source and the human participant’. But both are equally keen to point to the formative role of corporate rituals. While anthropologists tend to focus on somatic-emotional dimensions and pentecostal theologians more on the affective-spiritual, both acknowledge that there are communal-formative processes going on in pentecostal practice.

Thus, there is a joint and strong emphasis in academia on the role of bodies, emotions and senses in pentecostal worship. It has been theoretically explained in several manners, using several different conceptual frames, but the overarching theme is certainly that of a holistic integration of affective and somatic—of body and mind, of communal and individual, of sensory and cultural, of psychological and kinesthetic: a perspective that to me is subsumed by the term *embodiment* and further discussed in Chapter 6. To pinpoint just exactly how somatic and affective aspects of charismatic ritual are related is a difficult task, although the literature certainly leads us in the direction of trying. Yet in this study I do not have the ambition to create new theory on this relationship but, rather, to show how these aspects are played out through dance, dress, and music in specific ritual settings. I loosely adopt ‘somatic’ for things related to physical bodies, ‘sensory’ for those related to the human senses, ‘kinesthetic/kinetic’ for those related to bodily movement, and ‘affective’ for those related to emotional states and lasting dispositions. But my interest is less in defining them separately, and more in showing how intimately related they are in actual ritual practice. There is simply no way one can understand worship without looking at the connections between

¹⁷² Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, 78, fn. 2. Emphasis in original.

spiritual, sensory, kinetic, somatic, and affective. Hence the description above of both anthropological and theological perspectives that endorse a holistic embodiment perspective.

3.4 *Worship as 'The Rite of Worship and Praise'*

In this section so far, I have presented a ritual approach to pentecostal spirituality that entails paying specific attention to ritualization and embodiment and I have provided ample reason for doing so. In principle, such an approach could be used to study any aspect of pentecostal spirituality or liturgy, not just worship. Therefore I want to end by saying a few words specifically about worship in its most narrow sense, namely as 'the rite of worship and praise'.

In his analysis, Daniel Albrecht identified a basic ritual structure of five sequences: three primary rites surrounded by gathering/dispersing practices and joined together by a block of transitional rites. Within each of the five sequences, which he calls foundational/processual rites, he identified a number of micro-rites, smaller building blocks that could be used by congregants and leaders in a creative fashion. Some micro-rites occurred more often within one or other of the processual rites, but they could all be adopted by all of them. He thinks that the services' being a result of both creative improvisation and a set order explains the tension between spontaneity and structure within pentecostal liturgy. It gives a much-valued freedom to each ritualist and at the same time guarantees predictability and continuity in both form and content.¹⁷³ Indeed, charismatic liturgy has been compared to a jazz performance in that it creatively combines a set formula with freedom to improvise.¹⁷⁴

The three primary rites that Albrecht identifies are: (1) the rite of worship and praise, (2) the rite of pastoral message, and (3) the rite of altar/response. The first primary rite consists of music, singing and prayer; the second is the

173 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 152–70.

174 Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*. (London: Cassell, 1996), 139–57; Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*, 61. On the historical tension between freedom and flexibility in pentecostal liturgy, see Aaron Friesen, 'Classical Pentecostal Liturgy: Between Formalism and Fanaticism', in *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A.J. Swoboda (London: New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2019). On the connection between jazz and the African call-and-response-pattern, see Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*, 226–29. Hence, pentecostal liturgy and jazz not only resemble each other, but do so because of a shared musical heritage.

sermon and the third is a time for responding to the message and includes healing and prayer rites (at the 'altar', a designated space at the front).¹⁷⁵

Before the first rite the congregations gather to greet each other casually, both inside and outside the auditorium. Between the first and the second primary rite there is a time for congregational announcements, collection, testimonies, and prayers. In the churches studied by Albrecht this period seems to make up a smaller part of the service (although he never gives a clear time indication), functioning as a transition between the first and second primary rites. Albrecht considers it a 'pause' in the liturgy, a time where the ritualists may relax a bit between the highly engaging rites of worship and pastoral message.¹⁷⁶

Albrecht notes the resemblance to the revivalist American Frontier and Wesleyan Holiness traditions with their triadic structure of services: preliminaries, preaching, and harvest. The initial phase, also called the 'song service', included gospel songs and hymns that would orient the congregation towards the evangelistic preaching. He says, however, that, unlike these traditions, the singing in the pentecostal liturgy is not considered 'preliminary'; it is not a mere warm-up before the sermon but a primary rite in itself.¹⁷⁷

In addition to the basic sequences of the liturgy, Albrecht identifies a large number of micro-rites, smaller units that together make up the ritual. In an appendix he lists about a hundred or so micro-rites, including everything from brief actions such as lifting hands and kneeling, to larger units like communion and water baptism.¹⁷⁸ Summarizing his findings on the ritual structure, Albrecht says,

I have shown how the three primary rites together with the transitional rites (and the gathering and dispersing practices) make up what I have described as the foundational/processual rites. These rites give the ritual its fundamental structure. This fundamental structure serves as a framework within which the microrites emerge spontaneously or intentionally. In either case, a variety of microrites configure to give the ritual its

175 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 153–56.

176 Albrecht, 153–60.

177 Albrecht, 152, 156. Compare Birgitta J. Johnson, "'This Is Not the Warm-up Act!': How Praise and Worship Reflects Expanding Musical Traditions and Theology in a Baptistical Charismatic African American Megachurch", in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Monique Marie Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 117–32.

178 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 254–59.

internal shape. Consequently, the multitude of potential component practices, gestures, acts and actions (i.e. the microrites), fitted within the fundamental structure (i.e., the foundational/processual rites), help to account for the perception of the ritual as flexible, and for the sensation of freedom. (Two characteristics valued in Pentecostal spirituality.) The microrites are not mere ‘seasoning’ that stimulate the pentecostal tastes and senses, instead, the microrites together in their various assortments and configurations provide the basic ingredients that make up Pentecostalism, even as they constitute the elements of the liturgy.¹⁷⁹

It is the combination of a fundamental structure with a multitude of potential component practices that forms such a powerful whole: accounting for freedom and flexibility and yet connecting the church to its historical roots and its contemporary kin. In Chapter 5, I show how this combination of foundational rites and micro-rites is played out in concrete worship practices, and I modify the liturgical structure by adding a fourth primary rite—‘community-building rites’—to the whole.

From Albrecht I have borrowed the idea that the first section of a pentecostal church service—the part that variously goes under the name of ‘worship’ and ‘praise and worship’ and consists of music, singing, and prayer—may indeed be seen as a primary rite within the liturgy, along with the sermon and the altar call. In line with his usage, I occasionally call this section ‘the rite of worship and praise’, especially when highlighting ritual sequencing, although in general I refer to it simply as ‘worship’. When I speak of ‘worship practices’ it refers to the embodied actions that together make up the rite of worship and praise in a congregational setting. Related concepts such as ‘worship songs’, ‘worship music’, ‘worship team’, and ‘worship set’ follow the general usage in pentecostal-charismatic idiom, as described by Ingalls.¹⁸⁰ However, as noted in the Introduction, ‘worship’ is a rich concept in pentecostal idiom, and it is part of the task of this study to wrestle with its different connotations and levels of meaning, something I do continually throughout the book.

4 A Combination of Approaches

The current study takes as its starting point the ritual practice of worship, specifically the rite of worship and praise, in two specific congregational settings,

¹⁷⁹ Albrecht, 175–76.

¹⁸⁰ Ingalls, ‘Introduction’, 6–7.

in order to discuss and develop a pentecostal theology of worship. The analysis draws on a range of disciplinary sources, yet my primary dialogue partners are in pentecostal theology and ritual theory.

In this chapter I have detailed the theoretical basis for the current study. That basis can be summarized as a combination of three distinct yet related approaches; first, a spirituality approach to Pentecostalism, where the holistic and multidimensional character of pentecostal faith is acknowledged and where theology and spirituality are seen as thoroughly integrated; second, a practice approach to theology, grappling with notions of theology and theologizing and highlighting the importance of empirical research methods for studying the pentecostal-charismatic tradition; and lastly, a ritual approach to worship, presenting ritualization and embodiment as important tools for understanding pentecostal praise and worship. Throughout the discussion, basic concepts have been introduced and defined. Most notably, worship is described as *orthodoxa*, as a *modus theologicus* and as 'the rite of worship and praise'. Each of these are central to the way this study is organized and theorized.

The above theoretical framing answers three questions: (1) Why is this study important? Because of the connection between spirituality and theology in the pentecostal-charismatic tradition and the centrality of worship to this spirituality. (2) How do I proceed? By way of a close-up field study that adopts empirical methods as tools in theological research. (3) What have I studied, more precisely? The rite of worship and praise in two local congregations in Nairobi, Kenya, with the ultimate goal of theologizing worship from a pentecostal perspective. In the next chapter I describe my research design and method in more concrete terms.

Research Design and Method

The previous chapter described the theoretical framework of this thesis: a spirituality approach to Pentecostalism, a practice approach to theology, and a ritual approach to worship, thereby also providing a methodological basis for using empirical research methods in theology. This chapter answers concrete questions about how research was conducted in this particular study. I first delineate the research design, presenting it as a critical case study with two cases and several embedded units within a multi-layered context. I also briefly describe my methods of data collection and analysis. The rest of the chapter goes into greater detail, ending in a summary of the data collected. My hope is that providing a glimpse of the way I worked and the problems I had to solve can inspire others to undertake similar studies in other places. At the end of the chapter I discuss research ethics and my own positionality.

1 Case Study Design

According to Robert K. Yin, a leading scholar in the field of case study research, a case study can be defined in two steps. First,

A case study is an empirical method that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.¹

Secondly, a case study copes with situations where there are many variables and therefore “benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide the design, data collection, and analysis” and “relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion.”² According to Yin, case studies are most suitable for answering “a ‘how’ or ‘why’

1 Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 15. List in original. Yin’s case study method have been applied to practical theology in Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*, 82–102.

2 Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 15.

question” about “a set of contemporary events” over which “the researcher has little or no control.”³ The case is bounded in time and space, but the lines between case and context are defined by theoretical deliberations rather than evident as concrete reality.⁴ In other words, a case study is designed around a specific real-world, contemporary phenomenon set within a theoretical framework, uses the sources and data collection methods that are deemed most suitable to answer the research questions, and aims at creating an in-depth account.

Case studies can be designed as either *single-case* (one case) or *multiple-case* (two or more cases), and they may be either *holistic* (one level of analysis) or *embedded* (two or more levels). ‘The case’ constitutes the main unit of analysis and any embedded sub-units are selected in order to cast additional light on the phenomenon under study. Cases can be chosen on the basis of various rationales, for example, because they are *unusual* in that they deviate from theoretical expectations or everyday logic, or the opposite in that they are *common* or typical to everyday life.⁵ The *critical case* is a specific type where a case is selected on the basis of a certain theoretical framework and deemed critical for the development of that framework. According to Yin, such a case study may become “a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building by confirming, challenging, or extending the theory,” and even help “refocus investigations in an entire field.”⁶ This can also be called an *instrumental case*, a study that “uses a case to gain more insights into one issue or theme” and “attempts to understand something more general than the case.”⁷

In multiple-case studies the cases are juxtaposed to create a more solid investigation, although chosen to replicate each other in some way. “For ‘two-case’ case studies, you may have selected both cases at the outset of your case study, anticipating that they will either produce similar findings (*a literal replication*) or produce contrasting results, but for predictable reasons (*a theoretical replication*). With more cases, the possibilities for more subtle and varied replications increase.”⁸ In multiple-case studies, the analysis can be both

3 Yin, 13.

4 Yin, 31.

5 Yin, 47–61. Compare Jaison, *Qualitative Research and Transformative Results*, 44–46; Asbjørn Johannessen et al., *Introduktion till Samhällsvetenskaplig Metod*, Upplaga 2 (Stockholm: Liber, 2020), 195–98.

6 Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 49.

7 Jaison, *Qualitative Research and Transformative Results*, 45.

8 Robert K. Yin, ‘How to Do Better Case Studies’, in *The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*, ed. Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog, 2nd ed (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009), 259. Emphasis in original.

thematic (considering the themes emerging from each case) and *cross-case-based* (comparing themes between cases). The report may present each case separately and then the cross-case analysis, or consist of only the cross-case analysis, with each case presented only in short vignettes.⁹

In case study research, data collection methods vary according to the phenomenon under study, and may include both qualitative and quantitative approaches and textual and non-textual sources. The key point is *triangulation*, where a combination of data collection techniques paired with suitable methods of analysis for each source create an in-depth account of the specific case in its real-world context.¹⁰ Due to the reliance on multiple sources and multiple methods, the case study approach is “interdisciplinary in nature and allows a broad variety of explanations and concepts in handling the cases.”¹¹

1.1 *Critical, Multiple-Case, Embedded-Case Study Design*

The current study is organized as a critical case study, with a two-case, embedded design. Guided by two main research questions—“How and why do pentecostal churches practice worship as part of their spirituality?” and “How can worship be theologized from a pentecostal perspective?”—it seeks to construct a pentecostal theology of worship, based on empirical data from two concrete congregations and in dialogue with relevant theory from several disciplines. Given that worship is such a complex and rich ritual practice, an interdisciplinary case study design was deemed most appropriate.

The study can be seen as a *critical case study* for a number of reasons. First, and based on the theoretical framework described in the previous chapter, I see spirituality and theology as intimately connected in the pentecostal-charismatic tradition, and worship as a key ritual practice within it. Therefore it is critical for the development of theory on pentecostal spirituality to conduct an in-depth study of worship, with a special focus on ‘the rite of worship and praise’ as practiced in concrete settings. Second, as highlighted in the Introduction, churches on the African continent represent a vital part of the global pentecostal-charismatic tradition and indeed of contemporary Christianity itself. On the continent, East Africa and Kenya have become a

9 Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 226–28. Compare Johannessen et al., *Introduktion till Samhällsvetenskaplig Metod*, 198.

10 Yin, *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, 126–30. Triangulation is common also in ethnographic field work: Karen O’Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods* (London: Routledge, 2012); Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009), 86; Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*.

11 Jaison, *Qualitative Research and Transformative Results*, 44.

particularly vibrant context in this regard, bursting with churches and worship music. It is thus critical that East African pentecostal churches are taken into account when studying pentecostal spirituality and worship. Third, as described in the next chapter, urban Pentecostalism has a long history and vast influence in Kenya: politically, religiously, and culturally. The capital city, Nairobi, boasts hundreds of charismatic churches, their music and liturgy constituting a main attraction; Mavuno and Woodley, and their respective church families, are influential members of this community. Lastly, it is also critical in the sense of using cases to interpret and discuss larger theoretical issues; in other words, it could just as well be described as an *instrumental* case study.

There are two main analytic units in this study, that is, *two cases*: ‘the rite of worship and praise’ in Mavuno Church and in CITAM Woodley, respectively. The cases are temporally bound to the time of fieldwork, 2013 to 2014, theoretically bound to the corporate ritual practice of worship, and spatially bound to the two churches and their respective church premises. This means that in a technical sense, it is not the congregation or the church that is the ‘case’ but, more specifically, the corporate ritual practice of worship, and only during a limited time and in a limited space. Nevertheless, for convenience, I sometimes call Mavuno and Woodley ‘case churches’ in the report; moreover, when I utilize the present tense in my account, it should be understood as an ‘ethnographic present’, describing the way things were at the time of fieldwork. For while I am aware that ritual practices, musical tastes, and ecclesial organisations change over time, it is not part of this study to track those changes.

Opting for a *multiple-case* design rather than a single case was a matter of strengthening the empirical base of the theoretical discussions. With two cases rather than one, the chances increased of creating a robust investigation and a more nuanced interpretation. At the same time, I did not want to have more than two cases, which would have risked making the study too shallow as my time in the field was limited. The cases were chosen according to a *theoretical replication* logic: they were similar in size, situated within the same city, attracted the same middle-class population, and belonged to the same broad Christian tradition. At the same time, they were different in terms of affiliation and membership (targeting different age groups) and in terms of ecclesial background and theology (rooted in different parts of the Christian tradition).

Within each case there are five *embedded units*: the ritual performance, the church leaders, the music team, the songs, and the congregation.¹² Each of

12 The sub-unit ‘congregation’ is weaker than I had hoped for due to problems at the gathering phase as described below. Nevertheless, I have retained it as one of the sub-units since it constitutes an important part of the whole.

these units are part of the ritual practice of worship and each contribute to the whole. Based on my theoretical framework, ritual performance is the central sub-unit and the other ones all relate to that in one way or another. This means that the roles of leaders, music team, and congregation, as well as the lyrical content of songs, are triangulated vis-à-vis the ritual performance, but not vis-à-vis each other (except in a few instances). This also affected the data collection process, as lyrics (and to some extent surveys) were collected based on their connection with the services observed.

The *context* of the two cases can be described as overlapping layers: global (pentecostal-charismatic Christianity), regional (urban East African Pentecostalism), ecumenical (the Kenyan church landscape), and societal/cultural (Kenyan society and culture). These layers are all shared between the two cases and each context includes ritual practices, theology, spirituality, and music, among other things. Then there are several layers specific to each case: organizational (the church family and the local congregation), liturgical (the ritual life of the local church), and theological (the local theology). Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between the two cases, the embedded units, and the different levels of context.

In order to research the rite of worship and praise in Mavuno and Woodley, I used a combination of *data collection techniques*: participant observation, fieldnotes, audio- and video-recording, semi-structured interviews, a corpus

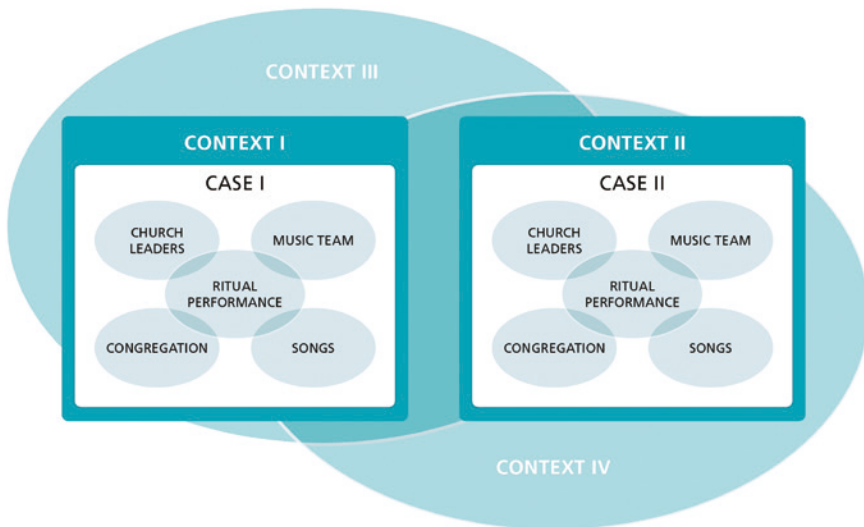


FIGURE 4 Case study design

of lyrics, and research surveys. The first four can be subsumed under the umbrella term 'fieldwork', which takes many of its cues from ethnographic research and ritual studies. The corpus compilation came out of a theological interest in the doctrinal content of songs, and the surveys were an attempt to include more of the congregational voice, as well as adding background information on the two churches. The details of all of these techniques will be outlined below.

It is important to point out at this stage that there is no direct link between the data sets produced by each technique and the sub-units described above. For although the sub-unit of 'songs' naturally connect to 'lyrics', and that of 'church-leaders' or 'music team' to 'interviews', all of them are also part of the 'ritual performance' and very much visible in the data sets 'audio- and video-recordings' and 'participant observation', to mention just a few examples. All the collected data have contributed insights to the two cases and the five units, as well the larger theoretical issues.

In terms of *analysis*, each data set has required its own approach. Data from participant observation, interviews and fieldnotes were carefully coded according to an iterative-inductive model, looking for both theoretical and emerging themes. The lyrics underwent a theological content analysis that included literary form and function, central motifs, key words, and name, title, and pronoun usage. Survey results were gathered in tables, looking at both total numbers and percentages. After each data set was analysed, a *cross-case analysis* also took place, comparing the two cases for themes, convergences, and dissimilarities. This book consists to a large degree of this cross-case analysis, but each of the cases is presented separately in Chapter 4 and the Interlude.

The details of each of the data collection techniques and the analysis of each data set are described below; suffice it to say that the overarching ambition for the analysis has been to answer the research question in the best possible way. Simply put, the 'how' has been analysed with a ritual studies approach, focusing on ritualization and embodiment, while the 'why' has been analysed with a pentecostal spirituality-as-theology approach, as explained in the *orthodoxa* model. Behind both questions is a practice approach to theology, where theologizing processes and 'reading' theology from practice take centre stage.

In sum, the current study is designed as a critical case study, wherein empirical data from two particular cases are used to develop and expand existing theory on the pentecostal theology of worship. The cases were chosen for theoretical (and practical, see below) reasons and data gathered using a range of data collection techniques. In the next section I go into details of each of the stages of research, moving now from research design to research process.

2 The Fieldwork Journey

In the following sections, I describe my research process in some detail, showing how data were collected and analysed. I do so in a fairly personal tone, underlining the reflexive and embodied character of ethnographic field research.¹³ The description will take the reader through the different phases of my work and the methodological questions connected to each of them. At the end, the type and amount of data are summarized. Once the concrete work of research has been described, I return to the question of reflexivity and my own role as an insider-outsider researcher.

2.1 *Choosing a Topic, a Method and a Field*

When I embarked on my PhD journey I had for long been frustrated by how little of the lived faith of pentecostal and charismatic Christians is actually spelled out and researched as theology, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where sociologists and anthropologists are much ahead of theologians in the field. It seemed necessary to find new ways of researching African pentecostal theology, as so much of it is expressed in genres other than books or even writing.

My specific interest in musical forms of worship began as a reflection on the importance of songs and music in pentecostal-charismatic churches around the world and especially in Africa. Growing up as a child of pentecostal missionaries to Rwanda, I had literally visited hundreds of pentecostal services and knew how vivid and engaging the music could be. Music has a universal character and can connect people across cultures and generations; at the same time, I knew from cross-cultural experience later in life, that even when you get the sermon translated for you, much of the overall message is lost if you do not understand the songs. I also knew that music and worship could lead to severe conflicts within a congregation. Disputes over the type of music and singing that a service should contain seemed to be about more than just culture or generation. They seemed to carry something deeper. Music and songs seemed to be crucial to people's spiritual or religious life and in many instances functioned as carriers of theology.

With this in mind I set out to study the practice of worship within pentecostal-charismatic churches in Africa with the aim of saying something about pentecostal theology and ritual. Since I was interested in pentecostal

13 Amanda Coffey, *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity* (London: Sage, 1999); James V. Spickard, J. Shawn Landres, and Meredith B. McGuire, *Personal Knowledge and beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2002); compare Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*.

“practices, not texts,”¹⁴ I needed a method that allowed me to come close to “the lived and the local.”¹⁵ Inspired by ritual studies and ethnography,¹⁶ I opted for a field-based method, which proved easier said than done.

The first problem was educational. As a theologian I was trained in text-based hermeneutics, historical methods, biblical languages, and philosophical reasoning, while I had not had any training at all in empirical research methods, fieldwork, or anything close to qualitative research of an ethnographic type. I had to learn everything from scratch and entered a steep learning curve that got even steeper as I came into the field. The second challenge was that of research design and data collection. How should one combine a focus on rituals and theology as part of the same study? Is there a specifically theological way to do field work? What data should be collected and for what reasons? The third problem was that of analysis: how does one analyse material that is so differentiated, taking its complexity into account and yet retaining one’s theological gaze? Undoubtedly, the analysis would be coloured by the theologian’s preference for texts and linguistic and hermeneutical training. At the same time, hopefully, the ethnographic attentiveness to ‘the lived and the local’ would add a distinctly new and intriguing dimension to it.

Although I was quite clear from the start what my topic would be and, later, also the kind of methods I would use, I encountered yet another problem. I needed to choose a specific setting in which to work, a ‘field’. In field research, this choice, of course, is pivotal. The location of both researcher and research field contributes in fundamental ways to the end result of the study. Here I am thinking of geographical, social, religious, denominational, intellectual location, and personal location. A field can be chosen in many ways and its boundaries are very much shaped by the interests of the researcher. Traditionally an ethnographic field would have been, perhaps, a tribal or rural community, whereas today it could just as well be a hospital, a school, or a group of young people, depending on the research interest. Karen O’Reilly also points out that frequently a field has to be chosen on the basis of practicality, and may largely depend on the researcher’s contacts and whether the researcher is welcomed into a specific setting or not.¹⁷

The initial topic gave me a general indication (Africa, pentecostal-charismatic churches), while practical and personal reasons led me to Nairobi

14 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, xx.

15 Ward, ‘Introduction’, 9.

16 Ritual studies is heavily indebted to ethnography and anthropology, see for example Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 11–54, 165–210.

17 O’Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 23–24, 43.

and Kenya. First of all, I needed to find somewhere my linguistic skills would be sufficient for my purposes, hence my search for a place where there were many English-speaking churches; second, good initial contacts would reduce the time spent just getting in touch with suitable churches; third, I wanted a place where I could safely bring my family, where we could find good accommodation. Thus, since most of my contacts were in Eastern Africa, I checked opportunities in Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. The choice fell on Nairobi, and I started to use my network to make contact with urban, English-speaking, pentecostal-charismatic churches.

2.2 *Two Phases of Fieldwork and Two Cases*

My fieldwork in Nairobi was conducted in two phases, totalling five months over the period of 2013 and 2014. Thus, the total time in the field is limited compared to a classic anthropological or ethnographic study, although not necessarily so for a case-study design where the quantity and depth of collected data is more important than the time spent in the field. My insider-outsider status also helped in this regard; I did not have to start from scratch when I entered the field, but could build on previous knowledge and experience. Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldböck point out that although the normal procedure in ethnography is to be submersed in the society or group for a year or more, the time requirements may be considerably shorter for an insider researcher due to his or her acquaintance with the context and general knowledge of the research subject.¹⁸ I think it is fair to say that this is the case in my research, for although I am not an insider of the particular groups taking part, I am an insider to the liturgical and theological tradition under study, as explained below.

The initial phase of fieldwork took place in January 2013 in the format of a pilot study;¹⁹ considerable time was spent during this period orienting myself among the vast number of pentecostal-charismatic churches in the city. Before I came to Kenya, I had asked people in my network for recommendations, and decided on some of the churches I wanted to visit. I had also tried to contact some of the pastors via e-mail, although with little success. Once in Nairobi, two people acted as my initial sponsors²⁰ or 'cultural brokers',²¹ helping me on the ground, taking me to churches and introducing me to different pastors.

18 Alvesson and Sköldböck, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, 85.

19 Corrine Glesne, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* (Boston, MA: Pearson, 2011), 56.

20 Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2002), 37.

21 Pranee Liamputtong, *Performing Qualitative Cross-Cultural Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 69.

Unfortunately, the selection of churches and research participants was a little less varied than would have been desirable, as several churches belonged to the same two 'church families' (CITAM and Nairobi Chapel group, see Chapter 4).²² At the same time, the fact that people in my network, unbeknown to each other, all recommended them indicated the importance of these two church families within the charismatic community. The first visit was also a little less fruitful than I had hoped since I did not manage to schedule interviews with all the desired leaders; however, I got a picture of Nairobi churches and some very useful contacts.

After the first phase of fieldwork, I went through my data and reflected on which churches to choose and where to go from that point. To keep the study both deep and manageable, I had intended to select a single church and its 'rite of worship and praise' as my 'case'. However, although there were many similarities between the practice of worship in the churches I had visited, there were also some interesting differences, leading me to choose two churches rather than just one. This would make the study clearer and richer as it would allow me to compare them to each other as well as see common patterns. Apart from the broader criteria described above (English-speaking, urban, pentecostal-charismatic), I wanted churches that could be regarded as critical cases in that (1) music and worship had a central place in the service; (2) they were well-known and often mentioned by my initial informants, a criterion underlining their standing within the pentecostal-charismatic community; and (3) they had both similarities and dissimilarities according to the theoretical replication logic described above. In addition, I also wanted churches that (4) welcomed me as a researcher and seemed keen to have me there. Mavuno and Woodley fitted these criteria best.

At the same time, my selection of Mavuno and Woodley was, in some ways, a matter of chance and coincidence. I happened to stumble upon information on the internet regarding Mavuno, which led me to search for an opportunity to visit the church during my pilot trip. Meanwhile, people in my network put me in touch with one of the pastors in Woodley, whom I also decided to visit. I was impressed by Mavuno's high-quality music and production values, and fascinated by the way they adopted and adapted elements from youth culture into their services. Woodley also had a large and well-organized music

22 During my pilot study I visited the following churches, congregations and ministries: Nairobi Pentecostal Church/CITAM (Valley Road, Woodley and Kiserian), as well as Nairobi Baptist Church, Nairobi Chapel, Mamlaka Hill Chapel, Mavuno Church Bellevue, Jubilee Christian Church, International Christian Church, House of Grace and Joe Kayo Ministires.

ministry, and I was intrigued by the joy and energy that the music team conveyed in the services. In both churches I got a warm and friendly welcome from church leaders who seemed to understand my specific interests and were open to participating in the study. On a personal level, I liked what I experienced and wanted to return.

The second phase of fieldwork took place about a year later, from December 2013 through March 2014, when I collected the bulk of my data, focusing entirely on Mavuno and Woodley. The Senior Pastors of each church—the ‘gate keepers’²³—had given their permission for my project and also appointed people to help me get around.

I came to the field with a distinct interest in worship, which I retained throughout my project. Due to the complexity of the subject—with worship a core ritual practice in pentecostal spirituality and yet a theologically laden concept with numerous connotations—I figured that triangulating the data would be advantageous. This would allow me to stay focused on the topic, yet enable me to see it from different angles while gathering rich material. Guided by my research topic, I chose to spend considerable time and energy observing and participating in Sunday services and other church gatherings. During the services I took notes and both videoed and audio-recorded activities. I also interviewed several pastors, members of the worship teams, and a few congregants in both churches, and conducted a survey using distributed questionnaires. I gathered so-called ‘worship sets’ (a list of lyrics to the songs sung in a service) from Woodley, although these proved harder to get from Mavuno where I needed to rely on my own notes and later internet searches. The details of each of these data-collecting techniques are discussed below.

3 The Data-Collection Maze

3.1 *Observation and Participation*

Given the embodied and enacted character of ritual, a central method for ritual studies is participant observation. Here ritual studies is heavily indebted to ethnography, wherein participant observation is a key feature,²⁴ and uses similar methods, although focusing on particular practices rather than a

23 Glesne, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*, 57; DeWalt and DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 36.

24 Alvesson and Sköldbberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, 84–85; O’Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 86–115; DeWalt and DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*.

culture as a whole. “The most direct way of studying a ritual is by attending it, opening up the possibility that all your senses will take in the event,” Grimes says. “Observing is more than watching”; if done well it is “multisensory” and requires “full presence.”²⁵ Thus, the researcher is observing while participating and participating while observing. “It is almost impossible to observe without participating, especially if you observe for long or repeatedly. Researching, you are at first an outsider, but researching attentively bends the body forward ... you become something of a participant by listening empathetically, even if you intend later to think critically.”²⁶

Depending on the researcher and the research topic, participant observation can lean more towards observation or more towards participation, although the two are never entirely separate. Spradley developed a continuum model that distinguishes between five levels of participation—non-participation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation, complete participation²⁷—of which the ‘moderate participation’ type would best describe how I worked. I was present at the scene of the action—whether church service or prayer meeting—observing what was taking place and to some extent interacting with the other participants, yet at the same time I was clearly identifiable as a researcher and my goal was to watch, listen, and take notes, rather than interact with people or engage in the service. However, I did not hang out with members of the two groups on a daily basis and I did not observe them in their everyday lives outside of the church premises. I lived in my own house with my family and I commuted to the two churches for services and gatherings.

While observing I tried to use all my senses and take notes on what could be *heard* (voices, prayers, music, laughter, handclaps, volume, rhythm, disturbances, etc.); what could be *seen* (facial expressions, body movements and postures, interaction between people, clothes, screens, decorations, etc.); what could be *felt* (atmosphere, intensity, joy, grief, engagement, reservation, etc.); and also occasionally what could be *smelled* or *tasted* (food, garbage, tea, wine, bread). For me, this meant that I could not also participate in the services in a way that involved my heart and my spirit as I would have done had I come as an ordinary congregant. I did sing along with the songs (while noting down the words and looking around), although I did not involve my whole person in worship. I occasionally prayed and communicated with God during the services, but usually I was more eager to observe what others did when praying

25 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 45.

26 Grimes, 45.

27 Referred to in DeWalt and DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 19–21.

and to listen to their words rather than participating in the prayers myself. Thus, I was not fully participating, but at the same time not only observing. I laughed at the jokes, greeted people at the time of greeting, spoke to them before and after the service and participated in communion more or less in the same way as I would have in any service. In fact, the time of communion was the only occasion during services where I felt it was not appropriate to take notes or 'spy' on others (either for me or the people around me), although afterwards I made notes on it.

As can be seen from the above, *participant* observation involves all the senses and is thoroughly personal and embodied. The researcher has to use him or herself in a holistic and often exhausting way. At the same time, *participant observation* requires some sort of mental distancing, as the researcher must not only feel, hear, and see but also write down and reflect on what is said and done in an orderly manner.²⁸ Participant observation may seem like 'a paradox' or 'an oxymoron', a method with built-in tension; however, the tension need not be resolved.²⁹ As O'Reilly points out, "the apparent tension between participation (and involvement) and observation (and distance) does not have to be resolved: it is what gives participant observation its strength. Participating enables the strange to become familiar; observing enables the familiar to appear strange."³⁰ Participating and observing are at the heart of ethnographic fieldwork methods and neither can do without the other or without their constant companion: field notes.

3.2 *Field Notes, Audio-Visual Recordings*

Writing field notes is an important way of documenting fieldwork, and an integrative activity in participant observation. As Grimes observes, the only way to convey the multisensory experience of ritual, including "smell, taste or touch," is to "describe, interview, photograph, or video, in effect rendering olfactory, gustatory, and tactile data as audiovisual data."³¹ Therefore, taking notes and using audio-visual media is key for documenting, analysing, and presenting ritual studies research.³²

Ethnographers advocate a variety of ways to systematize and record field notes, often distinguishing between different degrees of elaboration and different kinds of content: between mental notes, jotted notes, and full field notes,

28 O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 96–100.

29 DeWalt and DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 24.

30 O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 106.

31 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 45.

32 Grimes, 78–92.

for example, and between descriptive notes, analytic notes, and autobiographical notes, the latter often referred to as a diary or journal.³³ The researcher, as the producer of field notes, is inevitably part of the research itself; ethnographers do not just collect, but in a very real sense co-produce their own data, meaning that all field notes are both data and analysis, regardless of the content and style of writing.³⁴

My own notes took several different forms,³⁵ the simplest of which were in the notes app on my iPod: short jottings on something seen or heard in an everyday situation in Nairobi. A more elaborate format was the field diary. My field diary is a personal and reflective one, recording my own experiences and impressions in the field, while at the same time including both analytic and descriptive notes. Once I was back from the field, I continued writing occasional field notes, reflecting on methodological decisions or analytical ideas—something in the nature of what O'Reilly refers to as keeping an “intellectual diary.”³⁶

The most elaborate form of notes that I used were records of observed church services,³⁷ what I called ‘observation notes’. These were mainly of a descriptive character, carefully recording what took place in the service but always in a personal and reflective style, making use of all my senses. The ethnographic vignettes (see Interlude), as well as examples throughout the study, provide a clue to what they looked like. Observation notes were written in several steps. During church services I used an ‘observation guide’ (see Appendix 2) and continuously jotted down detailed notes on whatever took place both on stage and in the hall. The first part of the guide consisted of a one-page form where I noted things that I wanted to remember for each service, including time and location; the number of congregants and the approximate percentage belonging to different age groups and genders; the number, age, and style of singers and musicians; the number of songs in English and Swahili; Scripture verses read or quoted; the theme of the sermon; the number and type of altar-calls, and so on. According to DeWalt and DeWalt, this type of counting or listing of

33 Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); DeWalt and DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 141–62; Glesne, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*, 71–80; Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 101–5.

34 DeWalt and DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 143.

35 Observation notes and fieldnotes are referenced when directly quoted or paraphrased, not otherwise.

36 O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 104.

37 Compare DeWalt and DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*, 141, where this is referred to as “records of prolonged activities and ceremonies”.

items is an important way to improve the level of description and may serve as a basis for later conclusions.³⁸ The second part of my observation guide consisted of a two-page form for taking running notes in chronological order with the simple headings: When? Who? What? How? I used about 15–20 copies of the second part for each service I observed, writing on both sides. This means that I have approximately 30–40 pages of hand-written notes for each communal gathering that I observed. These notes were later digitalized as full records, with the help of audio and video recordings to jog my memory, producing 15–20 pages with detailed observation notes for each service.

Since my focus of research was the practice of worship in communal gatherings, I documented this very carefully with both elaborate notes, as above, and a combination of video and audio recording. Grimes underlines the importance of the latter, saying, “Fieldwork is greatly enhanced by video. It captures details we don’t see or can’t remember, and it engages the senses ... in a way that writing alone usually does not.”³⁹

On a practical level, my recording developed over time. For the pilot trip I used my iPod to record sound from communal gatherings, while during the second phase of field work I had a proper dictation machine. For both trips I used a video camera to record and take photos. During the first phase of fieldwork, I did not videotape whole services, only taking small clips and a couple of photos from each. During the second phase I decided to use a tripod to position my camera, which gave me more freedom to take notes and participate. Mostly I merely turned it on and left it running with the same perspective throughout the service. While this meant that I could not also take photos, I concluded that, of the two, video recordings would be more useful. In Woodley, I had the camera next to me for the first few weeks, but later the media team kindly offered to run it from their balcony at the back of the hall. This had the advantage of allowing me to sit wherever I wanted without the concern of camera positioning. In Mavuno, I kept the camera with me in the hall and struggled to get a good image due to the mass of people around. In both churches, I occasionally put the camera on the platform, facing the congregation, to get a different perspective.

From each service I observed, I have approximately two hours of audio and video recordings. During the pilot trip and at minor gatherings, I was not always allowed to use the camera and so I sometimes only have the audio recording and the notes.

38 DeWalt and DeWalt, 72–73.

39 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 79.

3.3 Interviews

Interviewing is an important research method and one that is used widely across many disciplines. Often a difference is made between structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews, depending on the level of control given to the interviewee and interviewer, respectively. O'Reilly says that ethnographers tend to rely on unstructured interviewing, but may employ any of these categories depending on the research topic and the purpose of the interview.⁴⁰ She further distinguishes between formal interviews conducted at particular times and with a particular purpose and informal interviews and conversations, which take place spontaneously and continually during field-work.⁴¹ Just as with participant observation and field notes, the researcher herself is intimately and inevitably linked to the data collected from interviews and a co-creator of that data. His or her personal presence in the situation and chemistry with the interviewee affect the result in a very real way.⁴²

I principally chose formal, semi-structured interviews, although I also had a number of informal, unstructured conversations, which occurred in connection with staff meetings and church gatherings, but also in public places, over a meal, or while commuting from one location to another. They mainly took place with staff members, worship leaders, or pastors in each church; I had virtually no informal conversation with ordinary congregants apart from some small talk going in or out of church (reasons for this are discussed in regard to the role of the researcher below). Informal conversations were documented as part of my field diary, and for the sake of clarity I do not refer to them as 'interviews' in the study.

Formal interviews, however, were conducted in a different manner. These were rigorously planned, individually adjusted, carefully documented, audio-taped and later transcribed. Since my research interest focused on worship as a communal, ritual, and spiritual-theological phenomenon, pastors, worship leaders, and worship teams were my key informants. Many were of higher status than myself—well-educated, busy people with weighty responsibilities; I could not risk wasting their time with informal conversations, and I could not count on getting more than one chance to interview them. Since most were also older than I, and male—an important element of status in Kenyan society—I had to ensure I behaved in a serious and respectful manner, using a formal interview style⁴³ and, above all, preparing well. Steinar Kvale and Svend

40 O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 120.

41 O'Reilly, 116–27.

42 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 47–51.

43 O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 125.

Brinkman note that a key component in interviewing the elite is knowledge. If the researcher can show that she is well-versed in the topic, masters the technical language, and is aware of the status of her interviewee, then a certain balance can be achieved that allows for an interesting exchange despite the asymmetry of power and status.⁴⁴ In my case, I believe my general acquaintance with the pentecostal-charismatic tradition and my personal background helped me handle these situations. Nevertheless, I experienced a difference between the interviews during the first phase of fieldwork and those of the second. Not only was I much better prepared for the interview situation itself, I had also gained much more specific knowledge about the field, the topic, and my interlocutors, which resulted in engaging conversations and rich material.

I also conducted group interviews with people from the music team in each church and with a youth group in Woodley. Ethnographic group interviews differ from focus group interviews in that they are conducted with naturally occurring groups in the field, rather than groups formed by a sample of people who do not know each other.⁴⁵ Pranee Liamputtong points out that in collective cultures, group interviews might be more suitable than individual ones as they are closer to the way people relate in ordinary life and generate positive input.⁴⁶ The three groups I interviewed met, talked about Christian faith, and worshipped together on a regular basis, and their close relationships impacted positively on the conversations, rendering them more informal and personal than the individual sessions. This was especially true of the youth group interview, which started in an orderly fashion but became increasingly heated, while remaining friendly, turning into a lively and completely unorganised discussion over which I was no longer in control. Not that it was in any way unpleasant or irrelevant to my research, rather the opposite, but it was not what I had planned or expected.

Interviews with the two music teams landed somewhere between the very formal and the informal. Both involved rather young people who knew each other well; although they did not have formal positions in the church, their on-stage roles generated a certain level of loyalty to the church and knowledge of the research topic. Conversation with the Mavuno team was engaged and vivid, not as chaotic as with the youth group and yet not as formal as the one-on-one interviews. Almost the whole team took part and it was clear that they also enjoyed the conversation. With the Woodley team the conversation

44 Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, *Den Kvalitative Forskningsintervjuen* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2009), 163.

45 O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 136.

46 Liamputtong, *Performing Qualitative Cross-Cultural Research*.

was more formal and less engaged, at least partly for practical reasons (everyone was tired after a long rehearsal session) and partly due to the participants being selected by the leader rather than volunteering. My plan was to do an interview with one of the 'life-groups' in Mavuno (small groups that meet on a weekly basis for prayer and Bible study), as a comparison to the youth group in Woodley, but I was unable to attend the planned interview for personal reasons, and it was conducted and partly video-recorded by the life-group leader. In the end, I decided not to include this interview in my analysis because of its limited quality.

During the pilot trip, I used more or less the same list of questions for each interview, although I adjusted them on the spot and asked follow-up questions depending on the answers. For the second phase, I developed a more elaborate 'interview guide' of two parts (see Appendix 1). The first part was the same for all interviewees, and contained a number of short questions such as name, personal background, and role in the church. Here they also signed their consent to being part of the study (see below). The second part contained an individualized set of main questions and a number of possible sub-questions, as well as some respectful sentences with which to frame the interview. Some questions were introductory, some direct or specific, and some more probing in character.⁴⁷ Examples of topics covered include questions related to their personal background and role in the church, church organization, the church scene in Nairobi, and, of course, their views on worship. Depending on their role, I spent more or less time on different topics, but in general I was asking for facts, ideas, concepts, and experiences, more than narration or discourse.⁴⁸

All of my own interviews were audio-recorded using either the iPod (first phase) or the dictation machine (second phase). In total, I conducted twenty-two formal, semi-structured interviews, each lasting between fifteen minutes and two-and-a-half hours, resulting in approximately twenty hours of interview material. Most second-phase interviews were later transcribed and coded but, from the pilot trip, only those that directly related to Mavuno and Woodley were so treated. For each interview I took hand-written notes and also made reflective notes in my field diary.

3.4 *Lyrics*

In case study research (as well as in ritual studies and ethnographic research), the idea of triangulation is an important one, as mentioned above. Using a

47 Compare Kvale and Brinkmann, *Den Kvalitative Forskningsintervju*, 150–57.

48 Kvale and Brinkmann, 167–76.

broad set of methods and techniques is a way to paint as rich a portrait as possible of the case, topic, or culture under study. In my case, this meant collecting songs that were used in worship, since this would give me yet another perspective in addition those provided by participant observation and interviews. As was noted in the previous chapter, analysing the content of lyrics is a way to investigate not only the 'indexical' meanings in ritual but also the 'canonical' ones.⁴⁹ This, however, raised some methodological challenges, both during fieldwork and at the stage of analysis. I describe these in more detail below in a special excursion into analysing lyrics in search of theology.

The process of collecting lyrics differed slightly between the two churches. Given that my 'cases' were the 'rite of worship and praise' and my main sub-unit the liturgical performance of worship, I decided to collect lyrics from observed services alone. In Woodley, I was invited to join a Facebook group that the music team used for communication, giving me immediate access to most of the lyrics used. Each week the worship leader posted the worship set for the coming service, which included lyrics for all the songs in their set order, sometimes the chords and names of artists or composers, but not the music sheets. Links to online versions of the songs were also posted in the group, mainly from YouTube, so that the team could prepare beforehand. I downloaded the documents for the Sunday and Wednesday services that I had observed, and followed links to some of the songs (especially those that I did not recognize). Comparing their worship sets to my observation notes, I could see that they generally followed the sets quite strictly, only deviating from them in a few cases. Browsing the internet for the songs that were not on the worship sets, I ultimately compiled a list of lyrics for 54 unique songs that were sung on one or more occasion at Woodley.

In Mavuno, I was promised the slides that displayed the lyrics on big screens during worship, but unfortunately did not receive them. Since I had counted on them, I did not take notes on lyrics, which meant that, once home from the field, I had to spend a lot of time browsing the internet to find the songs. The Mavuno music blog,⁵⁰ where the music team has put some worship sets, was of no use to me, since it did not include the sets for the services I observed. I later contacted some of the pastors and got some information from them as well, ultimately producing a list of 36 unique songs sung in observed services in Mavuno.

49 Packiam, 'Worship', 323.

50 The Mavuno Music Blog, <https://mavunomusicblog.wordpress.com/> (accessed 2020-02-25).

Since both churches are English speaking, most songs are sung in English. But both churches also include Swahili songs in their repertoire, and I have had a total of 20 songs translated for the sake of analysis by Sahaya G. Selvam at the Don Bosco Research Centre in Nairobi.

3.5 *Research Surveys*

When I planned my fieldwork, I was hoping that I would get a chance to get to know people in the congregations and to interview ordinary congregants and not just leaders. It was, however, much harder than I expected to have anything but short conversations as people came in and out of church, and no one seemed interested in getting to know me as a person, still less inviting me home. I can only guess the reasons: the difference in culture and colour, my own shyness, and my presence as a strange person with a camera might have been part of it, but more than anything I concluded it had to do with the urban atmosphere. People seemed to interact mainly with their own peers or family, and left the mingling with newcomers to the teams appointed for the job. The short period in the field also contributed to my difficulty; I would probably have got to know people had I stayed longer and engaged more in different parts of the ministry. This lack of congregational voices is a real disadvantage in the study and one that was not easily compensated for.

Given the conditions, I needed a new strategy, and I decided to do a poll in each church to get a sense of the congregations' demographic profile and the way ordinary congregants experience worship. It is not nearly as good as having in-depth interviews, but better than nothing. Again, it is a matter of triangulating data, using a different kind of method for a different perspective on the same subject. The surveys were later used mainly for background information on the churches and to a smaller degree to mirror the 'congregational voice' on worship.

My intention was to hand out standardized questionnaires (see Appendix 4) in conjunction with a service in each church, since this would give me comprehensive statistical material on actual church-goers and their on-site experience. This was approved in Woodley, and with the help of a research assistant and the ushers, I distributed questionnaires to people as they went into church and during the offering. After the service, the questionnaires were handed back and I got almost four hundred responses, providing very reliable statistical material. In Mavuno the process looked a little different since the church leadership did not approve of such hand-outs. They were afraid people would feel upset and unwelcome if they were met by a questionnaire as they came to church. I also got the feeling they thought questionnaires were a bit old-fashioned and did not fit their profile; they preferred an online poll

and offered to help me execute it. Ultimately, no one helped and I had to rely on my research assistant's negotiating with one of the staff members to give out the material in life groups and on buses taking people to church, which meant that I lost control over who filled in the questionnaires and in what situation. Therefore, the statistical material from Mavuno is weaker than that from Woodley. For example, it is possible that the representation is a bit lopsided in terms of demographics, with less affluent and younger people riding the bus to church rather than taking their own car. Nevertheless, I managed to get back three hundred responses from people affiliated with Mavuno, although I do not know how representative they are of the actual church-goers or to which service/services their appraisal relates.

The work of organizing, digitalizing, and analysing the surveys (using SPSS) was performed by a research assistant working for the Don Bosco Research Centre. We handed out more than a thousand questionnaires in total and ended up digitalizing and analysing 330 questionnaires from Woodley and 300 questionnaires from Mavuno. The numbers correspond to the estimated number of church attendants at that particular service for Woodley (30% of 1,000 people) and the estimated number of church attendants during an ordinary Sunday (two services) in Mavuno (15% of 2,000 people).

3.6 *Summary of Collected Data*

To sum up, during my first phase of fieldwork I observed nine Sunday services and a few other gatherings in a total of twelve Christian communities in Nairobi, including Mavuno and Woodley. I interviewed ten different church leaders, including pastors from CITAM and the Nairobi Chapel group of churches. In the second phase of fieldwork, I visited Mavuno and Woodley for the main service on six different Sundays. Since they had multiple services with a more or less similar program, this added up to ten unique services in Woodley and eight unique services in Mavuno. In addition, I attended a youth service in each church and number of other gatherings, adding up to a total of thirty-two observed services. During this period, I interviewed six individuals in leadership positions in Mavuno and Woodley and one local pentecostal theologian, and had a large number of informal conversations with leaders and academics in Nairobi. I interviewed the music team in each church and a youth group in Woodley, and conducted surveys collecting more than six hundred responses in total. I collected almost ninety songs from the two churches combined.

In numbers, the fieldwork looks as follows:

- I spent a total of 5 months in the field.
- I observed and participated in 45 services and church gatherings. Each service lasted between 1–3 hours.

- I have approximately 900 pages of fieldnotes, including observation notes, and 90 hours of video and audio recording, respectively.
- I interviewed 40 different people in 22 formal interview sessions. This amounts to approximately 20 hours of audio-recorded material, while 15 of the interviews have been transcribed.
- I collected the lyrics of 90 songs. I had 20 Swahili songs translated.
- I collected and analysed 630 questionnaires.

The study builds on all the collected data although not everything is directly quoted or explicitly referred to in the report. The detailed narrations in the Interlude function as exemplary descriptions of observed services, yet the themes I draw from them were present in other services as well. The same is true of interviews, where some voices are more present than others in the report, while the themes brought forward represent the whole set of interviews.

4 The Quagmire of Analysis

Above, I have described the methods I used in the field in a detailed and transparent way in order for the reader to understand how this particular study was designed and how the different methods relate to the purpose of the study and to the research questions. Each method produces a different set of data, and together they illuminate the complexity and richness of worship as it is practiced in Mavuno and Woodley. In this section I briefly describe how I have worked with analysis, and to what ‘analytic use’ I have put each of the data sets.

My point of departure is the ritual phenomenon that Albrecht refers to as ‘the rite of worship and praise’ and that for the sake of convenience, and in accordance with global pentecostal-charismatic usage, I refer to as ‘worship’. In general, my ambition has been to unpack both the practice and meaning of worship, and to do so from both ritual and theological perspectives (in line with the theoretical framing set out in Chapter 2).

The ritual analysis follows in the footsteps of Ronald Grimes, Catherine Bell, Thomas Csordas, Martin Lindhardt, and Daniel Albrecht,⁵¹ and focuses on the ‘performance’ and ‘embodiment’ of worship: that is, what people do in the

51 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*; Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*; Csordas, ‘Somatic Modes of Attention’; T. Csordas, *Language, Charisma, and Creativity: Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, *Contemporary Anthropology of Religion* (Basingstoke: New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2012); Lindhardt, *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*; Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*.

rite, what they say, how they move, how they dress, what roles they have, what objects they use, and so on. I have looked at how worship is ritualized in terms of processes, structures, and elements of the rite, as well as how participants explain and experience these different aspects. The primary data sources were documented participant observation and interviews, although the surveys and lyrics were allowed to mirror them to some degree. I found video recordings especially helpful for the visual aspects of ritual, and easy to work with since they can be played repeatedly.⁵² Observation notes and interviews, on the other hand, proved very helpful in informing structural and experiential aspects.

The theological analysis follows in the footsteps of Steven Land, Mark Cartledge, Kenneth Archer, James K.A. Smith, Amos Yong, and Ulrik Josefsson,⁵³ focusing on the relationship between pentecostal theology and spirituality, while at the same time being inspired by Clifton Clarke, Ogbu Kalu, and Kyama Mugambi⁵⁴ in that it does so in an African context. Concretely, the doctrinal aspects of worship were analysed from lyrics and interviews, while the larger issues of the relationship between worship as a part of the liturgy and worship as a way of life—indeed, between pentecostal theology and spirituality—are at the core of my project and have been active throughout the process of analysis for each of the data sets.

In addition to these two main theoretical clusters, I have made use of theories and insights from ethnomusicology, anthropology, and sociology, depending on what I have seen in the data. In line with the iterative-inductive approach, I have aimed for a creative dialogue between theory, data, and analysis, allowing them to interact at each step of the process and so co-produce the end result.⁵⁵

52 Glesne, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*, 81; Lars Kaijser and Magnus Öhlander, *Etnologiskt Fältarbete* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2011).

53 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*; Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*; Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*; Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*; Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*; Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*; Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*; Yong, 'Conclusion: Improvisation, Indigenization, and Inspiration: Theological Reflections on the Sound and Spirit of Global Renewal'; Josefsson, *Liv och Över Nog: Den Tidiga Pingströrelsens Spiritualitet. Abundant Life: The Spirituality of the Early Pentecostal Movement in Sweden*.

54 Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*.

55 Compare O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 30.

Technically speaking, my analytic process could be described as a *'bricolage'*⁵⁶ of analytic techniques suitable for each of the datasets. As mentioned above, the research survey was analysed using SPSS, and presented in numerical tables.⁵⁷ Lyrics were compiled into an alphabetic collection of songs used in each church, and a chronological list of songs sung in each service. Then I made tables, using Word, listing such things as themes, metaphors, biblical texts, type of song, and pronoun and person in Godhead. This process is described further below. Lastly, for the interviews, observation notes and other field notes, I used NVivo to code the content according to themes, categories, and concepts, and to make annotations. The coding built on my four theoretical frames—*orthopraxis*, *orthopathos*, *orthopistis*, and *orthodoxa*—homing in on ritual, somatic-emotional, and doctrinal aspects, and relating the practice and interpretation of worship to the larger picture of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology.

While coding and writing, I occasionally went back to the video and audio recordings when I needed more detail, such as exact quotes or a clearer picture than provided by the observation notes. Since I started this coding rather late in the process—once I had all my data and had begun planning my dissertation—I chose to work closely with theory. The analytic process had naturally begun much earlier when designing the project, deciding on interview questions, creating observation guides, and so on, and is, therefore, at least partly built into the design.⁵⁸

4.1 *Analysing Lyrics in Search of Theology: A Special Excursion*

The prospect of analysing lyrics in search of theology raised some methodological challenges for me, at the phase of collection as well as analysis. I have already described the collection phase above; here I explain how I worked with the analysis, since this has implications, especially for the discussion in Chapter 7.

For Woodley, I compiled a list of fifty-four unique songs that were sung during eight services. During my fieldwork, I observed a total of thirteen different services in the church, held on nine different days: ten Sunday services (unique occasions), two Power house (Wednesday evening) and one Family Carols Service (Friday night). Since the program is repeated in the three services each Sunday, I choose to count these as 'one' rather than 'three' services in my analysis. The Family Carols Service was a special occasion that did not follow

56 Kvale and Brinkmann, *Den Kvalitative Forskningsintervjun*, 251. Emphasis in original.

57 See Appendix.

58 Kvale and Brinkmann, *Den Kvalitative Forskningsintervjun*, 253–58.

the normal rhythm of a Sunday service (as explained in Chapter 5), which is why I chose to not include those songs in the analysis. Therefore, the analysis is based on songs sung in eight different services.⁵⁹

For Mavuno, I compiled a list of thirty-six unique songs that were sung in six different Sunday services. During fieldwork, I observed a total of fourteen different services in the church, held on eleven different days; eight Sunday services (unique occasions), five staff meetings (Wednesday morning), and one youth service (Sunday). Since the program is repeated twice on each Sunday, these are counted as 'one' as above. Due to the more complicated process of finding lyrics for the songs sung in Mavuno, I have not included songs from staff meetings and the youth service; instead, only Sunday worship is considered for this church. Therefore, the analysis is based on six different services from Mavuno.⁶⁰ One of them was a Christmas Service, referred to as the Alternative Christmas Service, that started off as a normal Sunday service but then included a concert of piano and voice in the middle, before ending with an altar call.⁶¹ In that service, a total of twenty-seven songs were sung, but given the fact that half of them were secular songs,⁶² only the thirteen songs that were functionally sung as worship songs⁶³ were included in the theological analysis.

Thus, the ratio of songs in each service is quite astonishing. In Woodley, an average of 6.75 unique songs were sung in each service. Only two songs were sung on more than one occasion, pointing to the high level of planning and organization surrounding the liturgy and CITAM's broad musical repertoire.⁶⁴ It does not necessarily imply, however, that these songs were all new to the congregation; my impression was rather the opposite. It seemed like the songs were well known in most cases, either because they were taken from the large Christian song tradition with which many congregants are familiar, or because they are often played on Christian radio or distributed via other media.⁶⁵

59 See Appendix 7.

60 See Appendix 7.

61 I discuss this in a forthcoming book chapter: Björkander, 'Who Got the Rite Wrong? The Mavuno Alternative Christmas Service and Charismatic Ritual'.

62 By 'secular' I mean songs that are normally sung in non-ecclesial settings and that do not have explicitly Christian lyrics, in accordance with local usage.

63 I.e. congregational song, sung according to the ritual patterns of 'the rite of worship and praise' described in Chapter 5.

64 Kidula, 'Singing the Lord's Song in the Spirit and with Understanding: The Practice of Nairobi Pentecostal Church', 133–47.

65 In Nairobi I heard Christian music played on buses and in shopping malls, and Christian CDs were available on every corner, not to mention the internet. See also Parsitau,

English hymns were frequent in the repertoire, as were Swahili choruses, Afro-American Gospel, and contemporary worship music by various performers, such as Reuben Kigame, VaShawn Mitchell, Kurt Carr, and Kabeira & the Klan.

In Mavuno the thirty-five songs are distributed unevenly between the six Sundays, thirteen of them belonging to one occasion as described above. This means that the average number sung at 'normal' Sunday services is 4.4 songs, considerably fewer than at Woodley. This is also how worship leaders explained the process to me, that they include four or five songs in each service. Three songs were sung on more than one occasion, the rest are used only once, again pointing to a high level of organization and planning of services. Apart from the Christmas service, where several hymns were included, the repertoire is more streamlined in Mavuno. African, Afro-American, and Australian contemporary worship music dominates, with original performers including Sinach, Gospel Fathers, Kanjii Mbugua, Marvin Sapp, and Tye Tribbett.

Although the repertoires in the two churches differ, there is still considerable overlap when it comes to original artists: Hillsong, Israel Houghton, Hezekiah Walker, Chris Tomlin, Don Moen, and William McDowell are all used frequently in both churches. Five songs occur in the lists of both churches: two hymns, both sung as congregational worship (*Away in a Manger*, *Oh Come All Ye faithful*), and two contemporary worship songs (*Our God*, *Withholding Nothing*). One song, a hybrid of hymn and contemporary worship, exists in both English and Swahili, (*The Solid Rock/Cornerstone/Cha kutumaini sina*), and both churches sang versions of it. In Woodley, fifteen out of fifty-four songs were in Swahili, the corresponding number in Mavuno is five out of thirty-five. It is thus a small proportion, but still important.

The sheer volume of songs forced me to choose between selecting just a few for in-depth analysis or taking a helicopter perspective and trying to uncover theological patterns in the whole corpus. Both methods raised questions: in the former, which songs to include or exclude and on what criteria; in the latter, whether or not these 54/35 songs of disparate origin could be treated as a corpus representing the theology of each church, and on what grounds. Ultimately, I chose the second path as I was interested in the overall theological pattern and thought a broader picture would do more justice to the local theology. The difficulty of choosing which songs to analyse when only a very few of them were ever repeated (if frequency were to be a deciding factor) also

"Then Sings My Soul": Gospel Music as Popular Culture in the Spiritual Lives of Kenyan Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians', 3.

affected the choice. The question remained, however, of whether the selected corpus represented local theology.

The key here is the context and the particularity of field research. As a theologian working empirically, my focus is on the “lived and the local,”⁶⁶ especially local practice. My study does not take into account all the worship songs ever sung in CITAM Woodley and Mavuno Church, only those that I observed during church services; neither does it take into account the origin and use of these songs in other settings. Instead, I see the church services as the context that defines the texts/lyrics and makes them what they are theologically. These specific songs have been chosen by this particular church (according to a fairly standardized process), during a particular time (winter 2013–2014), to serve a specific purpose (honouring God and mediating his presence to the congregation); therefore, they represent the theology of these local congregations, at least in some way, and may be analysed by me as a researcher. Had I come at a different time, I would have collected a different set of songs (for example, fewer Christmas hymns), and probably come to slightly different conclusions. In a similar way as one can speak of ‘Lucan theology’ in exegetics, while knowing that much of the Lucan corpus is also present in Matthew and Mark and not original to Luke, one may also speak of a ‘local pentecostal theology’, tentatively treating the collected songs as a textual corpus, despite their wide use and disparate origins.

An important aspect of this is the level of control. To what extent is the repertoire—and its theological profile—a matter of conscious choice? And if it is, who has authority to decide what songs to include? In CITAM, leadership is controlled by formal democratic and hierarchical structures, and through them formalized control is also exercised over what is preached in terms of doctrine. In Mavuno the control is exercised informally through a tight and diligent service-planning process and the charisma of the top leaders. Likewise, there is a control over the sung theology. In Woodley the worship leader in charge decides on what to sing on a specific Sunday, then sends the worship list to the worship pastor for approval before rehearsing with the team and presenting the song(s) in church. Should the Senior Pastor, the elders and deacons, or even the Bishop, have any objections to a specific song, they may disapprove of further use. In Mavuno, the tight planning process of services also includes the songs; hence, the worship team’s choices are checked in advance, and again afterwards in that the leading pastors may choose to remove a song from the repertoire if they see it as unfitting in some regard. Comments and

66 Ward, ‘Introduction’, 9.

suggestions from congregants may also be taken into account when worship leaders decide on the repertoire, meaning that an organic process operates to build a local consensus. If a song deviates too much from the general (explicit or implicit) local theology, it will soon be replaced by another.

In terms of method, the process of analysis went as follows: for each church, I listened to the sound recordings with the compilation of lyrics in front of me and made notes: marking, for example, the names and titles used to address God, Trinitarian references, ways to describe God, references to Scripture (implicit and explicit), personal pronoun usage, type of songs, words for worship and so on. Then I made charts displaying the outcome in tables to see the overall pattern (see examples in Appendix 3). While working on the analysis and writing stages, I kept moving back and forth between lyrics, charts, and internet sources such as Songselect.ccli.com, Biblegateway.com, Hymnary.org, Youtube.com, and many others.⁶⁷ Analysis thus focused on the theological content of songs, and not, for example, on linguistic qualities or stylistic form (but see form-functional typology, discussed in Chapter 7). This distinctly theological focus is, however, consistent not only with my own research interest, but also with the songs themselves and their doxological, liturgical, and sacramental purposes.

Having now toured through my research process as a fieldwork journey, a data-collection maze and a quagmire of analysis—and it was indeed a journey, a maze, and sometimes a morass of frustration and confusion—it is time to address ethical considerations and my own role as a researcher.

5 Ethical Considerations

5.1 *Access, Anonymity and Informed Consent*

I used the used the AAA ethical guidelines and general recommendations for ethnography when designing and conducting fieldwork,⁶⁸ although later had to adjust my writing to the stricter GDPR legal obligations in Sweden.

67 It has sometimes been hard to find reliable sources for the origin of a song or its original lyrics, but I have done my best to cross-check between different sources and report them here. In this I have followed the advice of librarians Annakim Eltén and Andrea Mervik, Lund University Libraries (Consultation 2017-01-24).

68 Compare discussion on ethical considerations in Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 37–44; Jaison, *Qualitative Research and Transformative Results*, 56–79; O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 62–72.

In my first phase of fieldwork, I carried a letter that introduced me and my research project and one of recommendation from Lund University, which I handed to the people whom I met for interviews; I then explained my project and asked them for their oral consent to take part in research. As I was interviewing well-educated people in elite positions, I counted on everyone having understood the information. I also asked the leaders if they would be willing to receive me in their church for a second round of fieldwork. As both Mavuno and Woodley are large organizations, formal consent could not be gained from each individual coming to church, but Senior Pastors in both churches granted their general consent to my presence. This access was confirmed via email before I returned to the field and continuously during my time in the churches.

When I met with interviewees in the second phase of fieldwork, I asked them to fill in a form with their names, information about their role in the church or organization, age, and gender; here they also signed their consent to taking part in the research and ticked a box to indicate whether they wanted their names to be anonymized in the study or not. Most did not want to be anonymous, rather the opposite; they were happy to take part in the study and to articulate their views and the views of their church. However, the GDPR regulations make this impossible, since views on religion are counted as sensitive, personal information and must be protected according to Swedish law. Therefore, I have decided to give all research participants pseudonyms (whether I met them for formal interviews or informal conversations). As an extra precaution, I have chosen to designate all church leaders as 'Pastor' regardless of their role in the church, but readers should be aware that I interviewed people at all levels of pastoral leadership. The list of interviewees in Appendix 7 gives a general indication of each person's relative position.

I made two exceptions to this rule. First, I did not anonymize local academics and theologians, since they did not speak of their own personal faith but talked in general about the situation in Kenyan churches or Mavuno/Woodley. Second, when I describe church services, I keep the real names of people in leadership positions acting on the platform, but anonymize the names of ordinary congregants when applicable. The church services are open to the public and, in the case of Mavuno, partly made public on the internet, so it is not a matter of breaking confidentiality. In effect, it would be very difficult to anonymize the services in any real sense, since those who know of these two churches would immediately recognize the people involved from my description of their demeanours.

At the beginning of my project, I applied for a research permit from local authorities at the National Council for Science and Technology (a department

of Kenyan government later re-named NACOSTI). After a bit of hassle, and many visits to different offices, the permission was legally granted.

5.2 *Copyright Issues*

Since part of my data consists of lyrics to songs that come under copyright regulations, I have discussed the ethical and legal side of this work with staff at Lund University Libraries.⁶⁹ Following their recommendations, I have taken pains to identify the author in each case and used an official version of the song whenever I quote lyrics. This information has been sought via Hymnary.org, for hymns, and via Songselect.ccli.com, for contemporary worship songs in English. The situation was more difficult for the Swahili songs, since I did not have any song books or general online resources to consult; instead I had to rely on searches via Google and YouTube for each song. I have done my best in this regard, and if I have made mistakes, authors and copyright holders are welcome to contact me with corrections. For a full list of references to songs, see Appendix 7.

The authors (song writers) are referenced in footnotes when I quote lyrics unless I have not been able to identify who they are, whereupon I have mentioned this in the footnote. Normally, I quote only parts of the songs unless the analysis requires the whole text. This is within the legal requirements for an academic work, and I have not sought specific permission to use the lyrics.⁷⁰

For quotes from the Bible, I have stated which version is used in each case. I mostly use the New International Version in English and the Swahili Union Version in Swahili.

5.3 *The Role of the Researcher*

In field based research, ethical considerations also include reflections on the role of the researcher vis-à-vis the research field and research participants. What kind of power relations were at play in the field? What position did the researcher take: in the field, before, and after? How did her age, gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliation affect the research? What biases did she bring with her? Did she in any way impact the research site with her presence? How does she represent the people she studied in her writing?⁷¹ Important as these questions may be, it is hard to give anything but partial answers to them, given

69 Consultation with Annakim Eltén and Andrea Mervik, Lund University Libraries (2017-01-24).

70 Henry Olsson and Jan Rosén, *Upphovsrättslagstiftningen: En Kommentar* (Stockholm: Wolters Kluwer, 2016).

71 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 35–46; O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, 62–85, 208–30.

space constraints; nonetheless, let me try add a reflexive take on who I am and the position I have taken in this research.

As I mentioned in the Introduction, I grew up as a child of Swedish pentecostal missionaries to Eastern Africa. I was born in Kigali, Rwanda, went to boarding school in Burundi, and spent eight out of my first twelve years in Africa. For vacations we travelled across the region, visiting countries like Tanzania, Uganda, Kongo/Zaire, Zimbabwe, Zambia; we often went to Kenya, enjoying the coastal life of Mombasa or visiting Nairobi where my sister went to boarding school. When we came back to Sweden my father kept travelling back and forth to the region and later my parents worked in South Sudan for several years. In this sense, I was in no way a new-comer to East Africa when I embarked on fieldwork, although I had never before lived in Nairobi. I was also no newcomer to African Pentecostalism, having been infused since childhood with the sounds and sights of praying congregations, preaching pastors, dancing choirs, and singing Sunday schools. Their spirituality fascinated me early on, although it was not until much later that I could put words to what I had experienced. Together with my family, I literally went to hundreds of services, in dozens of churches, lasting for hours and hours, often in languages I did not comprehend. Although I did not know it then, my participant observation of African Pentecostalism had begun already. Later in life, I have worked as a Bible teacher in pentecostal and evangelical churches in Sweden, travelled widely in Africa and across the world, and visited many different kinds of pentecostal and charismatic communities. I consider myself a pentecostal theologian, with my roots firmly in the pentecostal-charismatic tradition and a desire to develop and deepen the theological reflection among Pentecostals. Thus, in terms of spirituality and theology, I am a complete insider to this research.

However, in terms of culture and ethnicity, I am an outsider. I was born in Africa, but I did not grow up as an African. I was immersed in Swedish culture, went to Swedish schools, spoke barely a word other than Swedish, celebrated Swedish holidays, and had mainly Swedish friends. When I came to the field, I had never before lived in Kenya, and I had not visited the country as an adult. I was also an outsider to the two congregations; I knew no one in church and had never participated in any of their services. In very many ways I was a stranger in the field, and had to learn everything from scratch: simple things like how to travel around the city, and more complicated ones such as how to relate to the church elite. And not least, how to get to know the congregants. Growing up, I had an acute sense of being different from everyone around me (and it was not a pleasant one, I would have much preferred to fit in). This feeling of being strange kicked in when I came to Kenya and, paired with a personality that rather observes than participates, I had a hard time

finding my role in church and often retired to my notes and my camera rather than trying to interact with congregants. The urban atmosphere in Nairobi did not exactly help either. Interacting with pastors was somehow easier. They were often already aware of my presence in the church and curious about the research topic. Most of the leaders I met in Nairobi were very welcoming, open to cooperating with me, and encouraging me in my research. My insider status did help in this regard, that I spoke the 'pentecostal language' and asked questions that revealed my knowledge of the tradition. However, asymmetries remained. For most of them, I was a guest, a student, and a stranger, not a friend or colleague. I was there due to their goodwill, nothing else, although with some I felt a different kind of connection, one where they enjoyed the conversations with me and even thanked me for spurring their reflections on an important topic.

So, am I an insider or an outsider in this research? The simple answer is that I am both. Like any other position it has both advantages and disadvantages. The insider status helped me gain access, observe nuances, and ask relevant questions, the outsider status helped me look at the congregations with a critical eye. At the same time, the outsider status made fieldwork emotionally challenging, and the insider status will always come with a risk of being uncritical and inattentive to details all too familiar. I have been aware of these risks throughout the project and taken pains to reflect on them at each stage of research. In writing this book, I have opted for a transparent and reflexive way of writing—where my own process and my own role as co-producer of data are made visible—so that readers can judge for themselves whether I have succeeded in handling my insider-outsider position in a responsible manner.

Did I cause any harm in the congregations where I did my research? I certainly hope not, and I have no reason to fear that I did. Did I in any way affect the congregations? In some small way I might have. The Senior Pastor in Woodley was reportedly thrilled with the results of the survey, which I had shared with the leadership, and said that he now understood better who his congregation really was, but I do not know if this had any concrete effect on church ministry. Some of the interviewees said that my questions had cast light on the importance of music and worship, and given them ideas for future sermons, but whether they implemented them or not, I cannot say. Other than that, I do not think that my presence in Nairobi had any impact whatsoever; these churches are much too solid to be affected by the temporary presence of a Swedish observer. And that is as it should be.

One last note must be made concerning my own role, and that has to do with the economics of research. What are the ethical implications of European-based and funded research mediating sub-Saharan voices? What right do

I have to ‘represent’ their voices to the world? On the one hand, I have none. They have graciously given me access to their world, and I can only try and be as faithful as possible to their intentions as I write. On the other hand, money talks. The research is *de facto* funded and published in the West, for a Western-oriented academic audience, and that affects both the content and the form of what I write. Is it ethical? Well, the old order—where European theology dealt only with European issues in European languages—was certainly not. And the future order—where academic institutions around the globe fund and publish high-quality research on topics of interest to people around the globe—is yet to be fully realized. Much work must still be done to strengthen academic institutions in Africa. That said, the ideal cannot be one where only Kenyans can study Kenya, or only Swedes study Sweden. As an academic community, we must be able to study things that are outside our own backyard. This is, after all, one of the points of academic work: to learn new things. Personally, I would much rather funnel the voices of sub-Saharan Christians through European-based and funded research than not at all.

In this chapter I have discussed the research design of this current project, the details of fieldwork, data collection, and analysis, as well as the ethical dimensions of my work in some detail. For methodological and ethical reasons, my ambition has been to be as transparent and clear as possible about how the study was conducted. Ultimately, I hope readers will sense that respect, curiosity, integrity, and thoroughness have been my watchwords throughout the project, and that the working procedures can inspire other researchers as I myself have been inspired.

PART 2

Cases and Context



Urban, Progressive Melting Pots

Urban Kenya is alive with pentecostal-charismatic Christianity of all kinds. Its history of renewal is complex, the born-again community is diverse and dynamic, and the links are strong between churches and groups of this type. Progressive Pentecostals constitute an especially fascinating category with their combination of socio-political engagement and charismatic leaning in an urban, middle-class setting. Mavuno, an independent offshoot from Nairobi Chapel and a youth-oriented, innovative, and strategic player, provides us with an example of a church that utilizes music as wings to carry its members far and wide and connect them with secular society. Woodley, a semi-autonomous assembly within the CITAM denomination, and a multi-generational, highly structured church growing in classical pentecostal and revivalist soil, presents us with an example of music being utilized to root a church in history and connect them with the larger Christian community. Like most pentecostal-charismatic churches around the globe, both Mavuno and Woodley value worship as a key feature of liturgy and life, and their practice can serve as an entry point into a larger discussion of the role of worship in pentecostal spirituality and theology.

In this chapter, I briefly introduce the historical background of Pentecostalism in urban Kenya, especially focusing on the role of the two case churches and their respective church families within the charismatic community. Thereafter, I introduce Woodley and Mavuno, giving a short general presentation of each, and discuss their demographic and theological profiles. The chapter is followed by the Interlude, a section that complements this general introduction with detailed ethnographic vignettes centring around the practice of worship and praise in each church.

Readers are reminded of the bounded nature of case studies; descriptions and narrations in this book relate primarily to the way things were at the time of my fieldwork and I am well aware that changes can be both swift and profound. This is particularly true of statistics, and I do not claim to know how things are now, although the text is partially written in present tense.

1 Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya

Since independence, religion, and in particular Christianity, has had a special status in Kenyan society. For while the state is secular in the juridical sense, the society is still infused with religion. Kenya combines a “Western ideal of separation between religion and state” with “a de facto assertion of religious—primarily Christian—identity”¹ into a complicated whole. Churches are key institutional players in politics, economics, education, health, and many other areas. Christian leaders are visible and well known in public life, and issues relating to religion, spirituality, and faith are often discussed in the media or referenced in popular culture. At the same time, the power of religious leaders is contested, atheism and secularism is on the rise, and global transformations affect institutions and individuals alike. To this picture can be added mobility and fluidity between geographical areas, with people moving from the countryside to the city (and sometimes back again), while retaining close links with family, culture, and church ‘back home’. This affects the way religion is lived and practiced, leading to mobility and fluidity in terms of religious belonging as well. Pentecostalism has thrived particularly well in urban centres, resulting in the vibrant—and at times highly contested—presence of pentecostal-type churches (and their music) on almost every corner of Kenyan cities.²

1.1 *Historical Background*

In a thoroughly researched historical study of renewal movements in urban Kenya, church historian and scholar of World Christianity, Kyama Mugambi, describes four phases of development and the resulting four types of pentecostal-charismatic churches in the country.³

1 Gez, *Traditional Churches, Born Again Christianity, and Pentecostalism: Religious Mobility and Religious Repertoires in Urban Kenya*, 104.

2 Gez, 89–152; Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*; Parsitau, “‘Then Sings My Soul’: Gospel Music as Popular Culture in the Spiritual Lives of Kenyan Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians”.

3 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*. At the time of my fieldwork Mugambi was one of the Executive Pastors at Mavuno. For a general introduction to Kenyan church history, see David B. Barrett, *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498–1973* (Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel Publ. House, 1973). For African Church history, see Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African History*; Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present*; and Kalu, *African Christianity: An African Story*.

The first phase was that of the *Spirit-Roho* churches,⁴ developing in the first half of the 20th century as a reaction against historic mission churches, which were thought too close to the colonial government and too foreign in terms of structure and ethos. These churches sought to form a Christianity that was more sensitive to the African worldview, more integrated in terms of spirituality, where African leadership could develop freely. They were developed along ethnic and linguistic lines and led by key leaders, often called prophets, who were known for their supernatural gifting. Communities like the Akurinu, the Africa Israel Church Nineveh, and Legio Maria belong to this group. The *Spirit-Roho* churches became important forerunners of later pentecostal groups in their openness to the Spirit, their adoption of innovative oral liturgy, their leadership structures, and their creative appropriation of Christianity by African culture.⁵

The second phase, comprising the revivalists and student movements,⁶ took place within the historic mission churches which, unlike the *Spirit-Roho* churches, did not develop their own independent structures. Beginning in the 1930s, the East African Revival spread from Rwanda across East Africa, greatly affecting the historic mission churches, to the point where, by “the 1970s the entire Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist national leadership, along with over 90 percent of the clergy, were Revivalists.”⁷ Among young people, a similar renewal took place within the student movements. Organizations such as FOCUS and Kenya Student Christian Fellowship (KSCF) gathered young people in schools and colleges, and became fertile ground for developing spiritual leaders. Within both movements, people gathered around the conversion experience, of which the testimony of being ‘saved’ was a vital component. Coinciding with the turbulent political times that preceded Independence, a surge in formal education, and intense urbanization, these movements offered a new unifying basis for kinship, resulting in communities of ‘saved ones’ that transcended ethnic and linguistic divides.⁸

4 What in the East African context are called *Spirit-Roho* churches, are often referred to as Zionist or Aladura churches in other parts of Africa, or put under the general label African Independent/Initiated/Indigenous Churches (AIC). See, e.g., discussions in Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 65–83; Philomena Njeri Mwaura, ‘African Instituted Churches in East Africa’, *Studies in World Christianity* 10, no. 2 (2004): 160–84.

5 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 23–54.

6 These movements are often referred to as the *Balokole* or *Tukutendereza*, see discussion in Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 15–17, 94–98.

7 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 60–61.

8 Mugambi, 55–87.

In the third phase of renewal, beginning in the 1970s, the Newer Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (NPCC) appeared on the scene,⁹ operating in a post-Independence era of dynamic change at all levels of society. Like many of their contemporaries in other sectors of society, they emphasized self-determination, entrepreneurship, and optimism, and thus offered Christianity as “a potent force in the individual’s circumstances.”¹⁰ Examples of churches in this group include Deliverance Church, Redeemed Gospel Church, Jubilee Christian Church, and Jesus is Alive Ministries. Again, charismatic leaders, both men and women, were instrumental in the growth of the renewal, and they formed churches that were independent of missionary control. Interestingly, many of the leaders came out of the student movements, bringing with them the importance of a conversion narrative and the idea of a multi-ethnic and multilingual community of the saved. However, they stressed the miraculous in a much more profound way and added elements of prosperity, physical well-being, hope, and victory to their understanding of what salvation entails. These churches became known for their large open-air meetings (crusades), their use of modern technology and media, and their informal approach to liturgy.¹¹

The fourth phase of renewal began as a response to the political and economic turmoil of the 1990s, and the failure of other churches to address that situation in a way that was adequate to the needs of the growing urban, educated middle-class. For while earlier renewal movements had cast salvation in concrete, physical, and holistic terms, they had done so in a narrow, individualistic way and often failed to address social and political problems critically. Many within Kenyan Christianity disapproved of how money was handled in some of the NPCCs, and sought to correct the malpractices associated with the prosperity gospel. This led to the development of Progressive Pentecostal Churches,¹² of which Nairobi Chapel, Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM), and Mavuno Church are all examples. “Going beyond individualist piety,”

9 What Mugambi calls Newer Pentecostal Charismatic Churches are normally referred to as neo-pentecostal or neo-charismatic churches in other literature. See discussion in Chapter 2, as well as for example Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’.

10 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 19.

11 Mugambi, 89–130.

12 Mugambi borrows this expression from Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 1–67. To them Progressive Pentecostalism is one of several orientations within global Pentecostalism and can be found in all types of pentecostal-charismatic groups (Classical, Neo-Pentecostal, Charismatic within historic churches, Independent, etc.), whereas to Mugambi they are a sub-group within the NPCC/Neo-Pentecostal type; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 133, 146.

Mugambi says, this new group of churches “augment their application of the gospel with political awareness and a commitment to social transformation.”¹³ The Progressive Pentecostals retained some elements from earlier renewal movements: a holistic spirituality with an openness towards the metaphysical, an emphasis on conversion and the born-again community, oral forms of liturgy, and the central role given to the charismatic leader. At the same time they added new elements: transparency in finances, clear structures of governance, innovative systems to develop discipleship and leadership, and joint socio-political engagement. They are as entrepreneurial and creative as their predecessors in appropriating Christianity for African culture, but living and acting in a different time and context, and drawing slightly different conclusions.¹⁴

Some of these conclusions have to do with worship practices, which is why Mavuno and Woodley are intriguing cases in the context of this study. As examples of progressive, urban, contemporary, African Pentecostalism, their corporate worship can serve as a vantage point from which to examine the connection between music, spirituality, and theology.

1.2 *One Charismatic Community, Two Influential Church Families*

According to local pentecostal theologian Gideon Achieng, of the Pan African Christian University, the charismatic Christian community in Nairobi is “basically the same community.”¹⁵ Many people move between churches during their lifetimes and attend several churches on a regular basis. This picture is confirmed by social anthropologist Yonatan Gez in his study of religious mobility and religious repertoires in Kenya. He notes a general openness to mobility between Christian denominations and groups, and an especially strong bond between churches of a ‘born-again’ type, that is, churches and groups in which the three later phases of renewal described above more or less overlap.¹⁶

There are especially strong links between Mavuno and Woodley and their respective church families. Achieng describes how the Nairobi Baptist Church and Nairobi Pentecostal Church have historically “shared congregations,”¹⁷ with people going to the Baptist Church for good teaching and to the

13 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 133.

14 Mugambi, 131–59.

15 Interview Gideon Achieng 2014-03-14.

16 Gez, *Traditional Churches, Born Again Christianity, and Pentecostalism: Religious Mobility and Religious Repertoires in Urban Kenya*, 153–93. Compare Sophie Bremner, ‘Transforming Futures? Being Pentecostal in Kampala, Uganda’ (Thesis, University of East Anglia, 2013); Moberg, *Piety, Intimacy and Mobility: A Case Study of Charismatic Christianity in Present-Day Stockholm*.

17 Interview Gideon Achieng 2014-03-14.

Pentecostal Church for good music. Leaders were regularly recruited across congregations¹⁸ and top-level leaders shared strong bonds of friendship. This “kindred relationship” at the leadership level “made them behave as if they were basically pastoring the same congregation.”¹⁹ Once the Nairobi Chapel appeared on the scene as an offshoot of Nairobi Baptist, a generational move between churches began. The parent generation would be members of Nairobi Baptist, while sending their kids to CITAM because of their children’s ministry; the children would stay there until they reached university and then move to the Nairobi Chapel group (including Mavuno) as young adults and young families. It remains to be seen if some of them will move back to CITAM or Nairobi Baptist once they grow older.²⁰ At the time of my fieldwork, several of the leaders I met in Mavuno had grown up in Nairobi Pentecostal Church, or had taken part in CITAM’s children’s programs, and some still had their families there, even in Woodley. CITAM, in turn, was pondering the generational exodus and struggling to find a way to deal with it.²¹

CITAM, Nairobi Chapel, and Mavuno have all exerted considerable influence within the Christian community in Nairobi that extends far beyond their own congregations. Over the years CITAM has trained many young leaders who have later gone out to plant their own churches or serve in other denominations. The same goes for Nairobi Chapel; people who trained in their internship program have taken up leadership in churches and organizations alike. Today, Mavuno are well on their way to having an equally big impact through their own internship and discipleship programs.²²

The two church families have also had a notable impact on Christian music and media in Kenya. Up until the end of the 20th century, Nairobi Pentecostal Church on Valley Road was “the most famous and the most populous of the Pentecostal and charismatic churches,”²³ in Nairobi and therefore had vast influence. As early as the 1970s, NPC Valley Road started a popular radio ministry that aired Christian music and gospel messages on national radio for three decades. The ministry grew until it had sixty programs a week in six different

18 This dynamism and fluidity in leadership is also described by Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 247–48.

19 Interview Gideon Achieng 2014-03-14.

20 Interview Gideon Achieng 2014-03-14.

21 Interview Gideon Achieng 2014-03-14; Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

22 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 161–221, 253–85; Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 26–29, 89–106. Interview Gideon Achieng 2014-03-14.

23 Kidula, ‘Singing the Lord’s Song in the Spirit and with Understanding: The Practice of Nairobi Pentecostal Church’, 144.

languages, which, since many featured services, indirectly formed a model for liturgical and musical practice around Kenya. This ministry later developed into what is now Hope FM, CITAM's own radio station with 24-hour broadcasting and a nation-wide reach.²⁴ In the 1980s and 90s, the NPC's eclectic approach to music—incorporating a diversity of styles from choral music and small ensemble numbers to Swahili choruses, contemporary worship, and spontaneous singing in the Spirit—became a role model for other churches. Their Christmas music productions, especially the Singing Christmas Tree, became trendsetters in the country.²⁵

Equally influential, while in a different direction, were changes at Nairobi Chapel in the 1990s. By replacing the organ with drums and electric guitars and the hymnals with an overhead projector they were doing something new in Kenya at the time. Later becoming a staple in charismatic circles, the mixing of hymns and contemporary worship songs was radical and innovative at that point. Even more radical was the Nairobi Chapel's experimentation with African beats and African dress and the fact that music was led by a band rather than a soloist or a choir.²⁶ Mavuno has maintained this line of innovation, taking the church into the new millennium. From the outset, the church had a vast social media presence, regularly posting on Twitter and Facebook, broadcasting live on Vimeo, sharing photos on Flickr, and communicating via their website and a number of church blogs.²⁷ In terms of musical styles, they have taken experimentation with African rhythms a step further, also including R&B, hip hop, reggae, and soul in their repertoire. They are especially famous for their 'take-backs', remixed pop-songs with Christian lyrics, pushing the boundaries for what can be considered church music in the first place. Through a range of initiatives, with the Mavuno Worship Project and the Groove Awards as major contributions, Mavuno has had a significant impact on the Kenyan music industry, mainstream and Christian alike.²⁸

Having briefly described Pentecostalism in urban Kenya, its historical development and the place of the two case churches and their respective church

24 Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*, 80–83, 152–54.

25 Kidula, 'Singing the Lord's Song in the Spirit and with Understanding: The Practice of Nairobi Pentecostal Church', 144–45; Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*, 85.

26 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 24; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 271–72.

27 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 71–72.

28 Gitau, 119–29.

families in the charismatic community, it is time to introduce the two churches more specifically.

2 Introducing Woodley and Mavuno

2.1 *CITAM Woodley*

NPC Woodley was the first offshoot of the Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC), located on Valley Road in central Nairobi. This was in 1993, and the new location in the Woodley neighbourhood, a few kilometres west of the city centre, was a strategic one. The NPC already owned premises with a school which could be shared with a new church for the benefit of both. At first, open-air meetings were held in a large tent, but later a multipurpose hall was built, in addition to the offices and school buildings already on the grounds. The church began with a congregation of 100–150, of whom most were transfers from Valley Road, but some also came from Nairobi Baptist Church. By 2002 they gathered around 2,000 people,²⁹ and when I did my fieldwork in 2014, the church had a weekly attendance of around 5,000, including children and young people. Formal membership is, however, much smaller.³⁰

In the beginning, the relationship between the Woodley branch and the central church was not clearly defined, but as more ministries and assemblies were added, NPC had to develop new structures. This resulted in a name change to Christ Is The Answer Ministries (CITAM), and a better defined governance structure. CITAM is now led by a Bishop, a Deacon Board, an Elders council, and a group of Trustees, all elected at the Annual General Meeting of members of the entire church.³¹ The Elders council, in turn, appoints pastors to each branch and these lead the day-to-day work of each assembly. Both men and women are allowed into pastoral leadership. CITAM is thus centrally governed—financially, administratively, and spiritually—within a democratic system. Local assemblies/branches are semi-autonomous and led by a Senior Pastor, together with a local advisory board consisting of elders and deacons. In 2013, CITAM had ten different branches, most in different parts of Nairobi, and several other ministries as well, organizing around 20,000 people in

29 Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*, 116–19.

30 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

31 Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*, 146–51; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 223–51.

total.³² By 2017 weekly attendance figures were up to 30,000 in 18 local assemblies (including one in the US and one in Namibia).³³ Indeed, it could soon be regarded as a denomination.³⁴ CITAM Woodley is known among the branches for its comparatively youthful membership and vital music department, as well as for its ministry among children, families, and couples.³⁵

CITAM's vision is to "impact Kenya and the world at large with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit,"³⁶ popularly put as "Transforming God's people to transform the world."³⁷ Their target group is the English-speaking, urban, educated elite: people in leadership positions in the middle and upper classes. Through impacting this group, whom they see as "the opinion shapers" and "decision-makers"³⁸ in society, they seek to impact society at large. In addition, they strive for a cosmopolitan membership, providing a church for the international community of Nairobi. The use of English as their main language mirrors this ambition, as does the deliberate choice of a repertoire from the Anglo-Saxon musical tradition. Sunday services follow the same pattern in all CITAM churches, as do other ministries like Christian education classes, Sunday school, prayer meetings, and the like.³⁹

The ministry of the church is holistic in the sense of catering for the needs of all generations and all situations in life: "from the cradle to the grave,"⁴⁰ as one of the leaders expressed it. In terms of doctrine, CITAM has summarized its faith into ten statements, confessing belief in the Bible as the Word of God, the Godhead as Triune, and Jesus Christ as the Saviour, Healer, and giver of the Holy Spirit, as well as in the baptism, fruits, and ministries of the Spirit.⁴¹ They situate themselves as a pentecostal and evangelical church and take their

32 Interview Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14, Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

33 Christ Is the Answer Ministries, CITAM, official website, <http://www.citam.org> (accessed 2017-01-12).

34 CITAM does not understand itself as a denomination, but one of the pastors says that they are heading in that direction (Interview Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14).

35 Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*, 116–19. Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

36 Mugambi, 207. See also Christ Is the Answer Ministries, CITAM, official website, <http://www.citam.org> (accessed 2017-01-12).

37 Fieldnotes 2013-12-29; Fieldnotes 2014-01-12.

38 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

39 Interview Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14; Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31; Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21. Compare with discussion in Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 142–49, 191–94, 238–40.

40 Interview Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14.

41 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 205–6.

influences from classical Pentecostalism, mainstream Evangelicalism, and Neo-Pentecostalism.⁴²

CITAM traces its history back to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), a classical pentecostal denomination with links to the Azusa street revival.⁴³ The mother church, Nairobi Pentecostal Church, began in the 1950s as a small fellowship for Canadian missionaries, and only later developed into a church. Today CITAM has an entirely national leadership while still cooperating with PAOC—in education, for example.⁴⁴

2.2 *Mavuno Church Bellevue*

Mavuno Church began as a church plant in 2005 when the non-denominational megachurch, Nairobi Chapel, decided to split into five congregations and relocate along the major roads connecting greater Nairobi with the city centre. Mavuno, which means Harvest, was commissioned to reach the south-eastern side of the city, eventually moving into an abandoned drive-in cinema along Mombasa Road, where they put up a huge all-weather tent for the adult service and some smaller ones for other purposes. At the time of my fieldwork, they were about to move again, this time further south along Mombasa Road to the Athi River. The Mavuno Bellevue campus became the Mavuno Hill City campus.⁴⁵ When Mavuno Church first started, they had around 400 attendees, adults and children, while in 2013 and 2014 when I visited them, they gathered around 4,000 adults, young people, and children on a Sunday at the Bellevue campus. They had also started several new campuses: five in the Nairobi area and five in other cities (Kampala, Blantyre, Kigali, Lusaka, and Berlin).

The initial group came from Nairobi Chapel, and it was only after the move to Bellevue that the church started to attract larger crowds, especially people in business, marketing, media, and the music industry. Their primary target group is young adults in the growing middle-class section of society: upwardly mobile, university-educated, and English-speaking. Members of this group are

42 Mugambi, 149–55, 223–28, 250–51. See further discussion below and in Chapter 2.

43 Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal. How God Used a Handful of Christians to Spark a Worldwide Movement.*, 75.

44 Interview Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14; Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21. For a full depiction of the history of CITAM, see Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*; compare Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 223–51.

45 A full depiction of the Mavuno church and its journey is found in Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*. See also Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 148–50, 174–86, 217–18.

regarded as the key influencers of cultural change and therefore able to have a large impact.

Mavuno strives to form a church for “the un-churched, the non-churched, and the de-churched,”⁴⁶ as one of their leaders expressed it. To reach this goal, they have formed a discipleship tool that they called the Mavuno Marathon,⁴⁷ whereby people are led to faith and to maturity in faith through a series of classes. These classes are integrated with outreach events, services, life groups, and social initiatives into a total system,⁴⁸ summarized in the mission statement as “[t]urning ordinary believers into fearless influencers of society”⁴⁹—their way of stating the Great Commission from Matthew 28.⁵⁰ Sunday services with music that appeals to the young, with a message that is relevant to their needs, and where they feel at home, are a major part of this vision, along with their values, which are presented in the acronym REAP: Relevance, Excellence, Authenticity, and Passion.⁵¹

Mavuno church is led by the Senior Pastor and his team of executive pastors, each responsible for an area of the organization.⁵² Below them is a group of staff members, pastors, and trainees at different levels, organized into teams that in turn manage the work of volunteer leaders. Over time this has developed into a professionalized and complex system of governance.⁵³ At the time of my fieldwork, there were around a hundred staff members, and eight hundred to one thousand actively engaged leaders who constitute the formal membership of the church, which is thus much smaller than actual attendance at Sunday services. At all levels, both men and women take on leadership roles.

46 Informal conversation with Mavuno pastor, Fieldnotes 2013-12-22.

47 The Mavuno Marathon was later renamed the ‘T-Loop’, shorthand for ‘Mavuno Transformation Loop’, see: Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 184–85.

48 Mugambi, 174–85; Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 66–88. Interview Pastor Munga 2013-01-24.

49 Mavuno Church official website, <https://www.mavunochurch.org/our-mission-4> (accessed 2020-12-09). See also Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 148–49.

50 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11; compare Matthew 28:19–20, NIV: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”.

51 <https://www.mavunochurch.org/our-values> (accessed 2023-10-13).

52 <https://www.mavunochurch.org/executive-pastors-team> (accessed 2020-12-09).

53 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 84, 103–6.

The church is led in a top-down manner and not according to a democratic formula, although there is also room for bottom-up initiatives.⁵⁴

Theologically, Mavuno situates themselves as a non-denominational evangelical church, although they have been influenced by a range of Christian traditions: Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, classical pentecostal, and neo-charismatic. They find denominational labels irrelevant, and actively seek to break away from the demarcations that these create. In order to reach the younger generation, they are happy to be seen as different to almost anything else. Their doctrinal statement comes in the form of a communal affirmation often used in services, 'the Fearless Creed', which confirms, in an informal way, salvation through Jesus Christ, God's sovereignty, the Bible as the Word of God, the born-again experience, the church as a place of community and growth, and the Great Commission as a guiding principle in life.⁵⁵

Nairobi Chapel, the mother church of Mavuno, began in the 1950s as a fellowship for British colonial settler families, following the tradition of the Plymouth Brethren in terms of worship and theology. After independence, membership dropped and in the 1980s the community invited a team from the Nairobi Baptist Church to revitalize and indigenize the church in order to reach out to the young Kenyan population. This led to a total makeover of the congregation and produced what has become a large church planting movement with several church families. Today all the churches in the Nairobi Chapel group, including Mavuno, are self-governed, with national leadership. In 2018, the Association of Nairobi Chapel Churches had become a movement of around 15,000 people.⁵⁶

2.3 *Demographic Profiles and Affiliation*

Above, I described Mavuno as a church for young, professional adults, and Woodley as an all-generational church for the elite in society. This is how they presented themselves and were described by interviewees and in literature. Looking more closely at the data from my surveys, however, the picture is both confirmed and slightly revised (Table 1).

According to the survey results, half of the group of people who come to Mavuno's main service on a Sunday morning are in their twenties, so certainly

54 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

55 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 86–87; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 148–55, 174–85. See further discussion on theology below and in Chapter 2.

56 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 17–19, 30. Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

TABLE 1 Age and educational profile, Woodley and Mavuno

Age of respondents	Woodley Mavuno		Level of education	Woodley Mavuno	
Below 12	0%	1.7%	Incomplete primary school	0.9%	0.7%
13–19	7.0%	2.7%	Primary school	3.9%	1.0%
20–29	35.5%	52.0%	Secondary school	16.1%	6.7%
30–39	30.6%	29.7%	College certificate	11.5%	6.6%
40–49	17.9%	11.0%	College diploma	23.6%	16.7%
50–59	7.6%	3.0%	Bachelor degree	27.3%	44.7%
60 and above	1.5%	0%	Graduate degree	15.2%	21.7%
			Doctorate degree	1.5%	2.0%

young adults. But as many as fourteen per cent are actually above the age of forty, and a third of church attendees are in their thirties, and thus heading for middle-age. At Woodley, their self-conception is one of catering for “older folk rather than more younger ones,”⁵⁷ while in reality, their age profile is comparatively young: sixty-six per cent are between the ages of twenty and forty, and not even ten per cent are above the age of fifty. In both churches there are many more people under the age of twenty, but since they have their own gatherings (Sunday school and youth meeting) they did not take part in the survey.

In terms of education levels, both churches certainly have a large group of educated people. Results from Mavuno are striking: sixty-eight per cent of the respondents held a bachelor’s degree or higher. One can assume that at least some of those who said they did not are students on the way to attaining one. In Woodley, although deliberately targeting the English-speaking elite in society, the profile is more mixed. While forty-four per cent had a bachelor’s degree or higher, about a fifth of the respondents had no college or university degree at all.

In terms of gender, the picture is similar for the two churches. Female respondents are in the majority, around sixty per cent in both churches. Another aspect of demography is that of language (Table 2). The question is a tricky one, since most Kenyans speak several languages and selecting their

mother tongue is not straightforward. Schools teach in Swahili and English, and at home one or more of the local languages will be utilized. Some respondents commented on this in both questionnaires, as well as in interviews. The numbers should therefore be treated with some caution, although I still find them valuable in terms of overall pattern.

Woodley presents a top-three group of languages: Dhouluo, Ololuyia, and Kikuyu, closely followed by Kalenjin, Kamba, and Kimiiru. This to me points to a fairly large spread of ethnic belonging in the church. Swahili, although frequently used in church, is spoken as a first language by only three per cent. In Mavuno, on the other hand, Kikuyu is the mother tongue of more than a third of respondents, while Dhouluo, Kiswahili, Kamba, and Ololuyia are spoken by around ten per cent each. The ethnic mixture is less varied. Interestingly, English, the church language of both Mavuno and Woodley, is considered the mother tongue by five and three per cent in each church, respectively. However, it is the language of education, and as such it is a natural choice given the demographic to which they seek to cater.

To sum up, the congregational profile in Woodley is in many ways a mixed bag—varying ages, levels of education, and original languages—while the demographics in Mavuno are much more streamlined: highly educated

TABLE 2 Language profile, Woodley and Mavuno

Language (mother tongue)	Woodley	Language (mother tongue)	Mavuno
Dhouluo	20.0%	Kikuyu	34.3%
Ololuyia	18.5%	Dhouluo	11.7%
Kikuyu	15.8%	Kiswahili	9.3%
Kalenjin	10.3%	Kamba	8.0%
Kamba	8.8%	Ololuyia	8.0%
Ekegussi	8.8%	Kalenjin	6.3%
Kimiiru/Kiambu	6.1%	Kimiiru/Kiambu	5.7%
Others	3.6%	English	5.3%
Kiswahili	3.0%	Others	4.7%
English	3.0%	Ekegussi	3.0%
Mijikenda	1.8%	Mijikenda	1.7%
Samburu	.3%	Masai	1.0%
Masai	0%	Samburu	1.0%

TABLE 3 Church affiliation, Woodley and Mavuno

Type of affiliation with church	Woodley	Type of affiliation with church	Mavuno
Occasional visitor, member of other church	9.7%	Occasional visitor, member of other church	6.3%
Occasional visitor, not member of other church	4.8%	Occasional visitor, not member of other church	6.7%
Regular visitor, member of other church	13.3%	Regular visitor, member of other church	16.3%
Regular visitor, not member of other church	21.5%	Regular visitor, not member of other church	14.7%
Member of CITAM Woodley, involved in ministry	20.6%	Member of Mavuno life-group	28.7%
Member of CITAM Woodley, not involved in ministry	30.0%	Mavuno associate (volunteer leader)	25.3%
		Mavuno staff member	2.0%

people between the ages of twenty and forty, and a high proportion of Kikuyu speakers.

The surveys also covered church affiliation and the results show that only about half of the respondents in each church are actual members, the rest are either occasional or regular visitors and no small proportion of them, almost a quarter of respondents in each case, actually belongs to another church (Table 3). Church 'homelessness' is also prevalent, for the remaining quarter are occasional or regular visitors with no other church membership.

If half of the people who visit Mavuno and Woodley on a Sunday morning are visitors, and half are members with different levels of engagement, how stable is their affiliation? For how long have they been coming to church? Table 4 gives a hint of the situation.

It seems the pattern here is that Woodley has a far more stable congregation than Mavuno, with almost forty per cent having been involved for more than five years, compared to a mere sixteen per cent in Mavuno, while those who have been involved for fewer than three years constitute half the latter's congregation. This should not be surprising given the 'wow' factor of a place like Mavuno, which attracts many new people simply by its reputation and the comparatively much longer history and more stable structures of CITAM. Even

TABLE 4 Time of affiliation with Woodley and Mavuno

Time of affiliation with church	Woodley	Mavuno
Less than 1 year	18.8%	27.3%
1–3 years	25.8%	32.0%
3–5 years	13.9%	21.3%
More than 5 years	37.0%	16.7%
Not affiliated	4.5%	2.7%

in Woodley, however, the group of people that has been involved for fewer than three years is actually larger than the group that has been there more than five, pointing again to high levels of church homelessness and religious mobility in Nairobi.

To sum up, both churches gather together a fairly mobile group of people, with comparatively short affiliation spans and loose ties. The pattern is most prominent in Mavuno, but is certainly there in Woodley as well. This confirms a general pattern of religious mobility and multi-belonging in urban Kenya, as observed by Gez⁵⁸ and also found among charismatic Christians in other countries.⁵⁹ Because of this fluidity in religious belonging, and conforming with Ingalls's use of 'congregation' as a concept referring to the practice of congregating,⁶⁰ —those 'who congregate'—I refer to all attendees as 'congregants' regardless of their actual church affiliation.

Hence, it is a diverse group of people, with different levels of education, different ages, different linguistic profiles, and different levels of affiliation with their respective church, which participates in Sunday worship and together makes up the two congregations. The next section demonstrates that diversity and multi-belonging also applies to theological and denominational profiles.

58 Gez, *Traditional Churches, Born Again Christianity, and Pentecostalism: Religious Mobility and Religious Repertoires in Urban Kenya*.

59 For example Uganda and Sweden: Bremner, 'Transforming Futures? Being Pentecostal in Kampala, Uganda'; Moberg, *Piety, Intimacy and Mobility: A Case Study of Charismatic Christianity in Present-Day Stockholm*.

60 Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*, 16–23.

3 Situating Woodley and Mavuno Theologically

Above, I preliminarily situated both Woodley and Mavuno in the larger pentecostal-charismatic tradition, arguing, with the help of Kyama Mugambi, that they can be categorized as ‘Progressive Pentecostals’, retaining some elements of earlier revitalization movements in East Africa and yet creatively applying the Gospel to a different time and context.⁶¹ This ties into the discussions in Chapter 2, where I dwelled upon the difficulty of labelling and defining the tradition, and proposed my own working definition. I also introduced Allan Anderson’s four-fold typology (classical Pentecostals, older Independent or Spirit churches, older church Charismatics, and Neo-Charismatics/Neo-Pentecostals) and highlighted the problems that arise when trying to categorize specific churches, including Mavuno and Woodley. I argued that definitions are neither clear-cut nor static, since churches—and categorizations—change over time. Several different categorizations are possible, especially if both emic and etic perspectives are considered.

In this section I develop this discussion further, looking more closely at the theological orientation of the two churches, including their self-definitions and how some scholars have chosen to label them.

3.1 *Pentecostal or Evangelical?*

On the surface, Mavuno is a “non-denominational, evangelical church,”⁶² just as Pastor Munga explained to me in our interview. And there is certainly much that speaks for designating them as evangelical: their Baptist heritage, the emphasis on Scripture, evangelism, and mission, and their insistence on personal faith and discipleship.⁶³ Looking more closely however, there are also many elements that lean towards the pentecostal-charismatic tradition, especially their emphasis on church planting, their embrace of contemporary culture and mass media, and their style of worship, which all connect them with the neo-charismatic group. Scholars have situated them differently. For example, in her in-depth study of Mavuno, Wanjiru M. Gitau argues that the church should be considered an expression of “evangelical

61 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*.

62 Interview Pastor Munga 2013-01-24.

63 See, for example, discussion in Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th-Century Theology: God & the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 286–309, and; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998), 917–19, 1148–51.

revitalization,”⁶⁴ standing in a long line of revival movements tracing their roots to 18th-century evangelical Christianity. While Kyama Mugambi follows the lead of Miller and Yamamori, who include both the Nairobi Chapel (the mother church of Mavuno) and Nairobi Pentecostal Church (the mother church of Woodley) in their exploration of “Progressive Pentecostalism,”⁶⁵ whereas Paul Gifford puts the same churches under the umbrella of “Middle class Pentecostalism.”⁶⁶

In many ways, Mavuno is a mixture of evangelical and pentecostal tendencies. As Pastor Kamau suggests, “We’re a mish-mash of many things [so] there’s no one single box that Mavuno will fit in.”⁶⁷ He explains that in terms of their practice of prayer and expressions of worship, there are a lot of pentecostal and charismatic elements including vibrant music, public calls for commitment, prophecy, tongues-speaking, and praying for physical healing. On the other hand, the “pulpit theology” is “a mixed bag” of a range of evangelical, contextual, and pentecostal influences, and the same can be said of their ecclesiology and their “pseudo-charismatic”⁶⁸ approach to leadership (meaning that the top leader is not elected, but serves on the basis of his spiritual charisma). Meanwhile, in terms of the basic “thrust” or “process” of doing theology, “we are very evangelical, you know, the Word is very big among us.”⁶⁹ It is this emphasis on the Word that guides them to include what are often seen as charismatic or pentecostal elements. Since these elements are present in the biblical story of the early church, they also see fit to include them in their own practice and theology. When probed on the relationship to Pentecostalism, Pastor Munga responds, “I think we go, I would say if it’s biblical we do it ... So, laying on hands is biblical, speaking in tongues is biblical, um, we [pause]. So, I mean the things that we see in the Bible we practice. And so, some people say, ‘Wow you’re a pentecostal church,’ or ‘you’re a charismatic church.’ I think for us those are just labels.”⁷⁰

The idea that theological and denominational designations are ‘just labels’ was a common one in Mavuno. They did not want to categorize themselves

64 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 113. The expression ‘evangelical revitalization’ is borrowed from Mark Shaw (2010).

65 Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 30, 7–8, 71–72, 90–91, 114–15.

66 Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 109–16.

67 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

68 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

69 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

70 Interview Pastor Munga 2013-01-24.

as a single type and they found Western denominational demarcations rather irrelevant in Africa. “I feel like the distinctions, the walls between denominations, are less concrete here than they are in the West,”⁷¹ says Pastor Munga. An Anglican church in Nairobi can be more ‘pentecostal’ in style than a classic pentecostal church in the West. When I asked Pastor Kamau for his reactions to calling Mavuno a neo-pentecostal, or neo-charismatic church, he responded that it is “very irrelevant” and “doesn’t really matter” how I choose to label them, since “the categories just don’t serve the same function” in the “current revitalization movements.”⁷² Mavuno does not fit the normal categories, and has no intention of doing so. These labels are not part of their self-understanding and they are not something that they teach the congregation or even staff members, since “those categories are sometimes closed doors that really shouldn’t be closed.”⁷³ Then he pauses, and says, “Um, that having been said, if I were to give, if I were to put a category, um, I would probably say, I’d make a big word and say ‘Neo-Charismatic Pentecostal’ as a term.”⁷⁴

This tendency to minimize the importance of belonging to a ‘pentecostal category’, instead focusing on what is biblical, is rather common in non-denominational churches and among individuals with charismatic practice but without a strong connection to the early 20th-century pentecostal revivals. Miller and Yamamori refer to these Christians as “proto-charismatics”;⁷⁵ they belong on the pentecostal-charismatic spectrum, although they typically “do not have roots in traditional Pentecostalism,” and “may not even identify themselves as charismatics.”⁷⁶ They are “completely uninterested in defining labels” and simply attempt “to follow the example of Jesus and the model of the early Christian church, which they see as being filled with manifestation of the Spirit.”⁷⁷ From an outsider’s perspective, it is clear that they share much of their theology and spirituality with the pentecostal-charismatic tradition, although, from an emic perspective, they are disinterested in the connection.

Pastors in CITAM Woodley on the other hand, have no problem labelling themselves or their church ‘pentecostal’; it is part of their core identity and something they value highly. The history, statements of faith, and ecclesial

71 Interview Pastor Munga 2013-01-24.

72 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

73 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

74 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

75 Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 28.

76 Miller and Yamamori, 28.

77 Miller and Yamamori, 28.

affiliations of CITAM make such a labelling unproblematic and self-evident from both an emic and etic perspective, as Justus Mugambi effectively points out in his description of the history of CITAM.⁷⁸ Even though the current name of the church, Christ is the Answer Ministries, does not make any direct reference to Pentecostalism, the former name, the Nairobi Pentecostal Church, is still often used in local idiom, signalling their theological belonging.

The connection to classical Pentecostalism does not, however, rule out other concurrent labels and theological self-categorizations; they may indeed live side by side. When asked to explain the theology of CITAM, Pastor Nyaga answers in the following manner: “We are a pentecostal church. We believe in sound doctrine. We are evangelical. Um, we do believe in the Scripture.”⁷⁹ To him, and many Pentecostals with him, this is not a contradiction in terms; they are at the same time both pentecostal and evangelical. As with Munga above, what matters is that it is ‘biblical’.⁸⁰ To ensure that pastors preach sound doctrine, they must undergo theological training and there is a continuing “accountability in terms of doctrine.”⁸¹ Half-jokingly Pastor Nyaga adds, “[O]f course with the elders and deacons in place they check me as a pastor. If I’m preaching heresy then I’m called, ‘Pastor, what is that you say?’ [chuckles].”⁸² He sees the “prosperity gospel” as especially problematic, and says that some of the “charismatic teachings” are “really quite hyped.”⁸³ Therefore, they have “checks and balances in place”⁸⁴ to guarantee that whatever is preached from the pulpit is sound and biblical.

Curious to see how he understands the term ‘pentecostal’, I asked him for an explanation:

I: You, you said ‘pentecostal’—what makes you distinctly pentecostal in terms of theology?

Nyaga: In terms of theology we believe in the Holy Spirit—of course, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal means that then we, uh, we acknowledge the place of the Holy Spirit in our lives and we preach about the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. And so that’s part of our doctrine, yes. I

78 Mugambi, *Five Decades of God’s Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*.

79 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

80 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

81 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

82 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

83 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

84 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

do know there are churches that while they acknowledge the Holy Spirit as part of the Trinity, but the experience of speaking in other tongues is usually a strange phenomenon [chuckles]. Yes.⁸⁵

What makes the church 'pentecostal' is their 'acknowledgement of the place of the Holy Spirit', especially 'baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues'. This is classic pentecostal theology with roots in the early 20th-century pentecostal revivals.⁸⁶ We may note how careful he is to say that they believe in 'God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit', to make sure no one understands them as so called 'Oneness Pentecostals'.⁸⁷ His explanation of CITAM theology reflects their statements of faith, and similar responses were also given by other pastors within CITAM.⁸⁸

The roots in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, together with an insistence on Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts, and spiritual fruit,⁸⁹ thus put CITAM firmly in the category referred to by scholars as classical Pentecostals. At the same time, things are not as clear-cut as they may seem. Along with other classical Pentecostals, they endorse the evangelical emphasis⁹⁰ on the Bible as the Word of God, an insistence on mission and evangelism, and a strong emphasis on the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Just like Mavuno and many others in the evangelical tradition, they urge people to become born again, and practice believer's baptism (by immersion).⁹¹ All of this makes them 'evangelical' in some sense. Just like Mavuno, they also have a touch of Neo-Pentecostalism through their urban membership, their mega-church organization, and church planting strategies.⁹²

85 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

86 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 25–38, 187–205; Anderson, 'Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions'; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'Pneumatologies in Systematic Theology', in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Michael Bergunder et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 223–44.

87 See discussion in Chapter 2, and Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 45–47.

88 Interview Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14; Pastor Rose 2013-01-20; compare Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*, 205–6.

89 Mugambi, 1–57, 205–6.

90 Mugambi, 205–6. Compare the so called 'Evangelical Distinctives': conversionism, biblicism, crucicentrism, and activism, identified by David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Routledge, 1989), 1–19.

91 Interview Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14; Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

92 Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*, 133–80, 205–7.

Yet there are also important differences in theology between Mavuno and Woodley, as local pentecostal theologian, Gideon Achieng, explains:

But in matters, um, of theology ... Mavuno sees themselves more as Evangelicals, you know, in the technical sense, while Woodley sees themselves as Pentecostals, okay. And I think sometimes the question comes in whether does this mean that if you're a Pentecostal, you're not an Evangelical, you know? Particularly if you think of evangelical meaning that, you know, you believe in the Word of God as the standard of faith and belief. CITAM does believe that, but the thing is that, um, they more lean to Pentecostalism and pentecostal faith, okay? And it's on that basis that they interpret their Scripture.⁹³

To me, this sums it up pretty well; if the evangelical tradition and the pentecostal-charismatic tradition are seen as two concurrent, yet related, streams within Christianity, each with its respective theological tendencies and emphases,⁹⁴ then Mavuno leans more towards the former and CITAM more towards the latter. To some extent it is a matter of choice, and it would be quite possible to underline the differences between them and simply describe Mavuno as a non-denominational, evangelical church and Woodley as a classic pentecostal church in the holiness tradition. Yet it is also very possible to do as I do in this study, following Kyama Mugambi, and underline their similarities by labelling them both Progressive Pentecostals, albeit with slightly different leanings. The point is that the categorizations are very hard to uphold in an East African context where almost every church has been affected by charismatic revivals at some point⁹⁵—Mavuno pastors are right in this respect—and yet it is important to situate the churches theologically for analytic purposes. While aware that Mavuno and Woodley share many traits with the evangelical tradition, I am primarily interested in the way worship in Mavuno and Woodley mirror tendencies within the pentecostal-charismatic tradition, and have therefore used that as my main theological lens throughout the study.

93 Interview Gideon Achieng 2014-03-14.

94 Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*, 38–61. Historically and theologically there are strong links between Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism, while also important differences.

95 Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 23–24, 94–98; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*. Compare discussion in Bremner, 'Transforming Futures? Being Pentecostal in Kampala, Uganda', 71–75; Mwaura, 'African Instituted Churches in East Africa'.

3.2 *Cultural, Theological, and Liturgical Melting Pots*

Above I have described Mavuno and Woodley as mixtures of evangelical and pentecostal tendencies: one more evangelical, the other more pentecostal. To complicate matters further, the theological influences do not stop with these two categories. Since leaders and congregants live in a city that offers a plethora of churches of all possible kinds, there is a constant cross-fertilization of ideas and influences. In urban Kenya “religion tends to be lived in ways that significantly overflow the confines of a single, straightforward church membership,”⁹⁶ making exposure to many different church groups, and therefore theologies, a normal state of affairs. It is part of a larger picture in a country of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity, colonial heritage, and high levels of affiliation to Christian groups.

For most Kenyans, and Africans more broadly, diversity and intersectionality are self-evident parts of life. Ethnomusicologist Jean Kidula describes this when she retells her own story of growing up in Goibei village, “a place of mixed heritage, diverse ethnicity, and plural nationalities.”⁹⁷ In the village she is exposed not only to indigenous religion, but also to a whole range of Christian denominations, including their belief systems and musical repertoires. Commenting on the situation she says that they had “relatively stable cultural and linguistic roots and a great tolerance for different church groups.”⁹⁸ In fact, “Christianity, much more than education, became, and may still be, the most integrative factor and space in the village.”⁹⁹ The reason for this is that “the varieties of Christianity enable individuals, families, clans, and social groups to cohere by becoming affiliated with one or the other by choice rather than force.”¹⁰⁰ The fact that there were various groups within a single religion offered room for “distinctiveness and community,” as well as “conformity and preference.”¹⁰¹ Music is a key factor in this regard, since it can be “adopted, appropriated, transformed, and produced in multifarious ways.”¹⁰² The “texts, tunes, and functions” are “fixed and mutable ad infinitum.”¹⁰³ In a similar manner, songs in Mavuno and Woodley are adopted from different musical and

96 Gez, *Traditional Churches, Born Again Christianity, and Pentecostalism: Religious Mobility and Religious Repertoires in Urban Kenya*, 9.

97 Kidula, *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song*, 5.

98 Kidula, 7.

99 Kidula, 9.

100 Kidula, 9. Education, on the other hand, was perceived as being imposed upon people by authorities (colonial and national).

101 Kidula, 9.

102 Kidula, 9.

103 Kidula, 9.

TABLE 5 The family's main religious affiliation during childhood

Religious group	Woodley	Religious group	Mavuno
Pentecostal	41.5%	Pentecostal	31.3%
Anglican	19.7%	Catholic	23.3%
Catholic	19.1%	Anglican	21.0%
Evangelical	10.0%	Evangelical	9.0%
(Non-Pentecostal)		(Non-Pentecostal)	
Others	7.3%	Others	6.3%
Lutheran	1.5%	African traditional	3.0%
African traditional	0.3%	Lutheran	2.3%
No religion	0.3%	No religion	2.3%
Muslim	0.3%	Muslim	1.0%
Hindu	0	Hindu	0.3%

denominational traditions, and are sometimes transformed and appropriated in the most creative ways.

In Nairobi, it is a natural thing to live in several cultural and denominational worlds at the same time; indeed, the demographic surveys of the two churches point to this diversity of Christian backgrounds (Table 5). A large proportion of both Woodley and Mavuno worshippers have their background in pentecostal churches, yet they do not constitute the majority in either church. In Mavuno, people with Anglican and Catholic backgrounds together make up roughly half the congregation, while in Woodley they form an equally big group as the Pentecostals, around forty per cent each. Interestingly, evangelical churches that are not also pentecostal constitute a comparatively small group in both churches, around ten per cent. Yet almost as many people have a religious background that does not fit any of my a priori categories. I assume that several of them might belong to so-called *Roho* (Spirit) churches (or AICs, African Independent/Instituted/Initiated Churches),¹⁰⁴ a category that I did not think of adding specifically. At any rate, the statistics clearly show the denominationally diverse background of church-goers in both churches. I say 'denominationally' diverse, rather than 'religiously' diverse, because the numbers also reveal an almost entire lack of people with a family affiliation within Islam,

104 Mwaaura, 'African Instituted Churches in East Africa'; compare discussion in Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 63–83.

Hinduism or African Traditional Religions, or with no religious affiliation at all. Mavuno has slightly more people with these backgrounds, but still it is a very small minority.

This pattern of denominational diversity was confirmed in interviews with church leaders. Most interviewees had a history of multiple belonging in terms of Christian affiliation. One may have grown up in an Anglican home, gone to a Presbyterian school and later been affiliated with a non-denominational church; another may have grown up as a child of pentecostal missionaries within the country, transferred to a Baptist denomination, later to end up with a charismatic church. Pastor Rose is a case in point. When I asked her about the religious affiliation of her family, she answered the following way:

Rose: Uh, very evangelical. I'm raised an Anglican.

I: *Okay.*

R: But again, very interesting. Baptized a Lutheran.

I: *Uh huh. Okay [chuckles].*

R: And did catechism in Presbyterian, did my confirmation in Anglican and married a Pentecostal.

I: *Ai. So [tails off].*

R: [chuckles] And went to Catholic schools. ... So literally the whole spectrum of the Christian, yeah. Interesting mix.¹⁰⁵

We may note how she initially responds that her upbringing was 'very evangelical' and then says she was raised 'an Anglican'. Evangelical seems to equate with Anglican in her mind. But then she goes on to mention her affiliation with several other Protestant denominations, as well as the Roman Catholic Church and pentecostal churches. Later in the interview she adds that she has also worked in a neo-charismatic church for some time. This 'interesting mix' of the 'whole spectrum' of Christian groups is a common one in Nairobi. There is a sense in which everyone's personal background is a 'mish-mash of many things' (as Kamau said above about Mavuno), something that Yonatan Gez has confirmed in his studies on religious mobility and religious repertoires in urban Kenya.¹⁰⁶ This can be assumed to affect the theology and religious practice. To some extent, churches become denominational melting pots, wherein leaders and congregants navigate a constant stream of theological currents together. Some, like CITAM, choose to distinguish themselves clearly, and others, like

105 Interview Pastor Rose 2013-01-20.

106 Gez, *Traditional Churches, Born Again Christianity, and Pentecostalism: Religious Mobility and Religious Repertoires in Urban Kenya.*

Mavuno, are less interested in doctrinal labels; whichever road is taken, there is no way to escape the constant influx of ideas and influences. When, in the following discussion, I map out the worship practices of Mavuno and Woodley in relation to larger discussions of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology, I do so well aware, and acknowledging the fact, that these churches are in many ways theological and liturgical melting pots.

Having presented and contextualized Mavuno and Woodley in terms of East African history of revival, denominational, and theological affiliation, as well as demographic profiles, it is time to present their worship practices in more detail. This is best done in a narrative format where the whole audio-visual-kinetic-emotional landscape (the 'ritual field') of worship can be felt, heard, and imagined. Therefore, the next section consists of two detailed ethnographic vignettes based on observation notes from specific services and written with the goal of evoking all the senses while remaining as accurate and close to what I experienced as possible.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Compare discussion in Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 62–67.

Interlude

1 Sunday Worship in Mavuno Church, Bellevue, January 2014

On the 5th of January 2014,¹ I enter the premises of Mavuno Church Bellevue, passing through the security checks as always. The threat of a terror attack is ever present in Nairobi, and all public locations are potential targets; churches are no exception. Today I am accompanied by a private driver who has been appointed to take me to church by the Senior Pastor himself, through his assistant. As I pass smoothly through the first security check, guards from Jeff Hamilton's security service salute us and the driver jokes and laughs in response. I jump out of the car just in front of the barracks that house offices and staffroom. Behind them are a set of medium-sized tents for youth and children and an open area functioning as a parking lot. It is still early morning and not many people are here yet. I enter through another gate and have my bag checked by the next set of guards. Then finally I am inside the premises that once housed an open-air cinema and start to walk towards the huge white tent where services are held. They call it 'the dome'. On my way to the dome, I pass several smaller tents where volunteers are preparing for the service: one tent for newcomers, one for CDs and books on sale, several for snacks and coffee on each side. Small wooden huts give shelter on sunny days, and a brick building houses the restrooms.

Once inside the dome I look out over a sea of empty, military-green, plastic chairs, set out in blocks with aisles between them. At the back is a container housing the tech team, a large mixing table and all sorts of equipment. The pastor in charge of tech greets me, guides me to the front and helps me put my camera on the stage, an elevated steel construction with a black floor and backdrop. On the backdrop hang several photos, the middle one of which is a large, white-painted footprint with the words "STEP OUT" on it. The photographs show happy faces; one of them is a wedding photo. Between the frames white footprints move outwards from the centre, and on the left side white light boxes with black footprints continue the theme. On each side of the stage are huge screens promoting Mavuno's church services ("Bellevue Cinema", "Sundays 9 a.m. & 12 p.m.") and its vision ("Ordinary People" "Extraordinary Lives")—all set against an orange background with the Mavuno logotype on it. The branding is carried out consciously and professionally and also applied to

1 The following text is built on fieldnotes and observation notes from Mavuno, 2014-01-05.

all printed matter, banners, books, and so on. Nothing is left to chance when it comes to marketing.

After an incident with the service producer—who dislikes the idea of having a tripod on her carefully set stage, and does not accept any explanations from the tech pastor and myself, but finally submits to direct orders from the Senior Pastor—I leave the tent through an open side wall and go back in as if I were an ordinary visitor. It is 8:50 and ushers dressed in black and white have formed a human avenue leading up to the entrance, handing out beautiful dark orange roses to all female visitors. They smile and tell me I am most welcome to Mavuno. I thank them and go find a seat in the middle section, not too far from the stage but out of view of the camera. A woman in her sixties sits down in front of me and smiles tenderly at me. She wonders aloud if it is my first time in Mavuno and says she comes here all the time; she loves the place. She is one of very few women present who has grey, naturally curly hair; most wear their hair plaited or permed. Her skirt reaches her ankles, in which she again is the exception. Most women have either short skirts and dresses, or really long ones, if not tight trousers. Beads, trinkets, jewellery, earrings, and make-up are standard. Men wear jeans and a fancy shirt or cool t-shirt. Some wear suit trousers, but no one is in a full suit as far as I can see. I estimate the number of congregants gathered at the start of the service to be about a hundred, while by the time the sermon begins the dome is packed with people, at least a thousand, probably more. Approximately sixty per cent are women. The average visitor is a young adult, between twenty and forty years of age; a few are older, but no kids or teenagers attend the service as they have their own spaces. Apart from myself I can see only one Western-looking face, and no Asian-looking people. It is all African.

The service is about to start and instrumentalists are already on stage. Seated to the left and right at the back of the stage, they jam playfully as people gather and new advertisements show on the screens. There is a keyboard, an electrical guitar, an electrical bass, and drums. The instrumentalists are all males. One of them has dreadlocks and wears a red t-shirt with black print and black-and-white, animal-patterned jeans. The rest wear all-black clothing. At 9 a.m. sharp the rest of the worship team comes on stage and forms two rows in the middle. This Sunday they are dressed in the Kenyan national colours: red, green, white, and black. Black jeans as a base, and then a collection of street-styled t-shirts, college vests, blouses, and accessories. Apart from the two leaders, a man and a woman, there are four female singers and one male. They are all young adults, and all are well turned out.

The male worship leader greets the congregation enthusiastically—“Good morning Mavuno!”—to which those who have made it here on time respond

with claps. “Turn to your neighbour and tell them Happy New Year!” People willingly accede to his request and greet each other with handshakes and high fives. Screens now show the text, Happy New Year.

Then it is time for the first song:

My healer (healer), ruler (ruler).
 Omnipotent (omnipotent) Savior (Savior). ...
 I belong to you.
 You're the reason the skies are blue.
 No one compares to You. ...
 I belong, I belong, I belong.
 Yes, I belong to you.²

It is a contemporary worship song, with a heavy pop-rock sound and upbeat tempo, and includes a call-response structure in the verse. The chorus and bridge are repeated many times and people stand as they sing. The worship team clap their hands above their heads and encourage the audience to do the same. For a short while people do so, but then go back to more modest clapping and swaying. The song ends in a round of applause and cheering. The male leader speaks about being grateful for 2013, and calls out, “Shout to the Lord!” He is answered by a new round of applause before the next song. This time it is in Swahili with only one phrase in English:

You are Lord of my life and Your promises are true,
Nitakuamini, ahadi zako ni za milele.
Acha waseme watayosema,
We ni Ebeneza kwangu,
Waniongoza maishani hakuna mwingine kama Wewe.³

This song seems new to many, and is a bit hard to sing although the worship team do their best to get everyone engaged. The rhythm and style resemble afro-pop with a long wordless section in the middle when the instrumentalists jam and the rest of the team dance. The dance moves are taught to the

² I Belong to You by Marvin Sapp, <https://genius.com/Marvin-sapp-i-belong-to-you-lyrics> (accessed 2018-08-22).

³ Ebenezer by Kanjii Mbugua, <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Kanjii-Mbugua/Ebenezer> (accessed 2019-07-17). Translation: *You are Lord of my life and Your promises are true, I will believe in You, Your promises are for ever. Let them say, who will say. You are the Ebenezer for me. You lead me in life. There is no other, like You.* Translation by Sahaya G. Selvam.

audience and many participate. It looks cool and laid-back, with references both to East African traditional dance styles and to street dance and hip hop, and includes stepping rhythmically to each side, and then a turn. The leader shouts, “How many of you are happy to be in 2014? Say, ‘In 2014 I am stepping out!’” He gets loud cheers in response and energy levels rise in the hall. After a while, the dancing and jamming switch to singing. The male leader says, “Make a joyful noise!” And the congregants do.

At ten past nine the female leader starts to speak in a quiet voice. The music immediately takes on soft, serene tones, with the keyboard in the lead instead of the drums. Another Swahili praise song, this time a ballad:

Wewe ni nguzo yangu.
Wewe kimbilio langu.
Mwanga wangu Baba yangu ...
Nishikilie Niongoze.
Mbali na waovu Baba eeh.
Nionyeshe njia zako.
Nami nitazifuata Milele.⁴

Each part of the song is repeated many times and the music shifts dynamically between intimate and expressive. It starts softly and then rises to a crescendo, adding more and more instrumental and vocal sound, then drops again to an intimate tone. The vocalists look fully immersed in prayer and worship—faces expressing sincerity and hands lifted towards the sky. The audience follow, some lift their hands, many sway slightly on the spot, and most sing along once they have learned the tune. This song also seems new to many and it takes some time before the congregation participates in full. At the end there is again an instrumental part, this time accompanied by a spoken prayer by first the female then the male leader. Again the male leader asks the congregation how many of them are grateful that they “made it to 2014.” People cheer and clap. He speaks and prays alternately, “Thank you Lord. We look out for 2014. Thank you that you are doing something new.” He ends with a reference to the next song, “I will follow you forward,” before he starts to sing a globally well-known contemporary worship song:

4 Nishikilie Niongoze, by Kambua. <https://sifalyrics.com/kambua-nishikilie-lyrics> (accessed 2018-08-22). Translation: *You are my pillar/tower. You are my refuge. My light, my Father. Let me hold, lead me. Far from evil people, oh Father. Lead me in Your ways. And I will follow for ever.* Translation by Sahaya G. Selvam.

Not going back, I'm moving ahead.
I'm here to declare to You my past is over, I'm in You.
All things are made new, surrendered my life to Christ.
I'm moving, moving forward.⁵

Again, the song starts small and grows towards a crescendo, then shifts dynamically back and forth. At the end, the same phrase is repeated again and again, "You make all things new. And I will follow You forward." Now the intensity grows with every repetition. I try to count them but lose track. I write in my notebook, "How many repetitions? Maybe 30?" It is at least that. The congregants participate. Some close their eyes or lift their hands, but most look upwards or forwards, although it seems as if they see nothing with their physical eyes.

While the song continues a new person enters the stage. It is Pastor Kyama Mugambi, alias Pastor K., a man in his early forties and one of today's hosts. He is wearing a white pinstripe shirt and a pair of black trousers. He sings a few phrases along with the worship team and then starts to pray, almost inaudibly at the beginning and then louder and louder. "You make all things new in my body. You make all things new in my family ... in my workplace ... in my office ... in my personal life. We thank you Lord. You make all things new." After each phrase there is a short response of clapping and shouts from the congregation. I can hear people saying "Hallelujah" and "Amen" and "Yes, Lord" around me. In the end he shouts, "Let's celebrate the Lord!" and there is a loud outburst of clapping, cheering, wolf whistles, shouts, and music. He repeats, "Let's celebrate the Lord!" and the congregation and worship team get even louder. It all ends in a large crescendo of ovation, music, and singing. Then, suddenly, the atmosphere breaks, the music stops, and all the worship team leave the stage save the keyboardist.

A new person appears, the second host, Neema Ntalel. It is time for the next part of the service. She says, "You are looking good this year! Tell your neighbour 'You are looking good this year!'" People laugh and greet each other as they sit down. It is 9:26. Neema Ntalel is dressed in a black and beige, African-patterned skirt, a beige safari-style shirt and big, golden accessories. Her hair is cut fairly short in a hip, henna-coloured hairstyle. She is a bit younger than Pastor K., I guess around 30. She is presented by Pastor K. as "the one and only: the CORA-award winner! The one and only, Miss Neema!" There are some

⁵ Moving Forward, by Israel Houghton and Ricardo Sanchez. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4992525/moving-forward> (accessed 2020-08-25).

wolf whistles and claps in response. He says he is proud to host the service with her and to be her colleague, adding that she is a “fearless influencer”; he then holds a small interview about her musical career. Screens show pictures of her records and a clip from her latest music video, for which she recently won the Kubamba Music Video Awards. The prize is proudly displayed to the audience. She comments on it, saying that she was surprised but happy, especially with the category of Best Choreography. “It means I can dance!” she says half-jokingly, but it is clear she is pleased. Then she excuses herself for being a rookie when it comes to public speaking, and says she might just “burst into song” if she gets lost. She goes on to greet newcomers and welcome them to the VIP lounge after the service, where they can “have a *cool* cup of tea, with a *cool* group of people.” The VIP lounge is one of the smaller tents on the way up to the dome. Pastor K. and Neema continue to speak in turn, following the prepared script. They both speak very fast and often joke with each other and the audience. They resemble hosts at big gala events, standing in front of a round glass-fibre table, script cards in their hands. The screens constantly change, underlining the message. I smile, amazed at how well-produced the event is: it’s fun, it’s hip, it’s young. It’s urban East Africa.

The keyboard plays a new intro and Neema sings “Hill City!” as screens show a skyline in blue and purple overlaid with the words HILL CITY. The offering is announced through a series of photographs showing Neema as she visits the new location that the congregation has bought and to which they are about to transfer. It is basically a huge construction site with a couple of containers. In one of them is what Pastor K. calls the “hyper-dome”, which just arrived from “Johaannes-buorgh.” The new tent is “bigger-better-faster-cooler-smoother”—Neema and Pastor K. continue to fill in with words. The sum already collected for this project is mentioned, up to the last shilling. It exceeds 175 million KES. This is met with loud ovations from the audience. And then the congregation is encouraged to keep giving, and also sign “count me in” cards, meaning that they promise to give a certain amount in the future. Ushers walk around the hall with collection boxes and envelopes.

The hosts then begin to talk about New Year resolutions and ask us to speak to our neighbour about our “top two resolutions this year.” I speak to a woman next to me, who is around my age and has come alone to the service. She is wearing a beautiful red dress in a silk material. She tells me she is hoping to become a better person in 2014, to come to church more often, to improve her finances. After two minutes the hosts call us back; now they joke with each other about losing weight or exercising. Screens show pictures of fit persons working out and eating vegetables. Everyone who made a promise to “occupy physically” (get active physically) last year and has reached at least one per

cent of their goal is encouraged to raise a hand. Quite a few do. Two people are picked to come on stage for a game: two women, one in her twenties and one in her forties. They are each given a skipping rope and while they compete the hosts comment as if it were a large sports competition, and the audience cheer on them. The older woman wins a voucher at a Bata shoe shop, to go and buy herself “a pair of training shoes”. The younger one gets a CD with a sermon series from Mavuno. The hosts wind up with a small section on how to keep promises—count me in promises and New Year resolutions—and what to do when money is scarce in January. The advice from Pastor K. is clear: “Predetermine what to give. Be intentional.”

It is 9:45 and the hosts say they have a “special treat” for us today. A new person is welcomed by Pastor K.: “a gentleman from Uganda, born in Japan, educated in Nigeria, who relocated to Nairobi a few years ago.” He continues, “He is an artist changing the face of worship forever. Mike—O. Alias Pastor Mike!” His music is described as Christian contemporary, hip-hop, R&B, pop, and more. Pictures from his music production run on the screen while he enters stage. Pastor Mike has something mature and gentle about him, despite the hip, street-style outfit. He says the song is a Christian pop-song with Nigerian influences, including some pidgin English. He asks us to repeat the phrase, “it is not about you,” to our neighbour, because life is not about our own fame or reputation, but about God’s glory.

Some do it for the show ...
 Me I don’t do that.
 I do it for the glory of God.⁶

After the song Pastor Mike provides a testimony about why he relocated from Nigeria to Nairobi, saying he was “compelled by the vision of Mavuno.” He speaks in a calm and personal way, choosing his words carefully. Then he introduces today’s preacher, “the man that God gave this vision. A man of God, Daddy M., spiritual father for many of us.” The audience start to cheer and clap and wolf whistle, some even give a standing ovation, as the Senior Pastor Muriithi Wanjau enters the stage. The man himself seems relaxed about the attention and smiles at us. He asks us to give Pastor Mike a hand and then says, “It’s not about you. It has never been about you. It is always about Jesus. Give glory to God! You made it to 2014.” There is another loud ovation.

⁶ Glory, by Mike Onen. <https://soundcloud.com/kenyangospel/glory-mike-o-produced-by-geo> (accessed 2020-01-10).

It is 9:50, and time for the sermon, the first part in a series called “Step Out!”, with a text from Joshua 1. Pastor M. reads the whole chapter bit by bit, retells the story vividly and builds his message around it, adding personal stories to illustrate. He speaks of having dreams in life, of how God places dreams in us that are “glimmerings of God’s destiny,” “of what we were created for,” and encourages everyone to step into those dreams like Joshua and his people stepped into the promised land. “We are created for big things. Every one of us, we were created to make a difference. Step out. Make a difference. Change society.” Whether we feel ready or not, we should trust God and start doing what he has called us to do and, thus, occupy the promised land. Practical advice is offered on how to find courage, be obedient, take initiatives, form a strategy, and help others along, and the Mavuno Marathon is presented as a place to find the training and support to achieve those dreams.

An hour later Pastor M. winds up with an invitation to raise our hands if God has spoken to us during the sermon. About thirty per cent of the audience does so. He prays for them, and then asks us all to stand. “I want to bless you as you go.” People hold out their hands at waist level, palms upwards, eyes closed. “I bless you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Then, “Tell your neighbour, ‘Step out!’” and people greet each other with high fives. Screens show the words “Happy New Year.” The service is over. Quickly people gather their things and leave the tent. Catchy gospel music flows from the loudspeakers:

We lift our hands in the sanctuary,
 We clap our hands to give You the glory,
 And we will praise You for the rest of our days.⁷

2 Sunday Worship in CITAM Woodley, January 2014

Early morning on the 26th of January 2014,⁸ I get into a taxi and travel the short distance to Woodley neighbourhood and into the premises of CITAM Woodley. The area is surrounded by a big wall and we pass through a large iron gate to get into it. A dozy-looking guard in a navy blue uniform checks the car with his metal detector before we are allowed entry. The place is calm

7 In the Sanctuary, by Kurt Carr. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3324039/in-the-sanctuary> (accessed 2020-07-14).

8 The following text on built on fieldnotes from a visit to CITAM Woodley 2013-01-20, and fieldnotes of a Sunday Service at Woodley 2014-01-26.

and almost empty. Except for two people cleaning plastic chairs, a couple of other guards and a few people walking back and forth as if they were busy with preparations, there is no one in the open area outside the church. The driver drops me off in a turning area right inside the gate, and another guard checks my bag, suspicious of the camera and tripod in it. I tell him I have permission from the Senior Pastor to film inside the premises and he is content with that.

At first sight the place looks little like a church. In front of me are a number of two and three-storey brick buildings scattered on a green school yard and behind them an open sports field. To the right is a paved parking lot and to the left a set of smaller buildings and an assembly hall; all have the same grey and beige façade, giving a neat and well-organized impression. On week days this is a primary school, housing a few hundred pupils. On Sundays, however, this is a church. The assembly hall, a large building with a sheet metal roof, is surrounded on its left by a set of low office and school pavilions, and on its right by restrooms. Leading up to the assembly hall, and around it on each side, is a semi-covered passageway. The hall has several wooden doors, two on each side and a double door in the front. Outside the main doors is what they call “the overflow”—a white marquee housing a hundred or so extra chairs.

I choose one of the side doors and go inside. The hall has an unusual shape, similar to that of a diamond; at first, I cannot decide if it has five, six or seven sides; at least, they are not all the same length. The stage and main door are on opposite sides, on two of the shorter walls, with the maximum distance between them, while the rest of the building spreads out to the right and left. The architecture gives an impression of an almost circular hall, a few pillars supporting the roof as if it were a big tent. The roof follows the shape of the building, but there is no ceiling; roof trusses hold strip lights and fans. Walls are partly covered in decoratively cut wood, but otherwise painted white. Large windows on all sides allow in some fresh air.

Two banners on the front walls of the church meet the congregation as they gather for worship. On the right is the mission statement of Christ is The Answer Ministries, printed in white letters on a blue background: “Transforming God’s people to transform the world.” On the other wall the banner says, “Growing deeper, reaching wider, for the harvest.” This is the theme of 2014, and the picture illustrating it shows a lush green garden filled with apple trees laden with red-skinned apples. I write in my notes that it looks somehow misplaced, resembling my hometown in Sweden more than Nairobi. Later in the service the Senior Pastor comments on the picture, saying that they searched for a long time to find something that could illustrate the theme before ending up with this one. The hall is packed with orange plastic chairs, organized in

sections. Only the first row is different; pastors and elders get more comfortable black, faux-leather chairs. The partly elevated front area is called 'the altar' and here the white stone floor and the steps leading up to it are covered in a royal red carpet. At the back of this area are three rows of cream-coloured plastic chairs for the choir, and behind them shiny cream curtains with red and golden details and a big screen. On the right side is a separate area for the instrumentalists, and at the centre is an acrylic pulpit, pink floral decorations, and a number of microphones and amplifiers.

I walk towards the stage, looking for someone to help me find Elias⁹ from the media team. I ask the Deputy Senior Pastor who is talking to a young adult. This turns out to be Elias and he promises to help me to find a spot where I can place my tripod and camera, adding to the already crowded stage. He is a kind and gentle soul and I feel a little less like an outsider after talking to him. Then I find a seat and start to take notes. The prayers have already begun, led by a woman in her sixties in a black jacket, a matching black skirt that reaches her ankles and a white blouse. Around twenty people have arrived early for prayers and the hall slowly fills during the first half of the service until around 500 people are gathered. The next two services attract a larger crowd, around a thousand each.

At 7:50 the Senior Pastor, Pastor Charles Obara, steps into the hall, and takes the place of the woman at the red microphone. His suit is black and his white shirt spotless, as are his shoes. He prays loudly and energetically while lifting his left arm and waving it to underline his words. After praying for a couple of minutes he thanks the people gathered for coming early and announces that the service will begin shortly. He leaves through one of the side doors. A soft murmur breaks out as people turn to each other to chat.

At 7:55 the music team comes on stage and starts to sing. They are all dressed in white today. Women wear skirts or dresses that at least cover their knees, or wide trousers. A young man wears a *kanzu*, a long, wide gown reaching his ankles. This surprises me as I am used to thinking of this as a garment signalling Muslim identity. Obviously, it has a different connotation here; judging from the rest of his appearance I guess that it is considered trendy. Some of the men have shiny yellow polo t-shirts under their white shirts. The rest, both women and men, wear yellow, green, and blue batik shawls around their necks or waists. The visual effect is compelling. In the absence of other decorations, the choir brightens up the place. There are around 25 choir members, aged 25 to 60, plus seven lead singers and a male worship leader. He is in his thirties,

9 Pseudonym.

dressed in a long white shirt which is loose over his white trousers. He stands still in front of a microphone, playing an acoustic guitar. The instrumentalists—on keyboard, electric guitar, bass, and drums—sound-check briefly while the choir find their positions. Very soon the worship leader starts to sing and the choir tunes in:

We give You all the glory.
We worship You, our Lord.
You are worthy to be praised.¹⁰

The song is slow and declamatory, sung in vocal harmony, the same phrases repeated over and over. The congregation immediately stand and join in. Some raise their hands, some clasp them, most sing along and sway a little on spot. In the middle there is a jam session with instruments improvising and the choir praying into their mics, together forming an intense sound. No one leads the prayer, and I can hear scattered expressions of “We bless you,” “We worship you,” “We give you glory.”

At 8 a.m. sharp the worship leader welcomes us to CITAM Woodley and asks us to greet our neighbours. People shake hands, wave at each other, or hug. Unlike in Mavuno, no one in this church greets with a high five, as far as I can see. Several persons smile at me and welcome me to church. A few seconds later it is time for the next song, another well-known worship song:

Water, You turned into wine,
Opened the eyes of the blind,
There’s no one like You,
None like You.

Our God is greater, our God is stronger.
God, You are higher than any other.
Our God is Healer, awesome in power.
Our God, our God.¹¹

This song is upbeat, rhythmical, and energetic. The choir and worship leader do their best to engage the small audience, but acoustics in the hall make it

10 Alpha and Omega, by Erasmus Mutanbira. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4654148/alpha-and-omega> (accessed 2020-08-26).

11 Our God, by Chris Tomlin. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/5677416/our-god> (accessed 2020-07-14).

hard to sing. Drums dominate the sound and the choir is almost drowned out. The congregation stand to sing, but seem only moderately engaged; it is still early morning.

Pastors and elders arrive through the left door and take their seats at the front. The choir lift their hands in a certain pattern, upwards and forward, while they lead us in the next song:

We lift our hands in the sanctuary,
 We lift our hands to give You the glory,
 We lift our hands to give You the praise,
 And we will praise You for the rest of our days, yes!
 We will praise You for the rest of our days!¹²

It is classic gospel with a catchy melody that everyone seems to know. In one part of the song the leader teaches us the different harmonies. He says, "Come on! All sopranos, sing, '*Yes Lord, for the rest of our days.*'" And then, "Come on! All men in the house, sing, '*Yes Lord, for the rest of our days.*'" The congregation is transformed into a choir, repeating the same few phrases in vocal harmony over and over again. In the end there is loud clapping and the leader shouts, "Hallelujah!" Then he encourages us to ask our neighbour for some extra space to dance. This is a bit ironic as the hall is still rather empty, but it works better in the second service when the hall is packed with people. He shows us the dance moves: walk forward, cross legs, and back again, weight placed heavily on the floor. The rhythm and sound no longer remind me of a black American gospel choir but of an East African rural church. Drums and electric guitar take the lead and the tempo goes up.

*Pamoja na Wewe, pamoja na Wewe,
 Katika safari yangu, nitatembea na Wewe.
 Pamoja na Wewe, pamoja na Wewe,
 Katika safari yangu, nitatembea na Wewe.*¹³

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- 12 In the Sanctuary, by Kurt Carr. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3324039/in-the-sanctuary> (accessed 2020-07-14).
- 13 Bwana U Sehemu Yangu, by Elizabeth Nyambura. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4a-Ehd6HTWM> (accessed 2021-03-10). This is a Swahili-version of Fanny Crosby's hymn Close to Thee. https://hymnary.org/text/thou_my_everlasting_portion (accessed 2021-03-10). Translation: *Together with You, together with You, On my journey I will walk with You. Together with You, together with You, On my journey I will walk with You.* Translation by Sahaya G. Selvam.

Suddenly the congregation seems to come alive in a new way, people smile and dance and sing along with new energy. Although the specific dance moves are quickly abandoned both by the choir and the audience, the energy remains high throughout the many verses and repetitions. And it rises to another level as the choir start to walk rhythmically down from the altar, forming a long tail, rocking and clapping hands with the music. As they pass the front row of pastors and elders, they greet them with smiles, high fives, and handshakes. The leader sings, “*Tembea,*” and the rest of us respond, “*Tembea, tembea, tembea na Wewe*” (Walk, walk, walk, walk with You). I can hear people cheer and wolf whistle around me; it is clear this is a much-appreciated element of the service.

Once the choir is back on stage, the music and atmosphere change considerably. From happy and playful to serene and intimate, almost solemn. The tempo goes down, as does the overall volume. For a while the keyboard replaces the drums in the instrumental lead role. The choir again sings in harmonies.

I surrender all to You,
 Everything I give to You.
 Withholding nothing,
 Withholding nothing

King Jesus, My Savior, Forever.
 I give You all of me,
 I give You all of me.¹⁴

The song begins quietly but grows dynamically into a crescendo, before dropping again to a soft, almost silent tone. The worship leader sings each stanza ahead of the choir, forming the call-and-response structure of communally sung prayers: “Lord, I give you all of me.” The refrain is repeated again and again, maybe up to thirty times. People in the congregation and choir alike lift their faces towards the sky and close their eyes in prayer. Some raise their hands in front of them or above their heads. Many sway a little on the spot.

At 8:25 Pastor Evans, today’s host, comes up to the front. He is a man in his fifties, dressed in a dark blue suit, light blue shirt, and matching tie. He starts to speak to the congregation, while the singing and music continue in the background. The address is communal and personal at the same time: “Congregation, let us surrender. Tell him to take over in your life. Surrender your weaknesses

14 Withholding Nothing, by William McDowell. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7037764/withholding-nothing> (accessed 2020-07-14).

to the Lord. Surrender your challenges. Your struggles. Your temptations. Surrender everything to him.” He quotes Matthew 11—where Jesus encourages those who carry burdens to come to him—and then goes on praying for several minutes. “Father we worship you. We praise you. We give you glory. We praise you. We exalt you.” “In the name of Jesus.” His voice and the background music rise and fall together: first louder and louder, more and more intense, then again calm and peaceful. He prays for the country, for the national leaders, for security and the economy and for the congregation. Most of the audience still stand, eyes closed and heads bowed. Pastor Evans finishes with, “In Jesus’ name we pray!” and an encouragement to “appreciate the Lord.” He is met with “Amen!” and applause.

I look around at the gathered congregation. Half a thousand people of different ages; I estimate the majority to be between 35 and 55, and a good number between 20 and 35. A few kids and teenagers are present too, plus maybe a hundred or so above 55. I know that the youngsters have their own activities, explaining their low numbers. Women are in a slight majority although many seem to come as couples or families. There are a handful of Western-looking people in the hall, and apart from that all are African. The dress code is conservative and low-key, especially among women. Skirts fall below the knee, trousers are wide, blouses have modest necklines and sleeves. Very few wear high-heels, obvious makeup, or large accessories. I smile to myself thinking that even my style gives me away as a middle-class, middle-aged, conservative Pentecostal. Among the men shirts seem essential; with or without a tie, with or without a jacket or full suit. I can see feet wearing anything from black leather shoes to simple sandals of the flip-flop type. Few have opted for colourful garments or the latest fashion. Instead black, beige, grey, white, and brown dominate the palette, with a dab of red, yellow, and green. Most look clean and tidy, some very formal in suits or dresses, some less so in simple clothing.

It is 8:30 and the service moves on to the next section. We are encouraged to give the music team a hand and then greet each other, “Just tell your neighbour, ‘*Karibu!*’¹⁵ Tell them they are welcome to this service.” People shake hands and smile at each other. A handful of newcomers are welcomed to church; ushers dressed in black and gold hand them pamphlets as the congregation claps. A family that has just lost a child is mentioned as a prayer request and an elder is called to the front to pray for them and for the tithes and offerings about to be collected. He is calm and serious, praying matter-of-factly in a conversational tone. The congregation joins the prayer silently with their heads bowed

15 “*Karibu*” means “welcome” in Swahili.

and eyes closed. Then ushers dressed in red and white walk around the hall with collection boxes, while TV monitors show announcements of upcoming events, and loudspeakers play contemporary worship music: “Lord I give You my life”. Screens are small, their design is busy and inconsistent and it is hard to read the information on them, but there is at least one advertisement for a Valentine’s dinner, one for a pre-marital class, and one for a leadership meeting. Pastor Evans adds a few extra announcements before it is time for the choir to “give a special.”

A woman in her mid-twenties reads a passage from Numbers and then starts to sing; she has a very good voice and seems confident in the situation. She is the only one standing on stage for the first verse, wailing and filling the room with music. The choir joins her in the refrain and bridge, answering her in a form of call-and-response structure.

I'm not a man, I cannot lie. I know the plans for your life,
 I'm asking you to dream again, believe again and take the limits
 off of me ...
 No limits no boundaries, I see increase all around me.
 Stretch forth, break forth, release me, enlarge my territory.¹⁶

The text puzzles me as I listen to it. It is not clear who is talking to whom: Is God asking us to release him and make his territory larger, or is a human being asking God for more space? I have never heard the song before and cannot make out the meaning at first, but no explanations are given in the service. Possibly the meaning is clear to the audience.

Once the choir has finished the song, they leave through a side door. Encouraged by Pastor Evans the congregation claps in appreciation before welcoming the Senior Pastor up with yet another round of applause. Pastor Obara greets the congregation in his usual energetic way, “Good morning congregation! *Bwana asifiwe!*”¹⁷ Before moving on to the sermon, he leads a small ceremony to thank two of the pastors who are leaving for other appointments within CITAM. They come to the front with their families and are given a few minutes each to say their *kwaheris*¹⁸ before the elders gather in a half-circle, laying on hands to pray for them.

16 Enlarge My Territory, by Derick Thomas. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4508036/enlarge-my-territory> (accessed 20-08-26). Cf. 1 Sam. 15:29, 1 Chron. 4:10.

17 “*Bwana Asifiwe*” means “Praise the Lord” in Swahili.

18 “*Kwaheri*” means “Goodbye” in Swahili.

Today's sermon is part of a series on important characters in the Old Testament. Last week was about Adam and Eve, and today is about Enoch and Noah. Pastor Obara describes the lineage of men in Genesis 5 as "guys who lived for centuries" and "married at the tender age of 500 years." Compared to these guys, we are all "babies in diapers." People laugh at this ridiculous comment and many similar that follow suit. The tone is intense and at times extremely loud. Despite the humorous framing, Pastor Obara's message is a serious one. The sermon is an encouragement to walk with God on a daily basis—no matter the cost—and to witness to one's generation by leading a holy and righteous life. The examples given concentrate on moral issues, especially in the area of sex and alcohol. Warning people against the easy solutions of tele-evangelists, he says, "Don't be cheated!" "There is no magic"—only a life lived in "reverence" and "resilience" will lead to "reward." However, he warns the congregation that unless they watch against temptation, they may well end up like Noah, who ended his life in unrighteousness, "regretting" his sins.

At 9:10 he starts to preach and at 9:50 he invites people to respond to the message. People who want to give their lives to Jesus for the first time are invited to raise their hands and then to come to the altar where several counsellors gather behind them, hands on their backs, while Pastor Obara whisperingly leads them in a prayer. The keyboard plays softly in the background. The small group is taken out to get further counselling, and after a round of applause—"Appreciate them! Appreciate the Lord!"—we are all encouraged to stand to receive the blessing. His voice is again loud and intense as he prays, "Father we thank you, we bless you ... I pray for your blessings over your people. That they may leave a legacy ... In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray." The congregation says, "Amen," and is dismissed.

Quickly I gather my stuff, go up on stage and restart the camera. Some visitors have already left, and new ones are waiting outside to come in. The next service is about to begin.

PART 3

Worship in Pentecostal Spirituality-as-Theology



Orthopraxis: Worship as Ritualized Practice

If ritual were a bike, what would be its mechanical components, and how would we explain the dynamics that make them function together? If ritual were a body, what organs, joints, and limbs would it contain, and how would we present the relations between them that create a living being? If ritual were a theatre performance, what key roles would it have and how would we describe the plot line or the stage set up? If ritual were a game, where would it take place, what would be the rules, and who would be on the team? If ritual were a concert, what score would be played, who would be in the audience, who would be on stage, and how would we describe their interaction? If ritual were a Thanksgiving turkey, how would we carve it into pieces to make the most delicious meal?¹

Ritual is not a bike—nor a turkey, a body, a theatre performance, a game, or a concert—yet it is useful to think in terms of these metaphors and related domains when studying ritual. They help us see that ritual can be viewed from several angles, and that our own perspective is but one among many. They also attune us to the ritual's having parts, as well as being a whole, and that part-whole relations are important for understanding it.

Ritual theorist Ronald Grimes uses these and many other metaphors when speaking of ritual, saying, for instance, that anyone interested in studying—or constructing, mending, and riding—a bicycle needs to pay attention to its constituent parts and their interaction, as well as to how the bike works as a whole. Transferring this observation to ritual studies he says, “Regardless of whether your intentions are constructive or analytical, ritual studies scholars must eventually think about forms and dynamics, as well as part-whole relations.”² He continues, “a ritual, if it works, is a set of interconnected processes working in an integrated, dynamic fashion”;³ therefore, it is essential to track both the elements of ritual and its dynamics. Only by doing so can a scholar grasp the nuance and texture of any given ritual. Grimes calls this method “an

1 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 211–93.

2 Grimes, 233.

3 Grimes, 234.

elemental analysis,”⁴ tracking the details of ritual in a way similar to “transcribing” an interview or indeed “carving a carcass.”⁵

The task is laborious and time-consuming, but there is no other way to grasp their nuance and texture. Probing a ritual’s elements and dynamics, we uncover subspaces and notice subphases. To treat a ritual as having elements is a formalist tactic, drawing attention to the form, or design, of a ritual, staving off premature leaps to the whole ritual’s social or ecological functions. Functional considerations are necessary, but not at the expense of formalist ones. The two require each other.⁶

This chapter focuses on the formalist level of worship in Mavuno and Woodley. It is based primarily on participant observation (particularly on the detailed coding of observation notes and careful watching and rewatching of video recordings), but also includes emic interpretations imparted through interviews. The elemental analysis is my attempt to ‘cut the turkey into edible pieces’, thus disassembling the “designed assemblage”⁷ of praise and worship. I follow Grimes closely in naming the elements of ritual, although I also adjust his model slightly to suit the concrete ritual practice under examination. In this chapter, I hint at the function and purpose and intentions of ritual, and I also hint at contextual factors (cultural and ecclesial context), but I do not engage with these discussions. Instead, the focus is on pentecostal-charismatic worship in its most concrete and tangible form, that which can be seen and heard and caught by close observation.

The analysis has two parts: ritual dynamics in worship and core elements of worship. It starts broadly and gradually narrows down: from the place of music and singing within the liturgical system, via its place within the Sunday service, to its own inner dynamic of ritual sequencing and flow. Then I take a close look at some of the elements that I find most characteristic and discuss their respective roles, before summarizing the way in which worship is ritualized and ending in a discussion of the levels of satisfaction of people in the congregation with the service and its constituent parts.

Hence, the chapter concentrates on ritual and liturgical aspects of worship—the ways in which ritualization happens in the context of communal pentecostal music-making—and seeks to pinpoint the established procedures of

4 Grimes, 234.

5 Grimes, 235.

6 Grimes, 235.

7 Grimes, 232.

Sunday worship in Mavuno Church and CITAM Woodley: what, in their eyes, constitutes the ‘right practice’, *orthopraxis*.

1 Ritual Dynamics in Worship

Ritual dynamics has to do with the way ritual ‘works’, both in the formalist sense of elements working together within the ritual (processes, sequences, beginnings and ends, unfolding of events, interplay between actors, objects, and acts, etc.), and in the functional sense of how ritual functions vis à vis a system, a tradition, or a context. Grimes sees ritual systems and traditions as “two sides of the same coin.”⁸ A ritual system is a dynamic, interdependent whole made up of a set of synchronic rituals, while a ritual tradition is made up of a diachronic set, “emerging, developing and declining through time.”⁹ The two are not the same and yet they interplay, both with each other and with any specific ritual being studied. Rituals are also set in contexts: cultural, linguistic, musical, social, ecclesial, and any number of others. Not all of these can be analysed in any given study, but they all shape and are shaped by ritual practice.¹⁰

In the sections below, I primarily discuss the inner workings of ritual: the processes and sequential patterns within the Sunday service and within the rite of worship and praise (‘the rhythm’ and ‘flow’ of worship), but I also briefly address the place of music and singing within the ritual system and highlight a few contextual factors. I begin broadly, with the ritual system, and then gradually narrow down to the rite of worship and praise.

1.1 *Music and Singing within the Larger Ritual System*

In the Introduction and in Chapter 2, when I underlined the importance of a ritual perspective onto pentecostal-charismatic Christianity from a theoretical point of view, the need for further studies with such a perspective in the region of East Africa was highlighted. However, considering the many different forms of Pentecostalism in Eastern Africa, it would be wrong to assume that all these churches ritualize according to exactly the same pattern;¹¹ rather, there are

8 Grimes, 232.

9 Grimes, 232.

10 Grimes, 232, 297–337.

11 Compare discussion in Prosén, ‘Pentecostalism in Eastern Africa’; see also Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*.

both similarities and differences. In my observations in a number of Nairobi pentecostal-charismatic churches and my interviews with Kenyan pastors and leaders, I have, for example, seen a strong consensus as to the centrality of prayer, tithing, preaching, and communal worship, and many similarities in ritual forms and structures. This is also in line with scholarly descriptions of Kenyan Pentecostalism: for instance, Damaris Parsitau and Philomena Mwaura highlight praise and worship, the sermon, and the offering service as the three main units in the liturgy of the Deliverance Church of Kenya (DCK),¹² while Samuel W. Muindi describes six main rituals in the life of the Redeemed Gospel Church Incorporation: the call to worship, song and worship, tithes and offerings, scripture reading and preaching, altar call and altar ministry, and finally the ritual of benediction.¹³

At the same time, there is considerable variety when it comes to style.¹⁴ In some of the churches I visited during fieldwork, prayers were loud and music vibrant, and in others, prayers were silent and music soft. In some churches old European hymns were mixed with Swahili choruses and American gospel, while others mixed locally produced afro-pop with Australian worship songs. Some churches put considerable emphasis on the performance, including sound, light, clothing, furnishing, and decorations, while in others these aspects seemed to be irrelevant. In some churches people waved their hands, laughed, and gave verbal responses to sermons; in others, congregants were more or less still and responded modestly. In the same city, within the same category of Christian churches, there is still a large variety of expressions and emphases in ritual. Even within the same church different styles and liturgical approaches may exist side by side, so that the main service could vary from Sunday to Sunday or the youth service could be different from the main one. What is clear, however, is that music has a central place in most church gatherings, a pattern consistent with the global pentecostal-charismatic tradition as a whole.¹⁵

12 Parsitau and Mwaura, 'God in the City: Pentecostalism as an Urban Phenomenon in Kenya'.

13 Muindi, 'Ritual and Spirituality in Kenyan Pentecostalism', 152–58, see also Mugambi, *Five Decades of God's Faithfulness, The Amazing Story of Christ Is the Answer Ministries*, 63, and Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 75.

14 Compare discussion on style and sensational forms in Birgit Meyer, 'Pentecostalism and Globalization', in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 113–30.

15 Alexander, *Signs and Wonders: Why Pentecostalism Is the World's Fastest Growing Faith*; Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*; Ingalls and Yong, *The Spirit*

Kenyan ethnomusicologist Jean N. Kidula has described singing and making music as an integral part of religious life in churches among the Loogoli of Western Kenya: at Christmas gatherings, processions, Easter or New Year celebrations, youth meetings, women's groups, and so on. The Sunday service constituted the main gathering, and meetings on weekdays and Saturdays had a format that resembled it.¹⁶ Explaining the role of music and singing, she says,

Singing in the Pentecostal gathering punctuated service items and articulated worship through praise and prayers ... Within the service different items were surrounded and punctuated by functional music such as songs to open a service, to pray, to invite visitors, to take up offering, and to reinforce a greeting, a teaching, a sermon, and so forth. Songs were even raised as an alternative to a testimony. Thus song was thoroughly integrated into the service.¹⁷

Music and singing are integrated into the religious life of the two case churches in a similar manner. On a Sunday, the very first thing that meets a visitor or participant is music, and then the rest of the service is interspersed with musical elements. With a concept borrowed from Bateson, we could say that the ritual is *framed* by music.¹⁸ Playback music accompanies gatherings and partings, and the first sequence of the respective liturgy is one of congregational singing, allotted around a quarter to a third of the total time and, thus, constituting a major part of the Sunday service. Music, however, comes in at other places in the liturgy as well, with instrumental or playback music forming the backdrop to collection and announcements and sometimes accompanying prayers. Special musical performances are frequently given in both churches: solos or choir performances that do not involve congregational singing.

Sundays constitute the main gathering, and the format is mimicked at the others. However, in my observation, it seems like the space given to worship (in the sense of congregational musicking) within the ritual differs depending on the type of gathering, so that, for example, a two-hour-long Wednesday prayer meeting I observed in Woodley included a full hour of congregational singing

of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity; Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*.

16 Kidula, *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song*, 50–60.

17 Kidula, 51.

18 Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York: Ballantine, 1972); see also Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 74, 160–61.

and musically accompanied prayers, while a three-hour-long Saturday women's meeting included only forty minutes.

The purpose of a specific gathering seems to affect the amount of singing and music included in the ritual; the more focused the ritual is on communicating with or experiencing God, the more worship is included. This points to a key function that music has in pentecostal spirituality: a means of communication and a mediator of divine presence.¹⁹ For example, Mavuno frequently have Worship nights—a full evening with the explicit goal of seeking God and meeting with him on a personal level—when musicking is a major activity.²⁰ Likewise, Woodley regularly arranges special Worship Sundays when there is more singing than on a usual Sunday.²¹ Conversely, staff meetings in Mavuno serve a different purpose, and although worship and praise is certainly there at the beginning, most of the time is spent on other things. Yet often the purpose of a specific gathering is manifold, containing an element of communicating with God, an element of meeting each other as a congregation, and an element of teaching and preaching. This is especially the case on Sundays, resulting in a mix of ritual action within the liturgy.

Compared to rural settings that I have visited in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Kenya, where several choirs may perform on the same Sunday and music may last for hours, the time allotted to music in Mavuno and Woodley on a Sunday is still comparatively short (20–30 minutes). This is due in part to the limitations provided by consecutive services, and, thus, a phenomenon that reflects the busy life of the city. But I wonder if it also indicates a theological attitude that seeks to balance the spiritual-emotional experience with an intellectual understanding of faith: a point where pentecostal and evangelical origins and leanings intersect with each other. This theory is strengthened when other churches on the pentecostal-charismatic spectrum in Nairobi are considered. In my (admittedly limited) observation, the ones that focus more on spiritual experience, like the Jubilee Christian Church or the Joe Kayo Ministries, include a large amount of musicking in their liturgy, while those that have a more doctrinal leaning, such as Nairobi Baptist, include less, and churches that seek to combine the charismatic with the intellectual, like Nairobi Chapel, find a middle path. Tracking the time spent on each phase or

19 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 238–40; Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 68–69; Lord, 'A Theology of Sung Worship'; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 39–49. See further discussion in Chapter 8.

20 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

21 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

type of rite within the ritual may well help us uncover what role that part plays in the overall system. This could facilitate an interesting comparative study between different ecclesial communities or even traditions, where the link between music, spirituality, and theology would stand out in sharp relief.

Apart from actual musicking,²² music and singing are also elevated in other ways, especially in Mavuno, where the pastors' musical careers are promoted from the platform. The Mavuno Worship Project—an event that is both a concert and a worship service—is another example of music and singing taking centre stage.²³ In addition, special events that focus on music are commonly held during the Christmas season in both churches, and singing is always part of the ritual in youth services, Sunday school, prayer meetings, staff meetings, and other types of congregational gatherings, usually at the start, thus building on the same ritual pattern as the Sunday liturgy. To this pattern we now turn.

1.2 *The Rhythm of Sunday Services*

Zooming in from the role of music in the ritual system in general, to its role in Sunday services specifically, this section discusses the dynamics of worship in relation to its immediate liturgical context: the Sunday service and its sequential pattern, its 'rhythm'.

We may recall here that Rappaport says that a ritual is “the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances.”²⁴ In other words, a ritual has a certain sequential structure—words and acts come in specific orders and phases follow one another in more or less stable ways—although chronological sequences may or may not be obvious to the participant, and may or may not be spelled out during the ritual as such. Grimes refers to this concept as *ritual phasing* and defines it as the “temporal patterning ('rhythm') of a ritual; a ritual's articulation of its beginning, middle and end ('plot').”²⁵ Unlike Grimes, who sees ritual time as an element of ritual, I have chosen to treat it here as part of ritual dynamics and opted for the term 'ritual sequencing' instead. The difference is a matter of choice, but to me it

22 'Musicking' is a term coined by Christopher Small, referring to the whole process of taking part in a musical performance, regardless of the capacity in which one does so. Small says, “To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.” Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, 9.

23 Interview Pastor Munga 2013-01-24. A simple search on the internet will give the reader an idea of what this project entailed.

24 Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, 24.

25 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 262.

makes sense to understand temporal aspects as part of how the Sunday liturgy functions dynamically in a charismatic context: the way sequential elements work together as a whole to move the participant from one place to another. However, I do agree with Grimes that the pattern has something rhythmical or musical about it; its phases unfold one after the other in a regular, recursive, and yet progressive and creative fashion.

The temporal quality of ritual also has to do with things like *ritual duration* (how long a ritual lasts), *ritual timing* (when a ritual happens), and *ritual frequency* (how often a ritual happens), among other things.²⁶ I begin with a note on these aspects before moving into a deep-end discussion of the *ritual sequencing* of the Sunday liturgy.

1.2.1 Ritual Time, Duration, and Frequency

According to Rappaport, rituals as social constructs organize time into periods and intervals, the frequency and length of which are crucial for the function of ritual itself. Liturgical order cannot help but create a recurring pattern, an “overall temporal structure” distinguished by “an *alternation* between ‘periodic’ or ‘mundane’ time and intervallic ‘time out of time.’”²⁷ Thus, two “temporal conditions,” “two ‘kinds of time’” can be distinguished: “ordinary” time and “extraordinary’ or ‘sacred’ time.”²⁸ When in ritual, participants in some sense leave the mundane behind, immersing themselves through ritual in the extraordinary. Lengthy immersion in ritual leads to “deeper and more enduring effects upon the psyches of participants” and possibly to more profound “social, cognitive or affective”²⁹ transformations. When duration is combined with frequency, an interesting pattern occurs. Lengthy and frequent rituals take participants out of ordinary time to such a degree that they perceive life as “virtually continuous liturgy”³⁰ “outside of mundane experience,”³¹ whereas rituals that are brief but frequently recurring “bring the divine into everyday life.”³²

Among Pentecostals, the liturgical order combines a set of collective rituals that are comparatively lengthy (Sunday services, overnight prayer meetings, small group meetings, etc.) with individual rituals that can be either brief or

26 Grimes, 262–67.

27 Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, 187, emphasis in original.

28 Rappaport, 181.

29 Rappaport, 201.

30 Rappaport, 199.

31 Rappaport, 209.

32 Rappaport, 204.

lengthy depending on personal preferences (morning devotion, Bible reading, singing or listening to worship songs, etc.). Both sets of rituals are frequently occurring and the combination generates a transformative spirituality that simultaneously takes participants *out of* the mundane and brings the divine *into* ordinary life, thus suffusing every bit of reality with spiritual awareness.

The Sunday service is the centre of pentecostal communal ritual practice. That it is a weekly event, and thus frequently occurring, adds to its transformative power, especially since congregants often take part in other ritual practices during the week, and so ‘add up’ ritual time.³³ The Sunday service is also a practice that connects contemporary pentecostal churches with Christian churches across time and space. Although it might seem obvious for the Sunday service to be held on Sundays, it is still worth pointing out, as having their main gathering on a day when most Kenyans are off work and most Christian traditions gather for worship connects congregants with society, as well as with the larger ecclesial body.

Temporal aspects of ritual also have to do with attitudes towards ‘time’ itself, how time is managed within the ritual. In Woodley they have three services each Sunday: 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and 12 p.m. This means that time is always a bit scarce in the first and middle service, indicated, for example, by the preacher saying, “I must move quickly, my time is up,” during the sermon or encouraging people to come forward to the altar quickly because “There is not much time.”³⁴ The last service, on the other hand, is much more relaxed as there are no new visitors coming in and therefore no stress to finish promptly. Interestingly, the rite of worship and praise and community-building rites are usually not prolonged in the third service, but follow the same pattern in all three; rather, the flexibility comes in the preaching and altar/response time (the different phases are described below). Thus, more time is spent on praying for people at the end of the third service than at the other two.

In Mavuno they have only two Sunday services: 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. This means that there is usually an hour between the services when congregants and leaders can have some food and snacks, relax and chat. It also means that both services can be stretched a bit over two hours when needed, although good time is usually kept. The only case I observed in which time was not kept at all was a service when people were invited to share testimonies. The same pattern of flexibility occurs in Mavuno: worship is usually allotted the same amount of time in both services while the sermon and the rite of altar/response can be slightly extended. I had the sense that sometimes, if a certain

33 Compare discussion on length and frequency in Rappaport, 196–209.

34 Fieldnotes Sunday Service Woodley 2014-01-26.

element took too much time in the first service, they would correct this so that they caught up the time in the second. Indications of the passage of time also occur during the sermon and altar call in Mavuno and can work in both directions. For example, one Sunday I noted the pastor saying, “Quick! Right now!” during the altar call in the first service, while in the second he said, “I still have three minutes, so don’t run! There is still time.”³⁵ In the first case, they had already overshot the finishing time by a few minutes, while in the second he literally had three minutes to go before it turned two o’clock. In both cases time was counted to the minute, and acted as an important limitation of the ritual and its content.

The duration of the Sunday service is about two hours in total, a little less for the first service and a little more for the second. Out of these two hours, approximately half an hour is spent on the rite of worship and praise and community-building rites, respectively, and one hour is spent on the rite of pastoral message and altar/response. This pattern is stable in most of the services I visited, and becomes very obvious when one compares the services held on the same day in the same church.

In observing the churches, I took notes on the exact hour and minute that each element of the service took place, and it was striking how meticulously timed it was, especially in Mavuno where they follow their time schedule more or less to the minute. In my notes it may look like this:

9:00 (12:00)	Worship team begins
9:10 (12:10)	Instrumental part
9:26 (12:25)	Host enters stage
9:35 (12:35)	Videoclip
10:05 (13:02)	Preacher enters stage
10:57 (13:51)	Keyboard starts playing
11:04 (13:59)	Blessing ^a

a Fieldnotes Sunday Service Mavuno 2014-01-19.

Thus, the time difference between these particular services is less than three minutes up to the start of the sermon, and no more than five at the end of the service. In the ethnographic vignettes I sometimes allude to the exact time to give the reader a sense of this.

35 Fieldnotes Sunday Service Mavuno 2014-01-19.

These are examples of how ritual time is strictly followed and clearly indicated in each of the churches. It is almost like ‘time’ lives its own life apart and above the leaders and participants. There is a strict schedule and people adhere to it. It is part of urban, upper-middle-class life to schedule one’s life meticulously and this spills over into the liturgy. Yet the approach to ritual time also warrants theological and philosophical questions: What makes time important? Is time like a bank-account—you have a limited amount and you must be careful with it? Or is it like an eternal fountain, free for all to drink from? And more importantly: What kind of God do you serve when worship is dictated by a time schedule down to the very second? What relationship with God is fostered by such an environment? These and similar questions are important to raise as part of a reflection on worship practices within charismatic Christianity more generally, especially in connection with the trend of professionalized service production.³⁶

On the other hand, this resolute attention to time, timing, and production (the process of which is described further below) counteracts some of the common stereotypes of African pentecostal liturgy as “unrehearsed” and “spontaneous.”³⁷ It can indeed be so, but it is not always. In the two case churches, as in mega-churches around the globe, time is highly valued and services planned meticulously. Careful timing, combined with careful sequencing, creates the ‘rhythm’ that constitutes Sunday liturgy, in which ritual elements, acts, and utterances may find their place.

1.2.2 Ritual Sequencing of Sunday Services

In his study of pentecostal-charismatic churches in the United States, Daniel Albrecht identified a basic ritual structure of five sequences (what Albrecht calls “foundational/processual rites”):³⁸ three primary rites (rite of worship and praise, rite of pastoral message, rite of altar/response) surrounded by gathering/dispersing practices and joined together by a block of transitional rites. In addition, he identified a vast number of micro-rites that ritualists have at their disposal and combine in a creative and personalized manner within the larger structure.³⁹ Other scholars have developed Albrecht’s work, among them Mark Cartledge, who recorded both similarities and differences in his

36 Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*, 39–71; Neil Hudson, ‘An Ever-Renewed Renewal: Fifty Years of Charismatic Worship’, in *Scripting Pentecost*, ed. Mark J. Cartledge and A.J. Swoboda (London: New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis, 2019), 78–80.

37 Muindi, ‘Ritual and Spirituality in Kenyan Pentecostalism’, 159.

38 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 153.

39 Albrecht’s study was introduced in Chapter 2.

study of a British classical pentecostal church.⁴⁰ The micro-rites described by Albrecht were similar, although their function was not only to enliven the foundational rites but also to facilitate transitions between them. In terms of structure, Cartledge modifies this by adding Holy Communion as a foundational rite in its own right. Historically, the breaking of bread has played a major role in the classical pentecostal movement and in some churches this is still the case. Cartledge also underlines the importance of “the Notices/Family business/Offertory slot” saying that this should be regarded as “a major unit” since this is the time when “the community of the church is affirmed and developed in a significant manner”.⁴¹

Although Albrecht and Cartledge have studied a different set of churches in different parts of the world, the parallels with my own case churches are striking. The basic structure is there, as are many of the micro-rites. Similarities can be found on a structural level as well as on the level of detail. Of course, there are also differences, some of which I point out below.

One major difference from Albrecht’s findings is that in both Mavuno and Woodley the phase of the liturgy between the rite of worship and praise and the rite of pastoral message has a more prominent place. I have chosen to label this part of the liturgy ‘community-building rites’ rather than ‘transitional rites’ as I think the former term transmits its content and importance better. It also corresponds to the emic use of “community time”⁴² to describe this phase in Mavuno. Timewise, this part of the liturgy is allotted about 20–35 minutes in both churches, and so equals the time spent on congregational singing.

The community-building rites are not merely a transition from A to B, or “a pause”⁴³ in the ritual action; rather, they have their own function. As in Albrecht’s case, it is a time for “congregational business”⁴⁴ (announcements, information, collections) but, more importantly, it is a time for community building and bonding, in line with Cartledge’s observations. In my case churches, is a time to have fun, play games, get to know one another, greet newcomers, pray for those in need, give testimonies, and many other things.

40 Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, 39–43. Albrecht’s study has become a staple in pentecostal studies, referred to by a wide variety of scholars, see for example chapters included in Green, ‘Saving Liturgy: (Re)Imagining Pentecostal Liturgical Theology and Practice’; Ingalls and Yong, *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*; Lindhardt, *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*.

41 Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, 43.

42 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11. I did not hear anyone in CITAM use this expression; rather, they referred to the individual rites involved: giving, notices, etc.

43 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 160.

44 Albrecht, 160–61.

In CITAM this is also the place in the liturgy where communion is celebrated and where baby dedication and the ordination of pastors take place.⁴⁵ These specific rites—“sacraments, ordinances and ceremonies”⁴⁶—are not part of the rhythm of every Sunday service (and in Mavuno’s case happen on other occasions), so should not be counted as primary rites, but are best seen as different outworkings of the same function: building community.

In both churches there is an element during the community-building rites when newcomers are welcomed and people are encouraged to greet each other. This comes rather late in the service, after the rite of worship and praise. This could be considered a bit odd—welcoming people after they have been there half an hour—but it is very deliberately done, as the primary goal of the service in both churches is to honour and meet with God. Meeting each other is important, but comes only after inviting God in through music, singing, and prayer. The end of the service also marks this priority difference: the time spent on saying goodbye to each other within the ritual is minimal in both churches, usually only a sentence. Instead, the human farewells take place outside the hall/tent, or not at all, especially after the last services when the rite of altar/response tends to run over the normal two-hour service time; consequently, when people leave they drop out just as they came in.

Between the community-building rites and the rite of pastoral message there is a transition rite, usually a musical performance by a soloist, group, or choir. In CITAM this phenomenon is commonly known as “a special.”⁴⁷ In Mavuno the phenomenon was not technically referred to as “a special”, but was at times alluded to indirectly: for example, hosts would say they had “a special treat” for the congregation.⁴⁸

In terms of content the songs referred to as ‘special’ cannot be distinguished from those used for worship; what differs is the ritual performance: the congregation listens rather than sings. However, in some cases the congregation is encouraged to join in singing the refrain, introducing a strong resemblance to the rite of worship and praise. Musically, there is sometimes a difference in that the songs delivered as specials are more dense in text and/or more complicated musically.⁴⁹ In Woodley’s case this usually means a choir performance

45 Interview Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14.

46 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 258.

47 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31; Pastor Omondi 2013-01-14; see also Kidula, ‘Singing the Lord’s Song in the Spirit and with Understanding: The Practice of Nairobi Pentecostal Church’, 143. This phenomenon goes under the name “special music” in Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 162.

48 Fieldnotes Mavuno Sunday Service 2014-01-19.

49 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

sung in four-part harmony and in Mavuno an artist performing one of his or her latest tunes.

In terms of ritual performance, the special shares similarities with both the worship (music and singing, congregation joining in) and the sermon (congregation listen to someone acting on stage), thus pointing both backwards and forwards in the liturgy. The special links the rite of worship and praise with the pastoral message—leading the congregation back to a focus on God—so that, in effect, worship through musicking encloses the community-building rites. The special song thus acts as a bridge between the first half of the service and the second, joining them together and separating them at the same time, as Figure 5 illustrates.⁵⁰ Music both frames and guides the liturgy forward.

Ritual sequencing also has to do with the rites that surround the actual service, and here the two case churches differ. In Mavuno, the gathering and parting rites to a large extent resemble the casual greeting practices that Albrecht observed.⁵¹ Visitors usually get a stately welcome, not always with roses as described in the Interlude, but always greeted by several ushers and handed leaflets or the like before entering the dome. Before the service begins there is a time of gathering and talking, while screens advertise upcoming events and some relaxed background music is played, either live or from the speakers. People drop in continuously during the first hour of the service, and when they arrive, they greet others on their way in. By framing the liturgy this way, the gathering and parting practices mark the church off as a space for fun, relaxation, and friendship.

Woodley, however has a different approach. The first service is preceded by a time of intense prayer, led by an elder or deacon. People who come into the hall at this time find a seat and take part in the prayers without talking to each other. Only when the prayer is finished is there a short break for greeting and gathering, before the worship team starts to play, usually a few minutes before the announced starting time. Dropping in during the first hour, some greet each other inside the hall as they come in, but most go straight to their seats and start to participate in the liturgy. Congregants joining for the second or third service either stay outside the hall waiting to get in, and so gather and chat outside, or they enter the hall and participate in the last bit of the preceding service. Between services there is always a short break when people greet each other. Ushers greet visitors at the doors, but also act as doorkeepers when the hall is already full, preventing more people from coming in. During Holy

50 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 160.

51 Albrecht, 154–55.

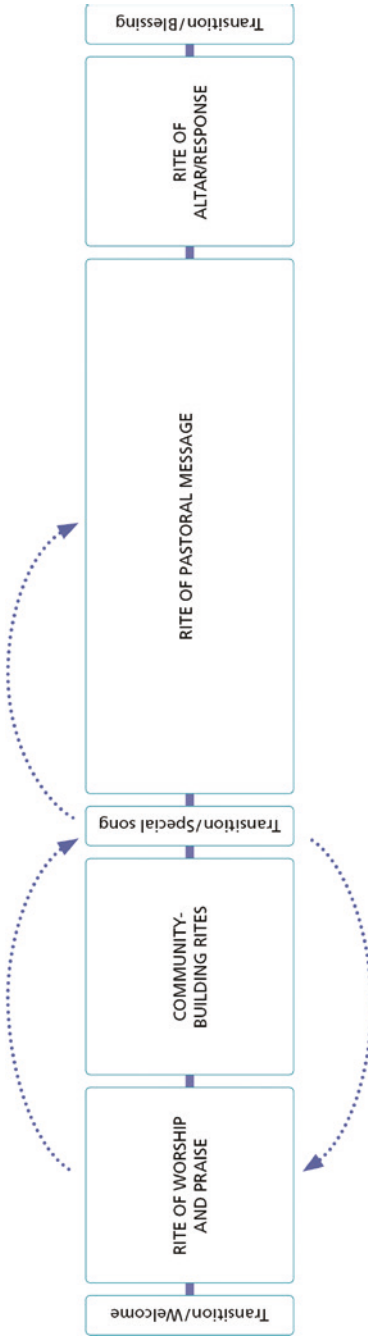


FIGURE 5 Ritual sequences in Sunday liturgy

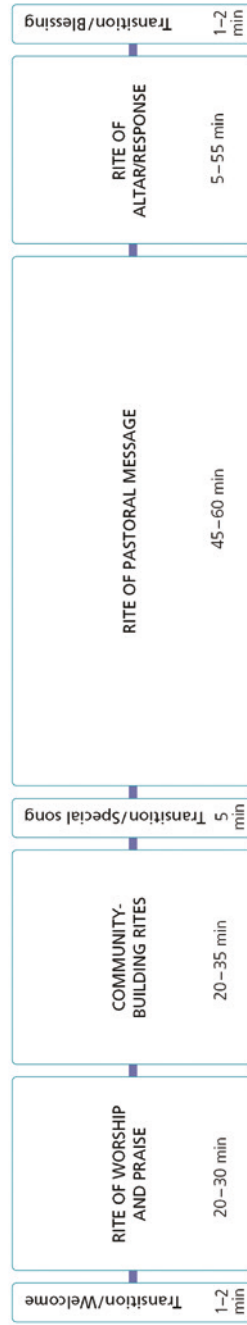


FIGURE 6 Timing of ritual sequences in Sunday liturgy

Communion and the altar time the ushers close the doors and congregants are expected not to leave or join the service for their duration. These practices frame church as a holy space, and Sunday liturgy as a holy time: space and time that require a certain respect.

With the above modifications of Albrecht's phases, we end up with a basic structure consisting of four, rather than three, primary rites (main liturgical sequences) framed by gathering and dispersing rites and joined by transition rites. Figure 6 illustrates this in diagram form, taking into consideration the timing of each of the liturgical phases, while the list below specifies it in a manner reminiscent of Albrecht's work.⁵² However, the structure below is slightly different from his description; he adds a transition between the sermon and the altar call, while in Mavuno and Woodley I find that these go together without a clear break between them. I have also clarified it by adding explanatory words to the minor transition rites within the liturgy, as well as adding the fourth primary rite, in line with the discussion above. Lastly, the structure emphasizes the beginning and end of the service with a specific transition rite; these are described by Albrecht, but not pointed out in his structure. In doing so I follow Muindi who highlights the importance of what he calls the "ritual of call to worship" and "ritual of benediction", respectively, in the Kenyan context. However, unlike him, I do not see them as equal in importance to the primary rites, but rather as having a transitional, framing function marking the difference between ordinary and extraordinary time.⁵³

Ritual Sequences in Sunday Liturgy

Gathering and Greeting

Transition/Welcome

RITE OF WORSHIP AND PRAISE

COMMUNITY-BUILDING RITES

Transition/Special Song

RITE OF PASTORAL MESSAGE

RITE OF ALTAR/RESPONSE

Transition/Blessing

Farewells and Dispersing

As we will see in the next section, several of the interviewed pastors in Mavuno and Woodley gave detailed descriptions of this general liturgical pattern. I take

⁵² Compare Albrecht, 153–54.

⁵³ Muindi, 'Ritual and Spirituality in Kenyan Pentecostalism', 154, 158.

this as an indication that both the structure itself and the vocabulary connected with it are stable and well-established, connecting both churches to the wider world of charismatic Christians.

1.2.3 Emic Voices on the Rhythm of Sunday Services

In this section so far, my discussion has been built on observation and I have used the work of other scholars to extract the ritual pattern from what I have witnessed. Now I turn to my interviewees for an emic perspective on the liturgy and the function of praise and worship within it.

When asked about the structure of the service and the function of the different parts within the liturgy, Pastor Nyaga in Woodley told me:

[I]t is worship that really draws people to God's presence, as they come and they worship God and they're more aware of God and some in their own way express their gratitude to God, some in prayer and thanksgiving. And we do that during the time of music and worship. And then of course, then we have the time for the notices, the welcome, we welcome people, making them comfortable in God's house. And then we give some notices which are geared towards helping people know what's happening, what programs are running they can be part of ... And then of course giving—there's an opportunity after that of giving, which is part of worship, offering ... [A]nd then we have the music team doing their special and then after that we have the Word. The preacher comes on and then they share from the Scripture. And this word draws people's hearts to what God is saying to the congregation. Depending on the topic, depending on the sermon, the way it's designed, it just means that bringing the mind of God to the people: "This is what God says in His Word." And that speaks to people's hearts. Depending on how the sermon goes we do allow people to respond to the Word ... We open the altar for people to come and receive that special ministry. Yeah. So all this is geared towards drawing people's hearts closer to God, which is really part of worship. Yeah, and then we wrap up the service, yeah.⁵⁴

In this quote Pastor Nyaga is describing the basic outline of a normal church service, and the pattern follows approximately what I have suggested above: time of music and worship, time of notices and welcome, giving, special music, the Word, response, and wrap up. It is worth noting that several different levels

54 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

and usages of the word ‘worship’ are at play at the same time in this quote; he uses it to refer to music and singing, to giving, as well as to the entire service. The function of each part is described and at the same time he relates all of them to an overall idea of worship, saying that it is all “geared towards drawing people’s hearts closer to God” and hence “part of worship.” Worship is what connects the different sequences together; it is the core activity that joins all of them into one ritual.

When he describes the pattern, there seems to be something almost self-evident or obvious about the structure, as if he is describing the most natural thing. When I continue, asking him whether this liturgical pattern is God-given or could be altered, he says that it is flexible and not God-given. In principle the pattern could be altered, but since music is such a powerful way to connect people to God and each other, this is “the most natural way.”⁵⁵ Thinking about the question he adds:

But also, I see it also as these are biblical, a loose biblical outline given: “Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.” So God presumes that you would come to Him joyful, you know, with music and thanksgiving even before you start making your request known, you know. And the Lord’s Prayer as well gives them some ideas, you know ... Before you make those requests you have praised Him, you have worshipped Him, you’ve given Him thanks and then, “This is my petition.”⁵⁶

He starts to say that the liturgical pattern is flexible, then says that it is natural, then goes on to give a theological argument, based on Psalm 96 and the Lord’s Prayer (Mt. 6:9-13), for why the structure looks as it does, suggesting that it is in fact ordered and prescribed. The argument goes in two directions, underlining both the value and existence of flexibility, and the value and existence of order. Order itself is not God-given, it is subject to change, but at the same time it is positively approved and theologically justified by biblical references. We may note that he does not refer to Christian tradition or church history in his outline of motivation, although that influence is certainly there as well, given the resemblance between this structure and that of other Christian traditions.⁵⁷

Pastor Rose has a similar understanding of the liturgical pattern as pragmatic choice rather than God-given, but focuses more on the challenges provided by the pattern. Interestingly, considering Albrecht’s notes on the

55 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

56 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

57 White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*.

combination of freedom and structure in the charismatic liturgy, discussed in Chapter 2, Pastor Rose rather pictures a pattern that lacks flexibility. She says that the service structure is implemented top-down in all CITAM churches in the country, and they all need to follow the same pattern and approximately the same time frames. As she says, “It’s something that they’ve tried to fine tune in the last two or three years so that if you went to any CITAM church anywhere in the country you would expect [to find it], although some churches have a shorter worship. Woodley’s known for its longer worship session ... The others have like 15 or 10, 15 to 20, 20 minutes.”⁵⁸

Again, even from an emic perspective we can sense the importance of time and timing within the ritual. The space given to music is counted in minutes and adding an extra five or ten minutes as Woodley has done communicates the value given to this part of the liturgy, both to the congregation and within the denomination. As a pastor in charge of the worship ministry she is constantly struggling to refresh and change the services, to update them both in terms of style and content, and to stretch the worship session, but reports a certain resistance from the leadership level: “[I]t’s not set in stone that program, it’s, it could be different, we’re always thinking what could we do differently. But change doesn’t come easy to our old leaderships, you know, people in leadership. They sort of want to know: ‘we will come and we’ll find this happening.’”⁵⁹

As the church is governed by a hierarchy of elders and deacons, and because these often belong to an older generation, Pastor Rose says it can be hard to change things in the service. Everything is expected to be as it has always been. Pastors have an operational and executive role, but they are under the leadership and governance of a board of elders and the bishop, and need to act in line with the latter’s decisions.⁶⁰ What Albrecht has referred to as two valued characteristics of pentecostal spirituality—namely, the perception of the ritual as flexible and the sensation of freedom⁶¹—are not always easy to achieve in practice. The difference between ideal and reality may, as so often before, bring frustration, sadness, and conflict.

In Mavuno the leadership structures are different, with much more power in the hands of staff members, especially the main pastors. The church has a

58 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

59 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

60 Mark Cartledge notes the need for further enquiry in practical theology on the role of leadership within Pentecostalism, saying, “The importance of leadership studies in the broadest sense cannot be underestimated”. Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 116.

61 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 176.

shorter history and reaches out to a younger demographic, one both expecting and allowing more innovation within the services. This permits freedom to “craft services”⁶² differently, and in terms of style and aesthetic language Mavuno does so. In terms of service structure however, the pattern is very similar to that of other pentecostal-charismatic churches. This pattern is approximately the same on all the Mavuno campuses, although again the timing of the music session may differ slightly. Pastor Kamau measures it in number of songs: “Now over here [i.e. Mavuno Bellevue] we have, our song set has four songs. It’s not always the same; I mean you go to Mavuno Downtown you find the five songs, if you go to Kampala sometimes they have six songs. So different, different communities do it differently. If you go to Berlin sometimes they’ll even have just three songs.”⁶³ This to him shows that there is freedom for the church campuses to craft their own services, although from an etic perspective it might not sound untrammelled. When it comes to ritual sequencing, CITAM and Mavuno have similar top-down management between the main church and its branches.

Explaining the service structure in Mavuno, Pastor Kamau identifies four main sections: the music time, the community time, the sermon, and the response. Each has its own function, which he describes in much the same way as Pastor Nyaga and in line with what I have discussed above, although using different words and with slightly different emphasis. The music time, Pastor Kamau says, has both an immanent and a transcendent aspect to it. It connects the individual to the community and allows people to have fun, and at the same time it connects them with God, communicating that “God is in this place.”⁶⁴ The transcendent aspect, he says, is not obvious at first sight in Mavuno, but it is there nevertheless. He says that the community time has an informational element to it, but overriding that is a very intentional goal: “to reinforce the value of community and a sense of belonging... [W]hat we want people to know is, you know, ‘I am welcome here.’”⁶⁵ The sermon, then, is the primary instrument for delivery of content, for “putting God’s Word in a translated form into their lives,”⁶⁶ and the response, naturally, is a time to respond to the message.

62 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

63 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

64 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

65 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11. This deliberate use of humour and entertainment to build community will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

66 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

We may note that there is a slight difference in emphasis from that applied by Pastor Nyaga when he says the preacher shares “what God says in his Word,” thereby “bringing the mind of God to people”—thus focusing on the transcendent or supernatural side of preaching—and Pastor Kamau’s saying “putting God’s Word in a translated form into their lives,” thus focusing on the interpretative and delivery side of it. In the first case the preacher is primarily a transmitter and in the second he is the translator of the message. This focus on deliberate communication recurs in my interviews with pastors in Mavuno.⁶⁷ There is very little sense of divine intention, Christian tradition, or biblically suggested order; it is all about communication, creativity, and crafting—yet, interestingly, they still follow the same liturgical order as most other pentecostal-charismatic churches.

To sum up, temporal and sequential aspects of the liturgy are essential to pentecostal-charismatic spirituality as practiced by my Kenyan interlocutors. Their services are highly structured, sometimes to the point where freedom and flexibility are constrained, and timing becomes an exact art. There is an inner dynamic whereby the four primary rites and the additional transition rites each have different functions and yet work together to create a total structure. This ritual sequencing—this ‘rhythm’—is biblically and pragmatically motivated and the goal of the entire Sunday service is, in its most essential form: worship. At the same time, worship is a specific practice and a specific part within the service, a primary rite to which we now turn.

1.3 *The Rhythm and Flow of Worship and Praise*

In the previous sections, I have discussed the role of music within the ritual system in general as well as the inner dynamic of Sunday services as manifested in a certain ‘rhythm’, or sequencing, of ritual acts. That rhythm has to do with both time and pattern, or rather, both timing and patterning. I have demonstrated how meticulously timed the services are, pointing to a high value of ‘time’ itself and counteracting a common stereotype about pentecostal liturgy as spontaneous and unrehearsed, while also underlining how the combination of a fixed structure of principal units, with an assortment of minor elements and micro-rites brings both flexibility and stability to the service. I have showed that music is a major aspect of pentecostal ritual life (although unevenly distributed between different types of gatherings) and how it functions to frame and drive the liturgy forward and facilitate an experience of divine presence.

67 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11; Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12; Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11. This process will be discussed in more detail below.

Homing in on the rite of worship and praise discloses that an inner dynamic of temporal and sequential aspects can also be found at this level. As demonstrated in the ethnographic vignettes, the songs at the beginning of each service are joyful and upbeat, while those toward the end of each worship session are more intimate and reflective and usually contain a dynamism of sound. This is a recurring pattern in both churches, and one that is very common in pentecostal-charismatic churches around the globe.

1.3.1 Ritual Sequencing of ‘Praise and Worship’

Explaining the global spread of pentecostal-charismatic worship music, ethnomusicologist Monique Ingalls describes how a certain “philosophy of worship”⁶⁸ developed concurrently with worship music’s distinctive style and repertoire. Part of this philosophy was the idea that there is a goal-oriented progression within the first phase of the liturgy (commonly referred to as ‘praise and worship’) consisting of the two distinct yet related acts of ‘praise’ and ‘worship’. In passing we may note that yet another usage of the word ‘worship’ is at play, namely referring to a sub-section of the first primary rite and a corresponding musical expression.

The Jewish tabernacle/temple design has particularly come to serve as a metaphor for the mythic journey that is thought to take place during the rite of worship and praise.⁶⁹ The ritual sequencing is marked and communicated through music. Tempos, dynamics, rhythm, and lyrics form a powerful totality that engages the audience and brings them on a journey.

This ritual procession begins with “praise” at the temple gates and then moves to “worship” in the inner sanctum of the temple, where worshippers relate individually and intimately with God. Music plays an important role in facilitating the transition from communal praise to intimate worship. Praise songs, sung at the beginning of the charismatic worship set, are characterized by upbeat tempos, major harmonies, lively rhythms, and communally oriented lyrics. In contrast, worship songs, generally feature slower tempos, more poignant contrasts between major and minor harmonies, and intimate lyrics expressing devotion, love and desire for God.⁷⁰

68 Ingalls, ‘Introduction’, 6.

69 See also discussion in Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, 124–31. I will return to a discussion of the temple/tabernacle-imagery and ritual progression in Chapter 8.

70 Ingalls, ‘Introduction’, 7.

Ideas such as these were also presented and contested by the pastors in Mavuno and Woodley. Both Pastor Josh in Mavuno and Pastor Rose in Woodley refer to the tabernacle model when explaining the ritual sequencing of the first phase of the liturgy. Although neither of them clearly distinguishes between ‘praise’ and ‘worship’ as two different ritual acts, both highlight the way music is used to facilitate the progression from the outer courts to the Holy of Holies, from celebration to adoration. By contrast, Pastor Kamau in Mavuno dislikes this distinction between ‘praise’ and ‘worship’ and refuses even to label the first phase of the liturgy ‘praise and worship’, as he believes that this limits the meaning of worship by equating it with music. At the same time, the concept is so well-established it is hard to change how these words are used. The following exchange between the interviewer (myself) and Pastor Kamau illustrates this difficulty:

I: So if you look at the music part of the service

Kamau: Yeah.

I: What does that, what kind of effect does that have? What is the function of, of praise and worship in the service for the people coming—spiritually or psychologically or in any other way?

K: Mmm. The only thing we try not to do, we don’t call it ‘praise and worship’ even though it’s called ‘praise and worship’. [Both laugh.]

I: What do you call it?

K: We just call it a music time.

I: Yeah, alright.

K: A music time. Because also there’s the false notion that ‘praise and worship’ is music and ‘praise’ is one kind of music, ‘worship’ is one kind of music. And not everybody, you know, picks this up. But it’s just how it is.⁷¹

First I use the expression ‘the music part’ in my question, trying to be specific and context-sensitive, but then in my follow-up question, I opt for ‘praise and worship’. He reacts to this, and says they do not call it ‘praise and worship’ while, in fact, it *is* called ‘praise and worship’. We both laugh at this, as we realize it is such an established concept for this sequence of the liturgy in pentecostal idiom, that it is in fact hard to find a different label, and even harder to get people actually to use it.

71 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

When Pastor Rose describes the ritual sequencing of worship, she distinguishes between three phases rather than two, adding an element of repentance to the usual pentecostal-charismatic ‘philosophy of worship’ described by Ingalls. Each of the three phases—celebration, repentance, and adoration—has its own tempo and tone, although she is keen to point out that “it doesn’t have to” and “it doesn’t always go like that,”⁷² possibly mirroring a certain ambiguity towards ritual forms and rigid systems. My own observations indicate that it is not easy to distinguish musically between the second and the third phase in her schema, while the difference between the first (‘praise’) and the second/third (‘worship’) is easily distinguishable in terms of tempos, rhythms, and harmonies.

This ritual journey from the outer courts to the Holy of Holies has its own timing, counted again in minutes. She tells the worship teams that they need to plan their sessions in order to get into their adoration songs “by 20 past ... so that by 25 past you’re through, just so that by half past should a pastor come and start wanting to pray, you’re ready.”⁷³ This means that if the service starts at 8 a.m., at 8:30 they need to be through all three phases and ready to leave the mic to the hosting pastor.

Sometimes the pattern is slightly altered, as described in the Interlude when the very first song in Woodley, *We give You all the glory*, is slow and declamatory, not upbeat or lively. However, that song was sung just before the service, and could be seen as part of the prayer and preparation mode, rather than as part of the rite of worship and praise. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that the next song, *Our God is greater*, sung at 8 a.m. sharp, after the worship leader has greeted the congregation, is upbeat, rhythmical, and energetic, thus following the ‘normal’ sequencing pattern. Below I describe this pattern as a dynamic flow of ritual sound within the rite of worship and praise. Rising and falling according to regular patterns, sound creates a space where divine encounters may take place.

1.3.2 A Dynamic Flow, Facilitated by Ritual Sound

It is hard to think of an oral liturgy without acknowledging the role of sound. All through the pentecostal liturgy, and not least during the musical parts, participants are immersed in a flood of instrumental and vocal sound, bringing them along on a journey and unfolding the ritual story of which they are part, bit by bit. As Michael Rowlands noted in relation to born-again churches in

72 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

73 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

Cameroon, sound not only transmits a message, it “is part of the ‘message’ itself, inasmuch as sound plays a cosmological role and helps shape social experience.”⁷⁴ Referring to theories by Anzieu and Warnier, he describes how the amplification of sound in those pentecostal settings creates ‘acoustic envelopes’ that mark inclusion, prosperity, and power over evil. “Acoustic envelopes are therefore like bubbles produced by noise and music to which you either belong or are excluded by the process of growing up within them”⁷⁵ (or, one could add, by being familiarized into them through later experience). For those inside the bubble, or envelope, sound creates a sense of belonging, physically and cognitively, while for those outside of it, the same sound signals exclusion and can be perceived as strange, even “unbearable.”⁷⁶

In pentecostal praise and worship, a combination of musical dynamics, tempos, and rhythms are fine-tuned into the worship set to create a powerful effect, a “sonorous bath”⁷⁷ that immerses worshippers in ritual sound. Daniel Albrecht calls music “an auditory icon,”⁷⁸ since sound in the pentecostal ritual functions as a window or doorway into prayer, into a human-divine encounter. He says, “It embraces the Pentecostal worshipers in an analogous fashion to the manner in which icons visually surround the Eastern Orthodox faithful in their sanctuaries. Our congregations use their sounds, particularly music, to facilitate the creation of their ritual field.”⁷⁹

Ritual sound comes with many different qualities, volumes, and forms. There are arbitrary sounds—sounds stemming from people moving chairs or blowing noses—and deliberate sounds, sounds meant to be part of the ritual.⁸⁰ There are sounds produced by the congregating collective, such as the typical murmur that breaks out at certain times of prayer in Woodley, and sounds coming from individual actors, the voice of a pastor preaching or artist singing. Most typical to the rite of worship and praise, is the combined sound, the sound produced by instrumentalists, vocalists, worship leaders, and congregants together.⁸¹ This characteristic sound has a marked dynamism; the

74 Michael Rowlands, ‘The Sound of Witchcraft’, in *Learning Religion: Anthropological Approaches*, ed. David C. Berliner and Ramon Sarró (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), 192.

75 Rowlands, 193.

76 Rowlands, 192.

77 Didier Anzieu (1985), referred to in Rowlands, 193.

78 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 142–43.

79 Albrecht, 143.

80 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 274.

81 Miranda Klaver, ‘Worship Music as Aesthetic Domain of Meaning and Bonding: The Glocal Context of a Dutch Pentecostal Church’, in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship*

volume rises and falls in a dynamic fashion throughout the rite: sometimes loud, sometimes soft, sometimes almost silent.

The combination of sounds that occur in a pentecostal service may well appear to an outsider as “a cacophony” or “sonic dissonance,” but to the insider, Albrecht observes, it is “a symphony of holy sounds” as it symbolizes “the gathered community in the presence of God.”⁸² Despite the element of hyperbole in this observation—it is not all symphonic; Pentecostals do hear dissonance and cacophony too—I find his basic observation correct. The combination of sounds and music is a key component of corporate worship in pentecostal settings and works as a facilitator for the human-divine encounter as well as the creation of a sense of group belonging.

Ritual sound is thus part of the ritual dynamics of pentecostal worship in a very obvious way. Changes in tempo, volume, and rhythm drive the ritual forward, marking transitions between the four primary rites or between phases and songs within the rite of worship and praise. Grimes notes that “sounds can lay out a narrative track even when they don’t contain narratives,” by “demarcating a beginning, ending, transition, or high point.”⁸³

In light of the observations from Mavuno and Woodley, one could think of the dynamic rising and falling of sound as waves flowing rhythmically according to a certain pattern within the rite of worship and praise. The pattern is not always exactly the same; indeed, it is individually adjusted to each service and subject to change over time. The pattern as practiced by the two case churches also has wider applications in terms of culture, music, and Christianity in Africa, but I only hint at these discussions here. Instead, the aim is more direct: to show how important sound dynamism is for pentecostal worship as practiced in Mavuno and Woodley at the time of my field work. Illustrated in a chart (Figure 7), and combined with the examples given in the ethnographic vignettes, the sound-pattern—the ‘flow’—of praise and worship looks something like this:

In the beginning, before the service, instrumentalists in Mavuno jam playfully, and the volume is at a medium level: not very loud, not very soft. Then,

in *Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 103–4. Mark Evans refers to this as a “wall of sound’ aesthetic” Mark Evans, ‘Hillsong Abroad: Tracing the Songlines of Contemporary Pentecostal Music’, in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 183.

82 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 143.

83 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 274.

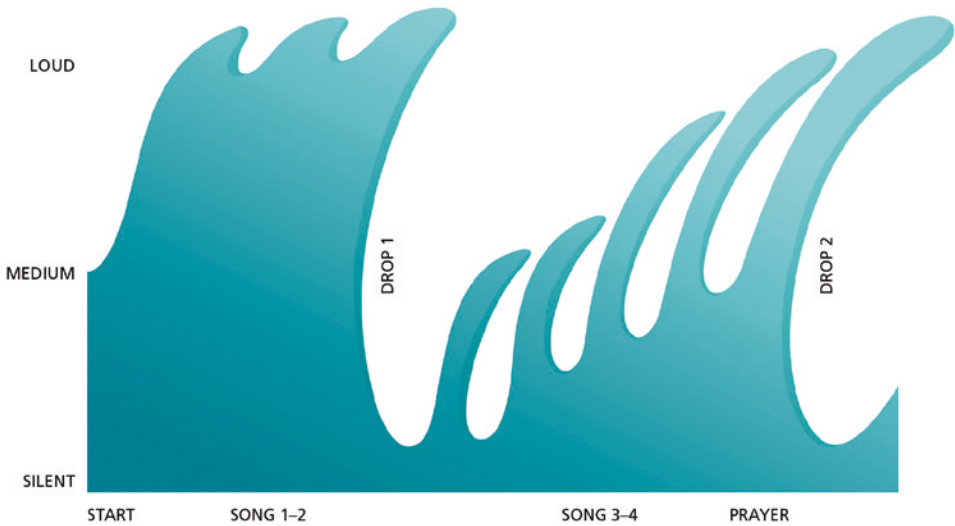


FIGURE 7 Waves of ritual sound

as soon as the service begins and the worship leader greets the congregation, the sound immediately gets much louder. Then it stays loud, even increasing slightly in volume during the first and second song, ending in the first crescendo after the male leader says “How many are happy to be in 2014?” and “Make a joyful noise.” This crescendo is followed by an immediate drop when the female leader starts to speak in a soft voice. Vocalists and instrumentalists follow and the third song starts soft and slow. This is the mark of going from the first phase of the worship rite, ‘the outer court’ to the second, ‘the inner court’. In this second phase sound shifts more dynamically than in the first; it starts soft, then grows into a small crescendo and falls again in a diminuendo. This happens several times during the third and fourth song, with every crescendo accentuating or driving the journey towards ‘the Holy of Holies’. The last song, *I will follow You forward*, ends in long bridge where the same phrase is repeated again and again in ever growing intensity. Then, while music is still playing and people are still singing, Pastor Kyama enters the stage and starts to pray. He repeats the same dynamic sound pattern: starting almost silently and intensifying bit by bit, until he and the music team and the congregation together reach the last crescendo, when he shouts, “Let’s celebrate the Lord,” and there is a large outburst of clapping, cheering, shouts, and music. Immediately after this comes the second drop, this time even more distinct. The music stops, the worship team leaves the stage, and Pastor Neema comes up. The rite of worship and praise is over, the community rite follows. A new phase of dynamic sound waves begins.

At the Woodley Sunday service, a similar sound pattern can be seen. The song sung before the service is sung at medium volume, and once the service begins the volume and the tempo goes up and more or less stays there until the first drop. This takes place only after the third song, after the choir has danced to the song *Bwana U Sehemu Yangu* and are back on the platform. The drop again marks the transition between the first sequence, ‘the outer court’, and the second, ‘the inner court’. Now the music has a different tempo and volume, and a different atmosphere to it. It goes from happy and playful to intimate and serene. Again, there is a dynamic shifting between soft and loud in the second phase, and a continual growth towards a crescendo during the fourth song. The rite of worship and praise ends with a prayer by Pastor Evans, expressed according to the same sound pattern as Pastor Kyama’s prayer above, reaching a climax of intense cheering when he finishes with “In Jesus’ name we pray,” and encourages the congregation to “appreciate the Lord.” Unlike the pattern in the Mavuno service, where the sound immediately drops after the transition prayer, it stays loud a little longer in the Woodley service. It is not until after the music team has been applauded and the congregation has greeted each other that the second drop takes place. This happens when an elder is called to the front to pray for a family that has lost their child. His voice is calm and serious and the congregation prays silently with him. The volume then stays at a medium level during the community rite and special song, and rises to a crescendo only during the sermon, when the volume is extremely loud. Then, again, the shift in liturgical phases is marked by a shift of tone and volume at the beginning of the rite of altar/response when Pastor Obara prays in a whispering voice for a few minutes before shifting to an intense voice again, sending the congregation away with a blessing.

It is clear from the interviews that worship leaders and pastors are aware of the importance of sound and rhythm, while also negotiating them in relation to style. In Mavuno the musical style is close to the East African pop music scene,⁸⁴ while in Woodley it is closer to Protestant church music,⁸⁵ although both churches mix different genres. When asked to describe their repertoire, a team member at Mavuno explains that styles and genres are less important than sequencing and content. What matters is where the song fits into the worship set and its timing, not whether it could be described as R&B, hip hop, Christian contemporary, gospel, or any other genre. She says, “We’re not limited

84 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12. Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 118–29.

85 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31. Kidula, ‘Singing the Lord’s Song in the Spirit and with Understanding: The Practice of Nairobi Pentecostal Church’.

by the style, it's more, we are guided more by, um, the time, we are guided more by the message in the song ... but we're not boxed by the genre."⁸⁶ Another person adds, "We've actually taken songs and changed their style. It's like, 'Okay, this is a nice song, but it would sound better as a reggae song' [pause] so we flip it, yeah."⁸⁷ A similar approach is described by Pastor Rose in Woodley, who says that they use "centuries old hymns," but sometimes "tweak them a little. And so you either give it a reggae style or you give it a little bit of a faster tempo."⁸⁸

My observations both confirm and correct this emic picture as sometimes songs that I recognized from other contexts were given a higher than usual tempo, or a different rhythm, but just as often were sung in exactly the same tempo and rhythm. The way African churches appropriate global songs in independent ways points to a post-colonial mindset and an African pentecostal movement that is diverse and dynamic. At the same time, the way they honour and cultivate Eurogenic songs and music indicates respect for the global Christian tradition and their own mission ancestry.⁸⁹

However, even though worship leaders say they are not 'limited by style' the creative approach does have limits, for not every song may go into a worship set, while some categories of songs keep coming back. A team member in Mavuno explains: "[I]f you study us for a while you'll realize that we'll always have an African song in the set and we will always have ... up-tempo, high 'proc-like-ish' music.⁹⁰ ... And we always have a slow, mellow set, basically, so [pause]. We usually play along with all those genres of music into those three categories."⁹¹

Many different genres may be used for worship, as long as the three categories are there in the set: an African song, an up-tempo, proclamatory song, and a slow, mellow one. Having observed a number of different pentecostal-charismatic churches in Nairobi, and visited countless more in Eastern Africa over the years, my impression is that these three categories guide worship leaders and worship teams far beyond Mavuno. Regardless of the ritual style, and of the combination of musical genres that churches adopt, most plan according to a predisposed idea of worship as necessarily including both up-tempo/loud and slow/mellow (similar to the general pentecostal philosophy of worship

86 Interview Mavuno Music team 2014-02-02.

87 Interview Mavuno Music team 2014-02-02.

88 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

89 For a deeper discussion on the use and adaptations of Western music in African church contexts, see for example: Kidula, *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song*; King et al., *Music in the Life of the African Church*.

90 From the overall context of our conversation, my guess is that he means 'proclamation-like'.

91 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02.

described by Ingalls above) and, in addition to that, African, or what is perceived as African-style music.

Before closing the section, two more observations must be made on the connection between ritual sound and the dynamic flow of worship within the service. The first has to do with rhythm, the second with silence.

As described above, sound dynamics often go hand in hand with changes in tempo and rhythm, so that a slow song is more often sung in the second sequence, while an up-tempo one more often belongs to the first. As Pastor Rose noted, however, 'it doesn't have to'; there are variations. In the second phase in particular you find all levels of loudness and a dynamic shifting regardless of the tempo; while a soft and upbeat song in the first phase would be an anomaly. Interestingly, I observed markedly rhythmical music at all points of the rite even though it was more common in the first than the second phase. In both Mavuno and Woodley, typically African rhythms were commonly, but not exclusively, used in conjunction with dance elements in the service and often for songs in Swahili or which included stanzas in Swahili. According to Johann Buis, this 'rhythmical impulse' is typical of black music in general, and has to do with the "inseparability of music and dance in all African contexts," where "even songs that are not meant for dance have rhythmical impulse and prominence of rhythm that hints at the dance".⁹² In the two case churches, rhythm is a key factor in choosing and arranging songs for worship; it is crucial for creating the 'narrative track' and 'sonorous bath' of their liturgy. My impression is that Western pentecostal and charismatic churches use rhythm as a ritual tool to a much lesser degree, and in such cases almost always in the first phase of worship and very seldom in connection with dance, although further comparative studies are invited to investigate differences and similarities with regard to the sound dynamics, rhythm, and flow of worship.

The last note has to do with silence, since silence is as much a part of ritualized sound as rhythm. Pastor Rose says that although Pentecostals are known to be loud, silence is nevertheless crucial for music and worship:

Whether it's fast or slow, whether it is, loud or soft, um—again, being a Pentecostal—more loud sometimes than [chuckles] than soft. But even the moments of silence. And I've been trying to teach my teams. I say, "You know, you don't have to always be singing and banging away, there's

92 *Cultural Theory: Black Music Part 1*, 2019, <http://sk.sagepub.com/video/cultural-theory-black-music-part-1>, building on Jr Samuel A. Floyd, 'Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry', *Black Music Research Journal* 22 (Supplement 2002).

a time for silence as well because music is both sound and silence. So if you don't have the silence bit when will you ever hear God, you know?"⁹³

We may note how she both confirms and corrects the stereotype of Pentecostals being loud. Yes, they 'are more loud than soft', but at the same time she, as an experienced worship leader and mature spiritual person, teaches her team that it is not only about being loud, since there is 'a time for silence as well'. And that time is connected with hearing God. Inasmuch as the worship team wants to lead people into a time of experiencing God through music, they also need to learn to combine sound with silence in a dynamic fashion. In Rowlands' study of born-again churches in Cameroon, silence was connected with evil and witchcraft,⁹⁴ while in Woodley, silence is connected with God. Again, there is a possibility of further comparative studies of the different approaches that pentecostal groups have to the role of silence and its possible cosmological connotations in different contexts.

In this section, I have discussed specific examples of how ritualized sound plays a significant role in the charismatic liturgy. Carefully combined with rhythms, tempos and styles, and sound dynamics—wherein sound shifts from medium to high, from high to low, from low to higher and higher—it acts as a mediator and signifier, guiding the participants through the phases of the ritual, taking them forward step by step. Music creates a 'narrative track' through the sequences of worship, from the outer court to the inner court to the Holy of Holies, all facilitated by worship leaders and music teams. In Chapter 8 I frame ritual sequences as intimately connected to and intertwined with a spiritual journey of transformation and discuss these issues in more detail. Suffice it to say for now that the pattern is there, it is theologically motivated and it is simultaneously liturgical, musical, and spiritual.

The rite of worship and praise thus has its own sequencing, timing, and flow, set in the context of the whole Sunday service and its respective sequencing, timing, and flow. The Sunday service is, in turn, set in the context of the ritual system of the respective churches, their local religious and cultural community, and the worldwide pentecostal-charismatic (indeed the whole Christian) tradition. There is an inner dynamic within the rite of worship and praise, and yet an outer dynamic vis á vis cultures, societies, and ecclesial bodies beyond it. These contexts are set in the context of history, of time passing, for outside of ritual time there is mundane time. While the 'time out of time' of ritual may

93 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

94 Rowlands, 'The Sound of Witchcraft', 203-5.

function to take participants out of ordinary time, it is a fact of life that time still passes relentlessly. With time, the musical preferences of participants change, as do theological emphases, ecclesial structures, and socio-political milieus. Since ritual is permeable and porous—its boundary “more like a membrane than a wall”⁹⁵—these different layers of context affect worship, rendering it subject to change. Again, this invites further studies of how pentecostal worship practices change over time, and what factors play into those transformations in concrete ecclesial communities and concrete social and theological contexts.⁹⁶

In the next section, I move from ritual dynamics to ritual elements. The two are inseparable and yet I try here to separate them for the sake of analytical clarity. Readers should be aware that ritual sequences and ritual sound may well be regarded as core elements (temporal and sonic ‘parts’) of ritual, although in my mind it makes more sense to discuss them as dynamic factors that drive the entire worship rite forward towards its *telos*.

2 Core Elements of Worship

In the previous section I discussed dynamics and processes that are involved in worship rituals and outlined some important features of the Sunday liturgy as a ritual ‘whole’. Now it is time to move from the whole to the parts, from ritual dynamics to ritual elements—again, guided by Grimes’ suggestion that ritual is a complex and dynamic entity, comparable to a mechanical, chemical, or organic whole.

Grimes schematizes the elements of ritual as “a set of overlapping spheres floating in a limitless sea of social context,”⁹⁷ specifically identifying the following: actions, actors, places, times, objects, languages, and groups. He underlines that this is a provisional scholarly construction as parts of a ritual can be named in many ways, borders between them are not given or universal, and their interaction can be described in various ways. Especially important is to

95 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 229.

96 Some historical work has been done on the general development, especially in the Western context, most notably by Ruth and Lim, *A History of Contemporary Praise & Worship: Understanding the Ideas That Reshaped the Protestant Church*; Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, but see also Hudson, ‘An Ever-Renewed Renewal: Fifty Years of Charismatic Worship’; and Friesen, ‘Classical Pentecostal Liturgy: Between Formalism and Fanaticism’.

97 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 235.

listen to how the participants themselves name and understand the parts and their functions.⁹⁸

What follows is a short description of the main ritual elements, essentially mapping 'what is there', while in the following chapters these elements will be further discussed, exploring, among other things, 'how it feels', 'what they say', and 'what it means'. In identifying and naming the different elements or 'spheres' of worship, I am inspired by Grimes's categorization as well as by his tentative approach. Ritual time has already been discussed above, and I will return to ritual actions/acts when I discuss embodiment in the next chapter. The remaining elements or, rather, categories of elements are: ritual actors, discussed in conjunction with groups; objects discussed in conjunction with places; and languages. Apart from these I also discuss ritual preparation and production as this is such a prominent part of pentecostal-charismatic ritual performance in my two case churches. In some instances, I discuss elements of the whole Sunday service, but mostly I keep to those that relate directly to the rite of worship and praise.

2.1 *Ritual Preparation and Production*

A fair amount of ritual production goes into services in both Mavuno and Woodley. Services need to be planned and coordinated, music rehearsed, hearts prepared. Neither the urban-contemporary-afro-pop-style worship of Mavuno, nor the full-choir-gospel-hymn-style worship of Woodley would be what it is without the music teams of each church meeting to practice and pray beforehand. Hence, worship rituals start with preparations a long time before they actually materialize in a service. Instrumentalists need to practice individually and together, vocalists and dancers likewise. New members of the music team need extra coaching and must be trained by the more experienced. For the team leaders, choir director, and pastors in charge of worship, there is also the level of deciding who is on the team and who leads on any given Sunday, as well as choosing songs, sending out information, and organizing time for rehearsal.

In Woodley the music team consisted of more than seventy people at the time of my fieldwork and it goes without saying that it takes both time and effort to organize such a ministry. Preparations involve the music team as a group, as well as individual team members, and take place on spiritual, musical, and practical levels. The whole team meets on Saturday afternoons for rehearsal and prayer, and then again on Sunday mornings at seven for Bible

98 Grimes, 232–36.

study and prayer. This means they spend up to five hours on joint preparations in a normal week, in addition to personal preparations and the actual service time, which amounts to another five to eight hours (the music team normally stays inside the hall for the duration of the second service and leaves after the rite of worship and praise in the first and third service). Sometimes the team has a fasting period together, an intense period of fasting, worship, prayer, and Bible reading as part of their preparations.⁹⁹ In light of the discussion above on ritual time and how extended exposure to, and frequent participation in ritual adds to its transformative and formative effects, it can be assumed that the music teams are among those congregants most affected by, and immersed in pentecostal spirituality. In fact, the deep-end exposure to formative practices (and through them closeness to the Spirit) was given as a motivation for joining the worship team by some members.¹⁰⁰

Reflecting on what she perceives as the risk of churches putting too much effort into preparing a professional artistic performance, including attractive outfits and appealing décor, rather than focusing on inner preparation, Pastor Rose says,

A lot of emphasis goes into that in our churches today and I've been saying, "You know, beyond the outward there's an inward." And so preparing your heart as well is so key for me. I've been dealing with that with my team and saying, "Hey, when I tell you guys to memorize Scripture, I'm also memorizing Scripture." It doesn't mean that because I'm a pastor [I am released from such duties]. I don't know the Bible off hand! I have to work on it. Um, we have to be in a Bible study ... Who are you praying with? ... [W]hat's your personal devotion like? Your morning glory? ... And so that it's not just the outward adornment, it's your heart as well.¹⁰¹

Inward, spiritual preparation is key, as an unprepared heart may hinder corporate Sunday worship. The way to prepare the heart is through spiritual practices such as memorizing the Bible, praying together with others, and prioritizing one's personal devotion. Pastor Rose, despite her position, is not exempt; just like her team she also has to 'work on' her spiritual growth through Christian practices.

In Mavuno the music team is smaller, around thirty people; on the other hand, the total organization of Sunday services is much larger, with several

99 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08, Interview Pastor Rose 2013-01-20.

100 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

101 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

different teams involved and preparations starting months before. In my interviews with pastors in Mavuno there is a recurring focus on deliberate communication and creative production. Services are ‘crafted’ rather than ‘planned’ or ‘held’; there is a complex and intentional process behind each service aimed at communicating the Gospel message in the most relevant and intriguing way to a young professional urban demographic.¹⁰² When asked about the planning process, Pastor Josh says, “Well it’s a [pause]. Let me try and make it as simple as possible,”¹⁰³ before diving into a complicated explanation of a complicated system.

The process starts a few months before the actual Sunday service with the preaching pastor coming up with “the big idea of what it is that he feels that God is telling us for him to address in that season.”¹⁰⁴ Presumably the yearly schedule of preaching pastors has been set well before that, although Pastor Josh does not mention it. The idea is discussed in a meeting with key members who can give input from the perspective of the target audience. This is called a “strategy meeting” where they “try and discuss the big idea of the sermon. What the take-outs would be for the layman who’s listening.”¹⁰⁵ The outcome of the strategy meeting is handed over to the “creative team” who “begins to think creatively about how, about how they can creatively execute it,”¹⁰⁶ all with the purpose of best communicating the sermon’s theme. This includes everything from the choice of music, what to talk about in the community time, how to engage the audience, examples to give in the sermon, and videos and stage décor, right down to “the kind of costume that would help the worship team or the host and even the preaching pastor to wear.”¹⁰⁷ Only after this do actual rehearsals and hands-on preparations take place.

In the process described by Pastor Josh we may note some guiding values: the supremacy of the God-given spoken Word (the preacher’s idea of what he ‘feels God is telling us’); the urgency of mission (the strategy meeting discusses how the message works for ‘them’ and ‘their friends’ and ‘the layman’); and the necessity for creative communication (the creative team takes charge of the total creative execution). Here the lines between a ritual and an artistic performance are considerably blurred, or at least overlap. The kind of creative

102 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11, Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12, Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

103 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

104 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

105 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

106 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

107 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

process needed for a large, non-ecclesial music or community event is very similar to that used in Mavuno (and many other Christian events and conferences).¹⁰⁸ The motivation for the process, however, is different. Here it is guided by a set of spiritual/theological values, which is less likely to be the case in a quotidian setting. Nevertheless, the practical doing of things is similar.

The last step of the preparation process in Mavuno is handled by a production team led by service producer Pastor Nelly:

What the production team does is execute what the creative team dreams up—so everything involved in the ideas of the creative team from our technical angle. We work with the technical team [from] our creative setup to the content of the service, and we do all that, we reproduce that and then on the day itself—because we run our services like you would a TV show to the second and on a cue sheet, on a flow—and then directing the service on the day.¹⁰⁹

The inspiration is clearly taken from TV shows and other large-scale secular events; from preproduction and an exact managing of time (down to the second), to carefully directing and producing every element of the event on the day. With a background in professional music and theatre, Pastor Nelly says that her career has prepared her for the job, for she is able “to view our service and the content of our service from the point of view of an event manager.”¹¹⁰

This resemblance between non-ecclesial creative events and Mavuno church services is both intentional and unproblematic to the people I interviewed in Mavuno. It is a matter of being professional, relevant, authentic, and of communicating the Gospel in the best possible way. And these are all values held in high repute by the congregation. Pastor Nelly says that in Nairobi “the church” (meaning Christian churches in general) was long viewed as “the sloppy one in society, you know, the ones who don’t keep time, the ones who don’t work hard, or the ones who just do a bad job at everything.”¹¹¹ Mavuno see it as their task as a church to correct this picture, since it constitutes a “gross misrepresentation of the God who created the earth in seven days with order.”¹¹² She continues:

108 Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*.

109 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

110 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

111 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

112 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

And so for us to be relevant to a professional generation we have to be professional ... I'm one of those people—I'm young, I'm professional, I'm educated, I've seen the world, I have standards, I have experienced a certain level of professionalism and excellence, and when I come to the space of my God I think it should only be better, not worse, ja.¹¹³

Order and excellence is a way to represent God properly, and a way to communicate with a group of people already accustomed to high standards. Pastor Josh even struggles to find the right word to describe what they are doing on Sundays; hesitating to call it 'a gig' or 'a regular service', he opts for the word 'event':

I wouldn't say, it's not a gig, but it's also not a regular Sunday service. It's almost like a Christian, a weekly Christian event that we're trying to put together so that we are able to get the necessary unchurched people into a space where they are able to have access to the Word of God ... and to good Christian music and just be able to be in a space where they can feel there's community.¹¹⁴

In other words, Mavuno Sunday services are meant to be something between an artistic and a ritual performance. They are creatively crafted according to a deliberate and intentional process, with the aim of giving young, urban professionals (whom he refers to as 'the necessary unchurched people') access to the Bible/Jesus ('the Word of God'), music and community. The end product is a meticulously planned production. Unlike Woodley, they have no problem at all with placing a lot of weight on the outward preparations; to them this is key for achieving the higher purposes of the ritual.

To sum up, ritual preparation and production is an element of worship that should not be overlooked. It has to do with musical preparations, such as choir practice and rehearsal; artistic preparations such as deciding on stage set up, dress, and the creative execution of themes; technical preparations, such as making sure all the cameras and microphones are in the right position; spiritual preparations including joint prayer and personal devotion; and liturgical preparations, such as deciding on sermon themes and service elements. These preparations go hand in hand and spill into each other, but each has an important function for the ritual practice as a whole. Without them the total product would be entirely different.

113 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

114 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

2.2 *Ritual Actors and Groups*

As described in the previous subsection, several groups of actors have already been involved in the planning stage before the Sunday service even begins, most notably the music and tech teams of the two churches, along with the strategy group, the preaching pastor, the creative team, the production team (in Mavuno's case), and the pastors and elders (in Woodley's case). As the service unfolds, some of these people take on new roles, some more visible and some more in the background, and a new key player is added: the congregation—the worshipping community.

2.2.1 The Congregation

The word 'liturgy' can be traced to the Greek *leitourgia*, which means "work of the people,"¹¹⁵ thus indicating the centrality of the gathered congregation for all kinds of Christian liturgies, not just pentecostal-charismatic ones. Yet, in the pentecostal liturgy, the congregation has a comparatively active role. This has to do with a strong emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and on spiritual gifts, making everyone equal in principle and bestowing gifts to use for the common good not just on leaders but potentially on every born-again and Spirit-filled person (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9–10, 1 Cor. 12).

In the two case churches, Sunday services include elements where congregants are encouraged to take an active part, both as individuals and as a collective, and so the congregation acts simultaneously as 'many' and as 'one'. In Mavuno, it could involve a game or a two-minute chat with your neighbour on a given topic, or coming forward to share your story of transformation. In Woodley, it is seldom a game or a chat, but may well be praying for your neighbour during altar time, or greeting friends and family during community time. In both churches it involves a collective response to jokes, exhortations, exclamations, and questions, as well as a joint vocal and embodied participation in prayers and musicking (as described elsewhere in more detail). Neither of the churches assign much space to sharing prophetic messages, prayer requests, or testimonies as part of their Sunday services, although these practices take place at other gatherings during the week. During the services, congregants have considerable freedom to participate in a style that suits them, some more active, some more passive, some louder, some softer. At the same time, some kind of active participation is expected; the opposite would be a sign of non-commitment or non-belonging.

Participation already begins before the service and it continues after it. All congregants are expected to come prepared in their hearts to listen to God, to pray, worship, and engage in the service with their whole beings. This is part

115 Green, 'Saving Liturgy: (Re)Imagining Pentecostal Liturgical Theology and Practice', 111.

of their own ‘walk with the Lord’, their own spiritual journey. When they go home, they take the message with them and act on it. Active participation can also take the form of service. In both churches, congregants are encouraged to take on ministry roles, serving in the music team, the tech team, the children’s ministry, or any other capacity that they feel led to. This type of service is seen as an expression of worship and commitment to the Lord and a way to practice spiritual gifts and grow in faith.

At different stages of the liturgy, different groups take centre stage: hosts and congregants during community time, preaching pastor during the sermon, and ushers during gathering and parting rites. During the rite of worship and praise, the primary interplay is between the music team on stage and the congregation in the hall. There is a constant give and take between these two groups, responding to each other in singing, music, words, and dance, resulting in an intricate interplay of sounds and embodied movement. If it were not for the gathered congregation, the charismatic liturgy would not work. Conversely, if the music team did not gather the congregation and make it into one singing body, it would remain individual persons under the same roof.

2.2.2 The Music Team

In a pentecostal setting, the primary role of the worship team is facilitatory; they facilitate the connection within the ritual between God and the worshipping community, and between a musical and a spiritual plane. On a very concrete level, the team is singing the next song, while on a deeper level, they are bridging the gap between the human and the Divine. One of the members of the Woodley music team expressed it by saying, “I am not only trying to connect to God, but also trying to help others connect to God.”¹¹⁶ Another member added, “So you can divide this into two—you and God and you and the people—because as you sing, it’s like you’re leading them to the next song; they can’t sing the next song unless you do it, yes.”¹¹⁷

Here, leading worship, especially in the capacity of ‘worship leader’ (an expression that can refer either to any member of a worship team or to the person in charge of the team on a particular day), is a matter of spiritual leadership, it is a role comparable to other pastoral and liturgical roles and one appointed by God. Ultimately, it is about leading people to heaven, according to one member of the Woodley music team.

For me I think a worship leader, I think any, any group of people they cannot do without a leader—there’ll be a lot of, a lot of chaos. So even that’s

¹¹⁶ Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

¹¹⁷ Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

why God decided [for] the children of Israel, “Though I showed them the way to Canaan but let me give them Moses so that he may lead them.” Even after Moses, he gave them again Joshua. So for me I think any group of people they, they need someone to show them how to do something, or where to go according to how God wants. So for me a worship leader, like God has chosen you to lead his people to heaven ... to lead people to his presence.¹¹⁸

According to him, leadership is a necessity in any group of people, as it avoids chaos, and it is also a practice that has its model in the Old Testament where God appointed leaders for the Israelites; hence, in the same manner, worship today needs leaders. Several others in the team agreed with him that leadership is crucial in order to guide the congregation into the presence of God.

The music team itself consists of several smaller units; there are worship leaders and instrumentalists in both churches. In Woodley there is also a large group of choir members, a choir director, and a smaller unit of lead vocalists, while in Mavuno the lead vocalists and worship leaders also transform into dancers on a regular basis. Both teams are led by a pastor in charge of worship and music, commonly referred to as the worship pastor.

2.2.3 Additional Groups

Apart from the congregation and the music team, other groups of ritual actors also play a role in the service of the two case churches: the welcome team, the ushers, the pastors, and the media/tech team. The latter two groups are crucial for the rite of worship and praise.

As demonstrated in the ethnographic vignettes, pastors are a very visible group of actors in the liturgy. They host meetings, lead the congregation in prayer and thanksgiving, read the Bible, preach, invite the congregation to respond, lay hands on people, and say the benediction, among many other things. During the rite of worship and praise, worship pastors are sometimes very active, serving in the capacity of worship leader of the day: choosing songs, heading the team, and leading the congregation into worship. At other times, this capacity is filled by a member of the music team and the worship pastor only takes part in preparations. The rest of the pastors take on supportive roles during worship and praise: clapping, singing, dancing, or otherwise participating in the front row. Towards the end of the worship time, pastors facilitate the transition from the rite of worship and praise to the community-building

118 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

rites, often via prayer or Scripture reading, and in cases where Communion is celebrated or the music team is invited to share a special song or lead worship during altar time, pastors facilitate these transitions too.

The media/tech team, on the other hand, is the least visible of the ritual groups, seated at the back of the hall, hidden in a container in Mavuno and on a tiny, elevated balcony in Woodley. Their job is only visible when there is a glitch; when the screens show the correct pictures and the amplifiers and microphones work, they have completed their task and remain invisible. The tech team in Mavuno is led by a pastor in charge of technology, ‘the tech pastor’, while in Woodley the media team is led by a volunteer. The tech team and the music team cooperate closely both before and during the services as their roles largely depend on each other.

There are also other invisible people who play a role in the liturgy: namely, those to whom leaders intentionally and unintentionally relate when they plan services. Those “imagined communities”¹¹⁹ may have a greater part in how services are shaped than is apparent at first glance. For example, pastors in Mavuno constantly referred to their target group of young professionals and to what that demographic might or might not like with regard to certain types of music, clothing, message, style, and so forth. And in Woodley, Pastor Rose often came back to what the older people in church, and especially the old leadership—the elders and deacons—wanted the service to be like. This affected the type of songs that she could choose and how she and others acted on stage. Feedback from the congregation—combined with a general idea of what the church wants to be in the larger Nairobi ecclesial landscape—affects both churches when they plan, develop, and fine-tune their rituals.

Having discussed ritual preparation and production, and ritual actors and groups, we now move to the issue of ritual objects and places, before ending our exposition of ritual elements with a description of ritual languages.

2.3 *Ritual Objects and Places*

At first glance, ritual objects may seem to be missing from worship rituals in the two churches being studied. The architecture is neutral; there is no church organ, no baptismal font, not even wooden pews or altar rails. Pastors do not wear special robes or vestments for their ministry, songs are not announced on a hymn board, and no paintings with Christian motifs cover the walls. In Woodley, the slightly elevated top part of the roof and the multi-coloured glass

119 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006). The book was originally published in 1983.

windows are the only things that signal ‘church’ at first sight. There is also a pulpit, a speaker’s stand of transparent Plexi-glass that could just as well figure in a secular meeting hall, and a communion table, an oval form covered with a white cloth. In Mavuno there is nothing particularly ‘churchy’ about the architecture or interior design. One could say that Christian belonging, ritual framing, and ecclesial affiliation are communicated through sound rather than sight.

On closer inspection, however, ritual objects and places still have a role to play: less obvious objects such as instruments and technological equipment take ritual roles; traditional objects such as dress and costume come in new shapes; and ecclesial space is used according to ritual patterns with long historic roots.¹²⁰

2.3.1 Technological Equipment

Technological equipment is one of the basic elements of worship rituals in both churches, and objects such as loudspeakers, microphones, screens, wires, cameras, and mixing-tables contribute in a direct way to how worship is ritualized in this context. Mavuno has taken the use of technology one step further than Woodley. Screens interact constantly with the worship leader, host, and preacher, sometimes simply showing or underlining what is done on stage, sometimes adding an extra dimension. The media team thus has a very important job handling the live video broadcasting, videoclips and other multi-media presentations. In Woodley this is done less elaborately, but the idea is the same. Lyrics and presentations are shown on screens and the whole service is broadcast live around and outside the hall. None of the people to whom I talked attached a specifically spiritual or religious value to high-tech electronic equipment as such; it is seen more as a facilitator of communications and a way to be relevant to, and up-to-date with society, but as an outside observer it is hard to imagine that these rituals would work as well without the equipment. Without the technology the music would sound different and the atmosphere in the room would feel different. Possibly the congregation would have a different demographic set-up, since a lack of equipment would signal poverty or at least a lower social status in this context.¹²¹

120 Compare discussion in Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*.

121 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

2.3.2 Instruments

Instruments, many of them electronic, also contribute directly to the performance of worship and thus to ritualization. Obviously, the music could not be played unless there were instruments of some sort. Again, ritualists themselves do not speak of instruments as ritual objects or attach spiritual value to them; nevertheless, from a scholarly perspective it is clear that they have become ritualized. This is at least in part an explanation for why conflicts in churches often arise over the use of a specific instrument.¹²² In Europe it might be the organ: some people want to throw it out, some say it is essential. In Kenya the acoustic guitar was once a source of conflict in Protestant churches,¹²³ and later electronic instruments were highly questioned,¹²⁴ but now both are common and mostly accepted. When new instruments arrive and old ones are abandoned it affects the execution of worship rituals, and potentially also the way people experience them. Choice of instrumentation is thus not neutral from a ritual performance perspective and is a much debated topic among scholars of African worship and music.¹²⁵

To the ritualists however, especially in Woodley, the spiritual value is attached to the inner person, ‘the heart’, not the instrument he (it is almost always a ‘he’) is playing. If an instrumentalist is right with God, and he is worshipping from a pure and totally surrendered heart, he can be “the worst instrumentalist”¹²⁶ and still qualify for the team (of course he would still have to practice and grow once accepted). And if a church has poor equipment and limited access to instruments, they can still be a vital church and bring the congregation into true worship. An example is given by one of the Woodley choir members, and the rest of the group chuckle in recognition:

One day I went to Mombasa and then I went to a small church. So in that church there was no roof, it was just open air, and we were about like 15 people. And there were no instruments and they were beating you know this jelly can, this 20 litres jelly can? [Affirming nods] They are using that

122 For a thorough discussion of contemporary conflicts over church music, so-called ‘worship wars’, see Dueck, *Congregational Music, Conflict and Community*.

123 Interview Pastor Ezekiel 2013-01-16.

124 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 94–95.

125 Compare discussion in King et al., *Music in the Life of the African Church*; Kidula, *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logooli Religious Song*.

126 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

to praise God. But, but believe you me, when I came out of that place I felt like I've met with God. Just from that jelly can which was being beaten. [Someone chuckles.] But you can go to a church where there is guitar, there's drums, there's everything, and you come out of that place empty.¹²⁷

Even though the church had no roof, and the only instrument was a jelly can, he felt that he had had an encounter with the Divine; while in a church with all sorts of instruments you may still walk out feeling empty. From his point of view, spiritual fulfilment has other sources than good instrumentation. At the same time, the team chuckles at his example; they all have experience of similar communities, but none of them has chosen one of those in which to worship. Their own chosen church has 'proper' instruments and 'proper' equipment, suitable for educated, middle-class, urban Kenyans, and facilitating a form of worship ritual which makes them feel at home.

2.3.3 Performance

In Mavuno, the performance and the value of the execution of the performance is much more embraced. In their mindset, an excellent performance, including the use of good equipment, good instruments, and nice clothing, is a way to honour God and part of the offering one brings to him. As one of the women in the Mavuno Music team says,

For me I think performance is actually valuable, as much as people think it's not important. When you read the Old Testament [pause] it was a performance, if you look at just the effort. The clothing they used to wear had to be fine. And even when David brought about, you know, his orchestra, it wasn't just anybody he picked up, it was skilled; I mean they were skilled in whatever it is, you know, they were playing, and whatever it was that was done. And I believe that it was then they would now come forward and now bring an offering to God.¹²⁸

She is aware that some people disagree about the value of the performance, but refers to the Old Testament to underline her point. In the temple and in David's 'orchestra' the performance was key, and it required skilled performers, both instrumentalists and singers. Another woman adds that the quality of the

¹²⁷ Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

¹²⁸ Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02.

performance can facilitate or hinder worship: “So I think having the performance done properly is to make sure there’s no distraction. Doing it badly is actually a distraction to the person.”¹²⁹

When Pastor Josh is asked why the church has put so much energy—and money—into musical and technical equipment, he returns to the question of relevance and communications. In order to reach “a generation of people who are used to excellence” and be relevant to them, they “must be able to meet certain standards that they’re used to.”¹³⁰ Echoing Jesus’ metaphor of fishers of men (Mt. 4:19), he calls this a ‘bait’ or a ‘net’:

It’s kind of like a, let me put it, it’s kind of like bait, it’s kind of like a net because them being attracted to that so we’re, it’s kind of like we’re packaging the Gospel, or we’re just packaging it differently. So in, for them, this generation is defined a lot by, like I said, by the culture, which is defined by music, entertainment, fashion, and all these things. So being able to catch their eye or get their attention visually or through audio is now what we just use to be able to reach them. And then when we’re able to reach them then we’re able to now send a message across. So that’s why it is very important, it’s very integral that we have this level of excellence and creativity in what we do.¹³¹

Similar ideas kept recurring in interviews both with the music team and pastors and in informal conversations with staff in Mavuno. Technical equipment and good instrumentation, when used with excellence and creativity, become a language of communicating the Gospel.

2.3.4 Dress

Dress is another element of worship rites that was often mentioned in interviews and is very obvious to an observer; it has also been mentioned by several people quoted above and is discussed further in the next chapter. In Woodley, the costumes of the music team are among the most obvious decorations in church, and contribute directly to the ritual performance in that they add a visual-aesthetic-sensual effect. This element is not as striking in Mavuno, possibly because the team consists of fewer people and the service includes other modes of visual communication, but it is still there.

129 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02.

130 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

131 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

As in many churches that I have visited around Eastern Africa, the choir in Woodley wears coordinated colours. In the ethnographic example the choir is dressed in white, matched with batik shawls of yellow, green, and blue for the women and yellow polo-shirts for the men. On other Sundays they wear all black and red, or all black and white, or all African-patterned. Co-ordinated clothing is also used for other groups within the ritual, specifically the ushers and the welcome teams, whose uniforms do not vary from Sunday to Sunday. In Woodley, unsuitable clothing is spoken of as “a distraction,”¹³² especially in terms of moral values and sexual connotations. Women with active roles in the ritual wear skirts or dresses that at least cover the knee, or loose trousers; men wear trousers, not shorts or sportswear. Neither men nor women are allowed to wear sleeveless tops or low necklines when on duty since this would distract the congregation from seeking God. Pastors in each church share a certain style: ‘casual-and-stylish’ for Mavuno and ‘formal-but-neat’ for Woodley. And, while they do not have formal robes like the clergy of the historical churches, their clothing is not arbitrary, rather signalling certain moral values, group identification, and cultural belonging, among other things.

Thus, dressing “is non-verbal communication” as one of the members of the Mavuno music team said, adding that, conversely, “bad dressing is a distraction.”¹³³ She did not qualify what constitutes bad dressing but, judging from what the music team in Mavuno usually wears, it is not a matter of dressing in (what could be perceived as) a morally questionable way so much as in an unfashionable way. The outfits the music team wear could be described with words such as ‘hip’, ‘fashionable’, ‘street-smart’, ‘cool’, ‘laid-back’, ‘fancy’, or the like. At any rate, they are always dress-coordinated and colour-coordinated.

In the example in the Interlude, they wear black jeans as a base and a collection of street-styled t-shirts, college vests, blouses, and accessories, all in the Kenyan national colours. That these outfits are in effect ritual costumes, and not just arbitrary, personally chosen clothes, was highlighted to me when I interviewed the music team after one of the services. Most of the team had changed clothes by the time I arrived, and one woman in particular had on a very different, and much more conservative outfit. She was now wearing a pink blouse with a high neckline and a black skirt covering the knee, a style suitable for a respectable, middle-aged Kenyan woman, and one that would fit in very well, for example, at CITAM Woodley, but not on the Mavuno stage. Certainly, the worship rites of each church would be considerably different without the

132 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

133 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02.

effect of coordinated and consciously chosen clothing, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

2.3.5 Scenography and Décor

Scenography and décor are further areas in which Mavuno invests time and effort, and again for the sake of communications and relevance. In Woodley, on the other hand, Pastor Rose grieves over the limitations put on creativity in the local congregation because of the financial prioritization of the mother church. If Pastor Rose could choose, she would be happy to use all sorts of decorations to adorn the church, but she is normally restricted by “budgetary allocations” and issues of maintenance. Unlike some other churches that have “beautiful backgrounds” and “unbelievable storage”,¹³⁴ Woodley does not have safe storage, meaning that décor that is not used for a season cannot be kept well-maintained. Although she does try to do what she can with the resources available, she says that “we have a little thing to work with, I think”,¹³⁵ directing a small critical remark at the church leadership. The next moment, she explains that given the core vision of CITAM, she understands their choices. In CITAM as a whole, finances are directed towards outreach, especially their mission stations in other parts of Kenya. The vision is to reach out with the Gospel to “Kenya and the rest of the world.”¹³⁶ She concludes that, although it is “good to attract a clientele in your church” with a beautiful décor, “evangelism and discipleship”¹³⁷ are more important values and must be put first.

Interestingly, the motivation for *not* investing in elaborate décor and equipment in Woodley is almost the same as the Mavuno motivation to *do* so. The core value is similar, that of communicating or reaching out with the Gospel; it is the target group that is different. Mavuno reaches out to people in the hope that they will attend church and become part of it; in that sense their target group is *within church*. Woodley, however, directs its evangelism towards people *outside of the church*, especially in distant areas. This difference in vision takes very practical forms, mirrored in the use of décor and scenography.

2.3.6 Church Building and Architecture

Attitudes towards the church building or ritual space represent another difference between the churches. For Mavunites, the tent used for services is

134 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

135 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

136 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

137 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

mainly just a tent. Sometimes it is jokingly referred to as ‘a dome’ and ‘a hyper-dome’, because of its round shape and spiritual usage, but when I asked about how they consider it, none of the pastors described it as set apart or holy in a spiritual sense. To make visitors feel connected and at ease, they rather strive to give a first impression of a non-religious, “ordinary place.”¹³⁸ That does not mean that it looks ‘ordinary’, in the sense of not special, as underlined by Pastor Kamau’s description of the intended reaction from a visitor: “‘Wow, this place is done up! It’s really, you know, dazzling’. Um, and that is deliberate.”¹³⁹

However, some of the Mavuno leaders are a bit ambivalent in their views of the church building. When asked whether the physical place of worship is important, Pastor Deborah explained to me that in a sense, place did not have significance—God can be worshipped anywhere—while at the same time it had some importance in terms of community.

Well, I think it doesn’t matter. I think as long as you understand you’re in the presence of God. You can be in the presence of God in a park. As long as you understand and say, “I am in the presence of God so I choose to worship him.” I don’t think a physical room or building or anything really is, is important. Um, I think where we put it, importance is where you are trying to congregate a group of people together.¹⁴⁰

When probed to explain this further, she said that place is important for congregational worship, since it contributes to “fellowship” and “oneness of spirit” and so the place becomes holy “when the Spirit of God is there.”¹⁴¹ It is the divine presence that transforms ordinary space into holy space, and ritual practice facilitates this transformation through the act of congregating.

In Woodley, on the other hand, regarding the church building as a holy space was a natural thing to do. When I asked Pastor Rose if she sees the church as holy, she answered emphatically, “Yes. Yes, because that’s what it’s set apart and dedicated for.”¹⁴² She says it is a “designated” and “dedicated place,”¹⁴³ similar to the Old Testament tabernacle. The most holy place within the church is the area called ‘the altar’. This includes the elevated platform, the stairs leading up

138 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

139 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

140 Interview Pastor Deborah 2014-03-21.

141 Interview Pastor Deborah 2014-03-21.

142 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

143 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

to it and the kneeling place in front of it, all covered in red carpet. At the end, people who want to respond to the message are invited to leave their seats and come forward for personal prayers. Occupying a form of ritual ‘middle-space’, they stand in the area between the first row and the altar where a team of intercessors or pastors minister to them. This understanding of ritual space is behind the expression ‘altar call’, a concept used in charismatic churches worldwide.¹⁴⁴ The practice is a common one in Mavuno as well, while spoken of as “response”¹⁴⁵ instead of altar call. They have adopted the ritual practice, using the space in a similar manner, although not necessarily sharing the theological motivation behind it.

In most CITAM churches the whole pastoral team are seated on the platform during the service, marking their importance and ritual role. This, however, is a challenge to the music team who must then lead worship from behind the pastors. As the music team in Woodley is comparatively large, pastors instead sit in the first row and only come up front when preaching, praying, speaking and so forth.¹⁴⁶ In terms of ritualization, this underlines the importance of music and worship in this assembly.

The choir and instrumentalists are thus literally seated ‘on the altar’, something of which they sometimes need to be reminded, as Pastor Rose points out:

And so, even for the music team I tell them, “Guys, you are sitting on this altar.” Man, we have to just to sort of sensitize us to the fact that it’s, it’s not like the market place, you know, when you go to buy vegetables and people say all sorts of things. You’re conscious what you say there. You’re, you’re not taking it for granted. And you just, you just can’t take it for granted. That’s for, it’s a disrespect, sort of like a dishonouring. Because even in African culture or African tradition or religion they had altars; they went to places and you wouldn’t misbehave at a place like that. Um, it’s structured in society. It’s just knowing that this is a place that is set apart for this and this is [tails off].¹⁴⁷

144 Compare Albrecht, where ‘the altar’ designates the in-between space, between the altar rails just below the platform and the first row of chairs. Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 145–46. Compare Cartledge who refers to this as the “between zone” Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, 43. In historic churches ‘the altar’ usually refers to the altar table itself.

145 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

146 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

147 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

There is, thus, a responsibility to act and behave properly among those who have been given the privilege and honour of ministering from the altar. Unlike other spaces in society, like the market, where people can say and do whatever they like, a holy place requires a certain sensitivity and consciousness. Behaving or speaking improperly dishonours and disrespects the altar. To explain this, Pastor Rose refers to African society and traditional cultures where people knew the rules that applied to holy places.

Generally speaking, both churches use ritual space in a way that resembles the traditional Protestant liturgy.¹⁴⁸ The congregation is seated in the hall, facing the front section where the clergy and choir lead the service. Seats are organized into rows and sections, and the architecture is designed to focus attention forward. Within the liturgy people alternately stand and sit according to a regular pattern. The choir in Woodley sometimes break the line between congregation and ministers, but only for a short while, before they go back to their appointed place on the altar. In Mavuno I did not see any instance when the worship team walked down into the hall, although there were several instances when ordinary churchgoers were invited to the front. In Woodley this was rare to see on a Sunday; I only observed it on specific occasions such as baby dedication. During Wednesday prayers the mic was regularly given to participants to pray or give testimonies.

Behind the scenes, there are spaces used by church officials between services: a room upstairs for the pastoral team and elders, and one downstairs for the music team and ushers at Woodley, and a set of containers and small tents at Mavuno. These spaces felt private and secluded in both churches and, while I had access to them, I always felt like an intruder. These were spaces where the officials rested, ate, relaxed, changed clothes, and planned for the next service—like a modern form of sacristy. Normally, ordinary congregants would not go there, although it is not prohibited. Thus, the liturgical space is not entirely fixed in terms of who is allowed access to where; nevertheless, there is an order of things that resembles traditional liturgy. This is provisional in both churches; once the service is over, or before it begins, the media team, ushers, and other people with practical roles move back and forth with no restrictions.

148 On liturgical space in different Christian traditions, see White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 81–103. On the use of space for contemporary worship, see Ruth and Lim, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, 41–58.

2.3.7 Provisionality

Lastly, this sense of provisionality was especially strong in Mavuno during my fieldwork, as the church was about to move to another place. Not only did they use a huge tent as their meeting hall, that tent was also about to be replaced by another one. Once the move had taken place, the old spaces were abandoned altogether. One day I visited the old area and, walking around what was now mostly gravel and stone, I pondered the temporal and transient quality of their liturgy. No longer did anyone sing, or dance, or preach, or meet, or pray at this place. It was all silent and empty and, except for a few guards and a receptionist, I was the only one there. The container that used to function as a sacristy had lost its place now that the big tent was gone, and the baptismal pool—I discovered that they had a portable one—was left among some clutter and had yet to be collected. At first, I felt it was sad, almost scary, how a place could be transformed in such a brief time, but then I thought there was something beautiful about it as well. It points to the flexibility, portability, and adaptability of the liturgy: not dependent on space, although it uses space, it is possible to move. What makes the ritual work is not the place itself, but the people who occupy it. Once the people congregate at another venue, the ritual moves and adapts to that new space. Using a non-permanent space to congregate mirrors the vision and theology of Mavuno, although it also points to the church's rather short history and the development phase in which it was situated as I did my fieldwork. CITAM Woodley has chosen a permanent building that connects them with the local neighbourhood, while at the same time signalling stability and seriousness. It points to their longer history as well as to their ambition to be a church for the established elite.

While there is a difference between the churches with regard to physical place, a similar one also occurs in terms of words and language. To this we now turn.

2.4 *Ritual Languages*

2.4.1 Approaches to and Use of Language

There is a notable difference between the two case churches in the way they utilize language as part of the Sunday service. In Woodley, language serves to create a space for transcendence and holiness, while in Mavuno language is used to communicate and create a space of identification and recognition. Where Mavuno uses a language as close as possible to that of a young man or woman in the street, exchanging typical Christian idioms for more general ones, Woodley uses a theologically dense language, peppered with expressions that are not commonly used outside of church. One such example is visible in the difference between the two churches' mission statements: *Transforming*

God's people to transform the world in Woodley's case, and *turning ordinary people into fearless influencers of society* for Mavuno. In terms of content the two are quite similar, as I discuss in Chapter 8, but from a linguistic point of view they communicate rather differently. The first requires some theological understanding to be intelligible, while the second should be obvious even without it.

Another example lies in the way people speak when they pray. In Woodley, typical pentecostal-charismatic expressions abound: 'In the name of Jesus!'; 'In Jesus' mighty name!'; 'Hallelujah!'; 'Amen'. The church is called a 'sanctuary' and giving, singing, or praying can be called an 'act of worship', 'an offering', or 'a sacrifice'. Prayers include asking for 'harvest', 'restoration', 'miracles', 'blessings', or the like.¹⁴⁹ Typical insider language is also used in songs, for example, in such stanzas as "Hail, hail Lion of Judah", "Worthy is the Lamb", "Oh, the blood of Jesus."¹⁵⁰ In sermons the language is particularly theological, particularly pentecostal, and often grammatically advanced. It is the language of an educated, theologically trained elite.

In Mavuno the language is generally much closer to everyday speech and they are more likely to pick up locally used expressions, especially from youth culture. For example, hosts in the Interlude speak of 'New Year resolutions', invite newcomers to 'a cool cup of tea' and call the new dome 'bigger—better—faster—cooler—smoother'.¹⁵¹ English lyrics are linguistically closer to everyday speech, or at least not as text-dense as traditional hymns or the gospel songs used in Woodley, where the language is also more advanced in Swahili songs, resembling that of the Tanzanian Lutheran hymnbook, while Swahili songs in Mavuno use informal language, even slang.

Theologically speaking, language is one of the ways in which Mavuno downplays the transcendental side of faith and instead foregrounds the immanent. Possibly this points to a difference in understandings of God in the two churches, or at least it has the potential to create such a difference over time. A church where language is difficult for the ordinary person to understand fosters a spirituality where God is perceived as distant, while a church where language is low-key and colloquial fosters a spirituality where God is perceived as 'among us' or even 'one of us'. As I see it there are theological risks with both approaches and the challenge is to keep them balanced.

149 Fieldnotes Sunday service Woodley 2014-01-12.

150 Fieldnotes Woodley 2014-02-02. Lyrics and their content are further discussed in Chapter 7.

151 Fieldnotes Sunday Service Mavuno, 2014-01-05.

English is the main language of both churches, but the multilingual context surfaces in different ways as well. Both churches include Swahili songs in their repertoire, although songs in English dominate. In Mavuno it is common for lyrics to mix Swahili and English, just like an ordinary young adult, while this is rather uncommon in Woodley. In Mavuno, Sheng¹⁵² and Swahili is often used in a humorous way, to make people laugh, while in Woodley it is more a matter of exchanging certain words, such as when the Swahili *Karibu* is used instead of 'welcome'.

An interesting difference between the churches is illustrated by the greeting phrase *Bwana asifiwe* (Praise the Lord) widely used in Protestant churches across Kenya and Tanzania.¹⁵³ This expression is a close equivalent to the Luganda idiom *Tukutendereza Yesu* (We praise You, Jesus) associated with the *balokole* or East African Revival, a hugely influential charismatic revival in the mid 20th century.¹⁵⁴ *Bwana asifiwe* is used as a greeting between born-again believers, and can be heard frequently in Woodley, sometimes several times in each service, while in Mavuno it is not utilized at all. This is highly unusual, and serves as a discreet—and yet distinct—way for Mavuno congregants to dissociate themselves from the ecclesial landscape of Nairobi. Possibly it is also a way to signal that they do not distinguish between 'saved ones', believers, and non-believers.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, using the more neutral 'Good morning/Good afternoon, Mavuno!' is a way to create an inclusive space with a low threshold.

152 Sheng is the slang language of urban youth in Kenya, see Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 203, 219.

153 The greeting is mentioned for example in Gregory F. Barz, *Performing Religion: Negotiating Past and Present in Kwaya Music of Tanzania* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 13, and Anneth Nyagawa Munga, *Uamsho: A Theological Study of the Proclamation of the Revival Movement within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania*, Studia Theologica Lundensia (Lund: Lund University Press, 1998), 17.

154 Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 16, 71, 94–96. Note that Kalu in some instances misspelt the Luganda idiom, this is the correct spelling. The expression refers to a song, compare for example: Shield of Faith Youtube Channel, *Tukutendereza Yesu* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_K22rCtb-c (accessed 2021-06-29). See also Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 55–87.

155 Compare A. Munga, who notes that the segregative use of this greeting in everyday life is one of the reasons behind the ambivalent attitude towards revival groups among Christians in East Africa. The greeting becomes a way to distinguish between 'saved ones' or believers, and 'ordinary Christians'/non-believers. Munga, *Uamsho: A Theological Study of the Proclamation of the Revival Movement within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania*, 17. See also how Armstrong Cheggeh explains the greeting and its connection with the East Africa Revival, in Armstrong Cheggeh, *Developing Relationships with Integrity: Impact Others by Seeking God First* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2010), 12.

Despite these differences, there are also similarities. Even in Mavuno the pastors use typical pentecostal-charismatic expressions when they pray and preach. One Sunday I observed the pastor finishing his prayer with “In Jesus’ name I pray, and God’s people say,” and getting a loud “Amen!” back from the congregation.¹⁵⁶ On another occasion, described in the Interlude, Pastor Kyama encouraged the congregation to ‘celebrate the Lord’ and the congregation responded with a loud outburst of clapping and shouts. It is clear that most congregants know the charismatic idioms and how to respond to them, although the official policy is to use as common and neutral a language as possible.

2.4.2 Orality of Liturgy

Pentecostal spirituality and theology has often been described as ‘oral’, as favouring the spoken words of stories, sermons, testimonies, and so forth over the written word in the shape of books, dissertations, documentation, and the like—although this description has been subject to considerable debate in recent years.¹⁵⁷ A strong proponent of such a view is Walter Hollenweger, who connects the growth of classic Pentecostalism to its African-American roots, and lists “orality of liturgy” and “narrativity of theology and witness”¹⁵⁸ among the characteristic features that Pentecostals have inherited from black spirituality.

The oral character of worship rituals in Woodley and Mavuno should not be contested. Clearly, vocally expressed words are part of the liturgy at all times; they are sung, spoken, prayed, shouted, whispered, and preached. However, this is not the whole story, for the liturgies also abound with written words. Multi-media screens placed at strategic spots around each hall show text during large parts of the service as well as before and after it. Songs are accompanied by lyrics flowing in large letters beside, below, or above the worship team. Congregational announcements are accompanied by written advertisements, and guests are presented with names and pictures. Sermons and speeches are illustrated with power point presentations and, of course, ‘the Word of God’, the Bible, is much valued in these settings and it is used within all parts of the

¹⁵⁶ Fieldnotes Mavuno Sunday service 2014-01-19.

¹⁵⁷ See for example discussion in Kärkkäinen, ‘Pneumatologies in Systematic Theology’.

¹⁵⁸ Hollenweger, ‘After Twenty Years’ Research on Pentecostalism’, 405. See also: Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*; Yong and Alexander, *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*; and Yong, *The Hermeneutical Spirit: Theological Interpretation and Scriptural Imagination for the 21st Century*.

liturgy. Specific verses or stories are often quoted orally, but just as often read from a physical Bible or a digital one. And whenever the Bible is read, Scripture verses are displayed on the screens for people to follow.

Thus, although the liturgy as a whole does not come in the form of a prescribed, written text, as in the historical churches, it nevertheless includes a wide range of written elements. One could say it is both oral and text-dense at the same time. This points to the socio-economic and educational level of congregants and pastors, as well as to larger developments within pentecostal-charismatic churches. Using screens to display lyrics is a well-known feature in contemporary worship across the globe. It is a handy way to help people sing along, and it gives a more modern touch than hymnals, songbooks, or overhead projectors. It also connects the congregation to a global community of worshippers, singing the same songs in a similar manner. New worship songs, accompanied by music videos and lyrics, quickly spread via the internet and are readily used by worship teams in local churches. According to Monique Ingalls, modern technology has brought about a “secondary orality”¹⁵⁹ (a concept she borrows from Walter J. Ong)¹⁶⁰ in which orality persists as the dominant mode of pentecostal-charismatic musical transmission, while transported and mediated via new technology such as internet-based media players and platforms.

The oral character of worship is also manifested via the well-known pattern of ‘call-and-response’ (the pattern is both musical and epistemological, as explained in Chapter 7).¹⁶¹ For example, the preacher, worship leader, or host calls out, and worshippers, vocalists, and/or instrumentalists respond. Sometimes the movement is reversed, with instrumentalists or worshippers calling, and the worship leader or preacher responding. In both churches, ritualists often move seamlessly between singing and speaking, between music and words, between sound and silence. The pattern is especially strong in the rite of worship and praise, where it can be seen on several levels. One is that of performance, with different groups and actors within the ritual responding to each other. Another is at the musical level, with instruments, rhythms, or stanzas ‘answering’ each other back, and whole songs built around a call-and-response figure. Yet another is the sonic level, where silence and sound answer each other or instrumental sound answers vocal sound. Lastly, there is

159 Ingalls, ‘Introduction’.

160 Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002).

161 Clarke, ‘Call and Response: Toward an African Pentecostal Theological Method’, 28; Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*; Floyd, ‘Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry’.

the functional or modal level, when a worship leader, for example, alternates between singing, quoting the Bible, leading in prayer, and urging the audience to worship. All these levels contribute to the total ritual experience, rendering the pentecostal-charismatic service participatory and dynamic.

Having explored the dynamics and flow, as well as the main elements of pentecostal-charismatic worship, giving detailed descriptions of each, it is time to bring the chapter to an end.

3 Conclusion: The Ritualization of Pentecostal Worship

I began this chapter by alluding to a host of metaphors used by Ronald Grimes to describe ritual as a functioning whole—yet constituted by parts—and ritual analysis as a way to uncover the elements of ritual, as well as the dynamics and interactions between them. In the above, I have laid bare the constituent parts and the inner dynamics of pentecostal worship as it is practiced in the two case churches, and discussed various aspects of both the whole and the parts. The description is deliberately elaborate, attempting to show the complexity of the rite of worship and praise down to the finest detail and within its immediate liturgical context. Taking the risk of not seeing the wood for the trees, I have ventured far into the deep jungle of ritual practice (to invoke yet another metaphor), exploring routes seldom travelled yet familiar to many a practitioner. But rest assured, readers will not be left in the wild but taken safely out to the other side. In this sense, the elemental analysis above performs the groundwork for the rest of the chapters in this book, providing readers with a sense of the kind of ritual “beast”¹⁶² we are dealing with here, and acting as a springboard for the coming deliberations, interpretations, and reflections. The chapter also acts as an example of how ritual theory can be applied to pentecostal studies in a fruitful way.

The above analysis has rested on the assumption that the pentecostal practice of praise and worship can indeed be regarded as ‘a ritual’, with the knowledge that many Pentecostals would shun such a description. By way of conclusion, and to summarize the findings in this chapter, I now return to the ‘fuzzy set’ or ‘family resemblance’ theory of ritual, discussed in Chapter 2, and put praise and worship into that matrix. According to Grimes, actions become ritualized through processes such as repetition, elevation, formalization, and traditionalization. Pondering the key characteristics of ritual (marked in italics

¹⁶² Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 236.

below),¹⁶³ could we say that the practice of worship is ritualized in Woodley and Mavuno? I do believe we can. For while worship practices do not share every characteristic (no ritual does) they do share a considerable portion of them, at least to some degree and in some sense.

At first sight, pentecostal-charismatic worship, being a rather new phenomenon and identified partly by the use of contemporary music and performance styles, may not come across as *traditionalized*. In Mavuno, there is even a deliberate break with Kenyan church culture and an attempt to move away from some aspects of the ecclesial tradition. At the same time, they happily appropriate other elements, such as songs and practices that they see as a good fit with their own church. In Woodley, there is an openness to including elements from mainline church traditions, as well as a conscious celebration of their own tradition, the classical pentecostal heritage. In both churches, worship practices are regarded as modelled on biblical practices, hence, *originating a long time ago*.

The association with key biblical texts, and thus with *sacredly held values*, give praise and worship an *elevated* place in pentecostal spirituality. Although it is often said that every aspect of life is a form of worship, congregational musicking holds a special position. The elevation of worship also leads to an elevation of worship leaders, worship teams, and music itself.

The elevation of worship has to do also with the *power and influence* attributed to it. Pentecostals consider worship practices transformational, seeing them as vehicles for spiritual, personal, theological, and social change (as described further in Chapter 8). The power of worship is sometimes thought to be unique, and so, in a sense, a certain way of singing and making music is singled out and elevated above other forms, while at the same time charismatic worship can take place anywhere, and is not *singularized* in the sense of being *a rare event*—rather the opposite.

Instead, *repetition* is a key feature. Not only is worship practiced in approximately the same way every Sunday (same type of songs, same duration in time, same bodily schemes, etc.), it is also repeated in two or three services each Sunday, and each song included in the worship set is sung several times. Obviously, Sunday worship takes place on Sundays; there is a set *time and place* for worship, which contributes to its ritualization.

This leads to a *patterned* and *rhythmic* character, wherein worship is *ordered*, even though I would not go as far as to say it is *stereotyped* or *standardized*.

163 Grimes, 194; Grimes, *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory*, 14. I combine characteristics from both these accounts. See also discussion in Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 138–69.

There is still considerable variation between Sundays and between weekday and Sunday worship, as well as room for individual preference and spontaneity in the way worship is *enacted* by participants and leaders. The pattern is implicitly, and in some cases explicitly, *prescribed*. For while the liturgy in pentecostal churches is not completely *formalized*, as in the historical churches, and is not governed by a written text, it still follows a certain pattern or format. It is not formal, in the sense of being serious or stiff, and yet not entirely informal. Again, it is a matter of degree: Mavuno is striving to be informal, on the edge of irreverent, while Woodley at times has an almost mainline-like formalism. In Woodley, songs used for worship are listed beforehand in a document and checked by the pastor in charge of worship. In both churches, services are planned beforehand, and then discussed and evaluated afterwards, so there is a *conscious* and continuous process of crafting the liturgy, *adapting* it in the most appropriate way.

One way of adapting the liturgy to a certain demographic or context, is by *stylizing* it, something that is done most elaborately by Mavuno, but also by Woodley to a lesser degree. At Mavuno, style is absolutely key, and worship is *carried out with flare*. This is not so much the case at Woodley, but it is still not unimportant. Clothes are coordinated, dance is coordinated. Music is well-rehearsed and the room has been prepared for the occasion. Musical styles and genres are adapted and adopted to fit the setting. Sound and light contribute to the total experience. The focus on performance and style is open to creativity and gives worship a *ludic*, even *dramatic*, character. However, style also leads to conflicts between generations within the same church, giving rise to debates in the ecclesial community over appropriateness when it comes to worship.

The conflicts and debates concerning the proper way that worship should be *performed* shows that ritual in this case is not *consensual*; new churches develop new ways of worshipping, challenging older churches to reconsider their own ways. Some choose to connect more strongly with their roots, digging deeper into the wells of Christian tradition, while some turn to contemporary culture and music for inspiration. At the same time, there is a comparable stability of practice, and a relative consensus on form, function, and content, pointing to the fact that worship is to a high degree *institutionalized*; it is part of the corporate life of the church (both local and global).

Charismatic worship practices are largely *collective* events; they involve groups of people, not just individuals. Groups of people lead worship (choir, worship team, band), and groups of people worship together (congregation, youth group, etc.). Worship is, indeed, also part of the personal devotion and daily life of congregants, but the practice is patterned to a large degree by the format learned in the community (be it the local church or the larger

tradition). The same goes for recorded worship music; even if a person is alone when listening to it, he or she is still part of a larger worshipping collective. If unseen powers are included in the analysis, then charismatic worship is never performed in solitude, but always takes place in the presence of God, if not also in the presence of angels and demons.

In terms of who performs worship, whether a *qualified specialist* or not, there is a certain amount of ambiguity. On the one hand, all congregants participate in worship during services and are encouraged to sing and listen to music in their daily life; on the other, not everyone is welcome on stage to lead worship and there are systems to control who joins the worship team, band, or choir, and how they behave once they are in. There are rigorous systems of leadership in general in both churches, and clear hierarchies between different types of leaders—and worship, being a core practice, is no exception. This ambiguity also applies to the *attitude* when performing worship. While worship practices are part of ordinary life for charismatic believers, they often speak of the importance of entering worship time with the right attitude or *in a special state of mind*. This is especially important for those who lead worship and are, thereby, examples and facilitators for the congregation. They must know their role and come before God with *pure* hearts, otherwise they will not be able to lead the congregation into a place of true worship.

In its essence, worship is about coming before God with music and singing, honouring him and giving him glory, thus *invoking powers to whom respect or reverence is due*. But not only that; ultimately it is about encountering God in a personal and profound way, so we may call it *mystical*, and to some degree, *transcendental*. There is a mystery in meeting God in worship that one cannot fully grasp or explain intellectually. It goes beyond the mind and touches the heart. Thus, worship practices are *not entirely encoded, or decoded*, by their practitioners, and that is a salient point. At the same time, worship, as an everyday experience for Pentecostals, is immanent, sensory, and *embodied*. Ideally, it involves the whole person and his or her whole life.

Thus, worship is *deeply felt* and profoundly *meaningful* to many of those who practice it. It carries meaning and it creates meaning; theologically, spiritually, socially, and personally, although it is not necessarily meaningful in the same way for every congregant participating. Certainly, the pentecostal indignation at calling worship 'a ritual' is more easily understood if one considers how *highly valued* and *sentiment-laden* it is to many of its practitioners, and how negative the word sounds in their idiom. Who would want their most precious family tradition be reduced to 'mere routine' and scrutinized down to its finest detail? However, from a research perspective, the fact that the practice is both *multi-layered* and meaningful are important aspects of its ritualization.

TABLE 6 Level of satisfaction with services and worship music, Woodley and Mavuno

Level of satisfaction; service	Woodley	Mavuno	Level of satisfaction; worship music	Woodley	Mavuno
Very dissatisfied	0.9%	0.3%	Very dissatisfied	1.8%	1.3%
Not satisfied	0.6%	2.0%	Not satisfied	1.2%	6.7%
Neutral	4.5%	6.0%	Neutral	7.6%	16.0%
Satisfied	54.5%	50.0%	Satisfied	46.1%	40.3%
Very satisfied	39.4%	41.7%	Very satisfied	43.3%	35.7%

In a last twist of argument, I take a leap from the formalist level—‘this is how worship is practiced’, ‘here are the elements and dynamics’, ‘this is how worship is ritualized’—to the level of functionality, asking whether the ritual ‘works’ for participants. Does the ritual ‘do’ what it is said to do? In other words, do people perceive worship in Mavuno and Woodley as meaningful? Are they satisfied with the services in general and the worship in particular? Do they like what they get in church? Judging from the query results (Table 6), it seems they do.

The great majority of both churches is satisfied or very satisfied with the services as well as the music. Interestingly, Mavuno congregants are a little less content with the music than those at Woodley (where as many as nine out of ten are satisfied with music—something that would make any church in Europe green with envy). This is possibly mirrored when ticking the element of the service that they like most (Table 7). In Woodley, music is most appreciated, closely followed by the sermons, while in Mavuno, music shares its place with the fellowship element, and cannot compete at all with the sermons.

Despite the high-tech, high-quality artistic performance of worship in Mavuno, people appreciate the sermons much more than praise and worship, while in Woodley the latter seems to be the main attraction and by far the most appreciated element, despite the fact that their equipment is a bit old, not many on the team are professional artists, and the sound is not always pleasant to the ear. Could it be that Mavuno has streamlined and professionalized its worship to the extent that something of the ritual or spiritual quality is lost? Is spirituality constrained by (over)production? Or are their sermons just outstanding? Do people perceive Mavuno music as too radical? Not ‘churchy’ enough? Has Woodley found a neat balance in their use of different musical

TABLE 7 Most appreciated service element, Woodley and Mavuno

Most appreciated element of service (multiple answers possible)	Woodley	Mavuno
Praise & Worship	57%	26%
Sermon	45%	67%
Prayer	15%	10%
Fellowship	17%	25%

styles, or are there other factors that contribute to their success? Does music carry spirituality in a more efficient way in Woodley? Do they engage the crowd more fully? Or is their music just more what people expect when they come to church?

These questions cannot be answered in full, but the results show that it is not a simple question of putting money, effort and a 'hip-factor' into worship to make it 'work'. People might appreciate it just as much, or more, with a more traditional setup. I believe that this, to a large degree, has to do with the total dynamic of elements and processes that together form a momentum, a ritual performance.

To sum up, this chapter has centred around the idea that worship can be viewed as a ritualized practice, as *orthopraxis*. Having discussed the concepts of 'ritual' and 'ritualization' in relation to charismatic worship, and analyzed the elements and dynamics in considerable detail, I hope to have convinced the reader of the relevance of ritual theory for the current study as well as for further investigations into similar contexts in the future. I also hope I have put enough flesh on the bones of worship in Woodley and Mavuno to create the basis for the rest of the discussion in this book. In the following chapters I argue that worship can also be described as *orthopathos* and *orthopistis*, before I conclude by saying that worship is indeed everything at the same time: it is *orthodoxa*.

Orthopathos: Worship as Embodied Practice

Imagine you are flying high above a crowd, seeing it from a distance. First you notice a group of people, they seem to belong to each other; it is almost as if they were one organism, acting in concert, and yet there are a few hiccups here and there in the smooth movement. Already at a distance you can hear them singing and fellowshiping together. When you get closer you discover that they are in reality doing many different things at the same time. They stand, sit, clap, dance, and move about the place, all in an orderly manner. You fly even closer and begin to notice their diversity and individuality, the way they dress, their age and gender, their individual style. Curious, you want to know more and zoom in on them, trying to read their emotions and body language. Some of them may appear exhausted, some anxious, some bored. Yet many seem elated, exuberant, or just plainly content. This is where the researcher would ask them who they are, what they are doing and how they feel, and in doing so, come to understand their world a little better.

In this chapter, a similar zooming in takes place. I start on a broad scale, discussing ways in which worship rituals build community; move closer to examine ritual action, kinetic movement, and dance; closer again to elaborate on the role of dress, and finally culminate in a discussion of emotions and feelings. In all of these themes I look out for differences and similarities between my two case churches, as well as connections to trends within the wider pentecostal-charismatic tradition. I am also on the watch for tensions—scratches on the smooth surface—indicating complexity and ambiguity in worship.

You may wonder what these themes have in common. My answer is embodiment and affectivity, subsumed under the umbrella *orthopathos* (right passion/affection). As stated in Chapter 2, “ritual is *embodied*”;¹ it is overt human action. Such human action, when performed in concert, can create community and form faith. Ritual is also sensory; it utilizes and evokes the sensory domain, and there is no way to do so but through embodiment. In ritual, bodies act and sense, but they also feel. Emotion and affectivity cannot be separated from embodiment, because human beings feel with their bodies. Ritual engages

1 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 195. Emphasis in original.

participants in “somatic modes of attention,”² allowing them to perceive and feel things in and through their bodies. Hence, ritual in general, not only in pentecostal worship practices, is embodied and affective.

At the same time, Pentecostals are known to be especially open towards the embodied and affective dimensions of faith. Theirs is a spirituality that celebrates God’s immediate presence, rests in the arms of the Father, and strives for a personal relationship with Jesus and deep experiences of the Spirit. It is a spirituality that thrives in community and builds fellowship, one that is expressed through an oral and participatory liturgy, “informed by experiences of correspondence between body and mind.”³ Among Pentecostals in sub-Saharan Africa, the embodied and affective dimensions seem especially accentuated,⁴ not because Africans are more ‘emotional’ in any negative sense of the word, but because they understand how profoundly holistic life is, and how central these dimensions are to living a whole life in Christ; indeed, how central they are to being human at all.⁵ In the West, my impression is that many a pentecostal church has forgotten their importance, no longer utilizing the full potential of embodiment and affectivity in ritual.

While the previous chapter focused on the performance of worship in a liturgical setting—attempting to chart structures, processes, and elements of the liturgy, especially the ‘rite of worship and praise’—this chapter moves

2 Csordas, ‘Somatic Modes of Attention’, 138.

3 Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, 18–19. See also See also Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*; André Corten, *Pentecostalism in Brazil: Emotion of the Poor and Theological Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999); Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*; Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*; Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism*.

4 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*; Clarke, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*; Kalu, ‘Holy Praiseco: Negotiating Sacred and Popular Music and Dance in African Pentecostalism’; Muindi, ‘Ritual and Spirituality in Kenyan Pentecostalism’; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*; Parsitau, “‘Then Sings My Soul’: Gospel Music as Popular Culture in the Spiritual Lives of Kenyan Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians’. Embodied and affective forms of worship are also central to black congregations in the West, for example among African-Americans: Edgar (Trey) III Clark, ‘Liberating Liturgical Theology: Learning from the Building Blocks of Black Worship’, *Worship* 96 (April 2022): 124–43; Robert A. Mills, ‘Musical Prayers: Reflections on the African Roots of Pentecostal Music’, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 6, no. 12 (April 1998): 109; Yong and Alexander, *Afro-Pentecostalism: Black Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in History and Culture*.

5 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*; Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*.

the gaze even closer. Here we examine bodies—how they move, how they are dressed, how they interact—and emotions: how worship feels ‘under the skin’ and why music is crucial in the mix. It argues that worship in Mavuno and Woodley is in fundamental ways an embodied and affective practice, one that bridges the mind/body divide and integrates a whole range of somatic, emotional, kinetic, and sensory dimensions. The cases illustrate local adaptations and interpretations of general tendencies in pentecostal spirituality, sometimes counteracting, sometimes consolidating trends. The first step is to consider the link between embodiment and community.

1 Bodies Together as One: Why Community Matters

In one of her books, ethnomusicologist Monique Ingalls argues that the performance of contemporary worship music is key to the formation of evangelical identity and community across North America. Ingalls refers to these musically centred collective performances as “musical modes of congregating,”⁶ highlighting the connection between congregating and musicking, between community and worship.⁷ Performed in a range of spaces—from concert halls to conference venues, local congregations, private homes, and digital networks—“shared musical and worship practices help make evangelical participants’ religious experiences coherent.”⁸ This is because performing worship music together “creates and mediates a sense of unity not only among gathered participants, but also among the local congregation and other congregations in its regional church networks, as well as among the local congregation and the evangelical community imagined across time and space.”⁹ Through performing the same type of music, in a similar manner, a sense of unity and shared identity is created.

However, while the music does have the capacity to unify worshippers, Ingalls argues that it also “allows a range of tensions to surface.”¹⁰ The two processes go hand in hand and communities handle the tensions in their own ways, subsuming, acknowledging, or managing the internal differences that surface.¹¹ Ingalls

6 Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*, 23.

7 Ingalls, 17–23, 207–9.

8 Ingalls, 207.

9 Ingalls, 208.

10 Ingalls, 208.

11 Ingalls, 208–9.

offers numerous examples of conflicts and tensions spurred by and played out through ‘musical modes of congregating’ and in my own study I have tried to follow her lead, regularly pointing out the fault lines of worship. In this section I discuss the ways in which a sense of community is built through music in Woodley and Mavuno, and how tensions and conflict surface among those engaged in ministry.

1.1 *Nurturing Community through Worship*

1.1.1 Fostering Fellowship and a Sense of Belonging

One of the things that my Kenyan interlocutors highlight when explaining the role of music in church is that it has a strong fellowship component. During the week, people worship alone or in smaller groups but on Sundays they all come together as a community.¹² As one of the young congregants in Woodley explained,

you know, in a service, people are different. Like people who came from different backgrounds and everything, but once you come and stand together and sing the same songs that everyone knows ... you feel like you belong. You know, you can't just come and the preacher starts preaching, people will just be seated there and they won't feel they are touched, but when you come and people sing together, the songs that they know and people praise together ... So when you see it, you feel like you are in the right place. So, you stand, people are standing, you are all praising God. So, when you sit you feel like you are not in the right place. So, for me, that is all I can say. Sometimes we sing to bring people together to know that they belong, to ease them, it distracts you, it eases you, now you feel like you belong so now you are ready to listen to God's word.¹³

To this young man, the singing and music create a feeling of belonging within the congregating community despite the fact that people are different and come from different backgrounds. Through musicking together, bonds of trust and friendship develop between them. Music has a way to ease and distract, and make people feel they are in the ‘right’ place, with well-known songs being especially important for creating that sense of belonging. However, the kinetic engagement that goes with praise and worship has a role to play here as well. If services started with the sermon, the young interlocutor imagines that people would be seated and rather indifferent to proceedings, while starting by

¹² Interview Pastor Deborah 2014-03-21; Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

¹³ Interview Focus Group Woodley 2014-03-16.

standing and praising together makes people relax and engage in a different way. Only thereafter are hearts ready to listen to the Word. To him it seems obvious that the emotional, the social, the spiritual, and the kinetic component all interact and interweave in worship, together nurturing a sense of belonging and community.

Pastor Kamau in Mavuno reasons in a similar direction, highlighting ‘fellowship’ as one of the main reasons for the inclusion of dance and music in church (next to ‘outreach’, as discussed below).

But then the other thing [after ‘outreach’] is that it also helps connect us together as a community because people are meeting out in the week, you know, in their Life groups. So it’s the one place where we come in and we do the same dance as everybody, we sing the same, everybody. So there’s a, there’s a fellowship thing about it that, that says, you know, we are Mavuno ... And the moves that we do together, you know, move this way, everybody raise up your hand, everybody raise your handkerchief, everybody [pause] That has a very strong fellowship component to it.¹⁴

Pastor Kamau underlines the kinetic aspect of moving bodies together in a synchronized manner—raising hands or handkerchiefs, moving in the same direction at the same time—and combines it with the social aspect of creating community. This fellowship component of musical forms of worship—‘musical modes of congregating’, to use Ingalls’ terminology—cannot be underestimated, and is certainly acknowledged by the participants themselves.

It is not only the rite of worship and praise that has a community-building capacity in the service. In Mavuno they also deliberately work with the section between singing and sermon—what I have called ‘the community building rites’ in Chapter 5—to help create a sense of belonging. When I accidentally referred to this section of the service as ‘entertainment’, Pastor Kamau laughingly rebuked me saying, “It’s called a community time. It’s not entertainment!”¹⁵ Even though they ask people up front to “do push-ups” or “play games”,¹⁶ it should not be dismissed as ‘mere entertainment’. Explaining the ritual function of this section, he continues:

There are some very specific things that we want to come out of that. We have come together, we have celebrated together, we have sung songs

14 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

15 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

16 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

together, we know we are together, God is here. ... What we want people to know is, you know, "I am welcome here and I love this community, I want to be part of this community." That's the feeling that we intend. It's very intentional. "We're in church, we're enjoying it, and we love being together with one another." That is why, for the most part, most of our services will have some sort of space where people either talk to one another or do a competition together, to reinforce the value of community and a sense of belonging.¹⁷

After having sung and celebrated and felt the presence of God together during the first part of the service, it is time for the second section where the focus is on interpersonal relationships. It is a time for people to understand that they are indeed welcome, making them want to be part of the community. Again, we see an integration of emotional aspects (the ways it is intended people should 'feel'), with social aspects ('we love being together with one another') and inter-personal kinetic activity ('talk', 'do push-ups', or 'play games').

For Pastor Kamau, this deliberate focus on belonging and community is part of the larger overall vision of creating a church for the younger generation. He finds this critical in an urban, African setting due to current social conditions:

When you think about it, this demographic more than some of the other demographics does not have ethnic, very close ethnic ties, and lives in a materialistic, individualistic world. So again, those ties are also very, are also weak. And the extended family ties are there, but they are weaker than they used to be. So, a sense of belonging is very important, first in the Life group but also among us as a community.¹⁸

Because of the lack of close ethnic ties and the relative weakness of extended family ties, young people ('this demographic') have a greater need for a sense of belonging than older generations ('some other demographics'). Young people live in a world that is marked by individualism and materialism, he says, and Mavuno deliberately tries to counteract the effects of these social conditions by building community in small groups as well as in the larger church. This deliberate attempt to create a social setting that meets the needs of urban

17 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

18 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

youth by adopting and adapting to their culture has been described extensively by Wanjiiru Gitau in her book on Mavuno.¹⁹

Woodley pastors did not speak as much about the community aspect of services as their Mavuno counterparts; however, this does not mean that community building does not take place. One example is the role of the Welcome team: that of greeting newcomers and serving them tea. Another is the way prayer is personalized when individual prayer requests are announced and prayed over in public. A third example is the way important family events, such as the birth of a child or marriage, are celebrated in the community. These are all ways in which the Sunday service functions as a glue between people, nurturing a sense of fellowship and family despite the often anonymous context of urban Nairobi.

It should be clear from the above description that from an emic perspective, part of the function of gathering together for worship, is indeed *to gather*, to congregate, to build community. The questions then become: How can we understand this in theoretical terms? In what way is community built? How does worshipping together form fellowship? Are there any theoretical explanations for the connection between kinetic, social, and emotional? One way to approach all this is by referring to social scientific theories on ‘successful interaction ritual chains’, another is to introduce the concept of ‘kinetic orality’, borrowed from ethnomusicology.

1.1.2 Interaction Ritual Chains

In Chapter 2, I presented Joel Robbins’ argument that shared ritual performance is the key to understanding Pentecostalism’s institution-building capacity and global expansion. Robbins builds his argument on Randall Collins’ theory of interaction ritual chains, saying that pentecostal churches are unusually good at creating ritual spaces where people experience the emotional energy that is the result of successful interaction rituals. Through a shared definition of what participants are doing together in a rite—a “mutual focus of attention” and a “rhythmic synchronization of bodily action,” particularly facilitated by shared ritual frames—“emotional energy”²⁰ is produced and bonds of trust are fostered. In other words, community is built.

19 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*. On identity and community-building through pentecostal-charismatic ritual and music, see also Chitando, ‘Singing Culture: A Study of Gospel Music in Zimbabwe’, 90–94; Lindhardt, ‘Introduction’, 13–15; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 161–94, 291–93.

20 Robbins, ‘The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalization’, 57, 59.

In this section, the focus is on the role of music in community building, and here I turn to Peter Althouse and Michael Wilkinson and their discussions of musical bodies and ‘soaking prayer’ in the international ministry called Catch the Fire.²¹ Using Randall Collins’ theory, they say that interaction rituals have “long-term effects” in the form of emotional energy: “a strong, durable emotion that lasts over an extended period of time” and “produces the capacity to initiate and act with resolve.”²² Wilkinson and Althouse go on to combine this understanding of ritual with Chris Shilling’s framing of the production and reception of music as embodied and interactive processes. Shilling describes music as having the capacity to “take the body ‘beyond’ itself in ways that transcend written communication and cognitive processes,” to stimulate “peak experiences” and to “shape behavior, form personal identity, and consolidate group fidelity.”²³ In addition, as noted by Althouse and Wilkinson, the use of music in ritual contexts has been shown to have “therapeutic effects on the body, supporting physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.”²⁴ Music thus has the capacity to create exactly the result which interaction rituals strive to attain. The synchronization of bodies with one another—essential for successful interaction rituals—is facilitated through “the attunement of music, in which rhythms, tone, and tempo reverberate with bodily rhythms.”²⁵ It is not hard to see why music forms such an indispensable part of charismatic ritual, as well as many other religious rituals around the globe.

Having described the details of ‘soaking prayer’ and analysed it with the help of Collins, Shilling, and others, Althouse and Wilkinson conclude, “As

21 Previously Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship, the centre for the so-called Toronto Blessing.

22 Peter Althouse and Michael Wilkinson, ‘Musical Bodies in the Charismatic Renewal: The Case of Catch the Fire and Soaking Prayer’, in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Monique Marie Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 32, see also Peter Althouse and Michael Wilkinson, *Catch the Fire: Soaking Prayer and Charismatic Renewal* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2014). These are much like the ‘affectations’ and ‘embodied attitudes’ of which pentecostal theologians speak (see Chapter 2).

23 Althouse and Wilkinson, ‘Musical Bodies in the Charismatic Renewal: The Case of Catch the Fire and Soaking Prayer’, 33, see also Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*; Mandi M. Miller and Kenneth T. Strongman, ‘The Emotional Effects of Music on Religious Experience: A Study of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Style of Music and Worship’, *Psychology of Music* 30, no. 1 (1 January 2002): 8–27; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*.

24 Althouse and Wilkinson, ‘Musical Bodies in the Charismatic Renewal: The Case of Catch the Fire and Soaking Prayer’, 33.

25 Althouse and Wilkinson, 36.

groups of people come together for soaking prayer, bodily responses begin to synchronize through ritual interaction and produce high levels of emotional energy. Music is a vehicle through which attunement and entrainment are facilitated.”²⁶

Thus, in the analysis of charismatic ritual, the role of music cannot be underestimated. It is crucial, especially when somatic and affective aspects of worship are considered. In Mavuno and Woodley alike, music is ‘a vehicle through which attunement and entrainment are facilitated’, with the power to ‘stimulate peak experiences’, ‘shape behavior, form personal identity and consolidate group fidelity’. This happens through the use of music, dance, and rhythm, all deliberately framed to create a joint understanding of the ritual situation. The service is consistently interactive and leaders consistently guide the participants in what to do and how to respond properly. Ultimately, the participatory forms of musicking and the interactive instructions and explanations given come together in what Robbins, Althouse, and Wilkinson, all building on the work of Randall Collins, have described in terms of successful interaction ritual chains.

1.1.3 Kinetic Orality

Another way of theoretically explaining the connection between embodiment and community is through the lens of ‘kinetic orality’. Here I build on the work of of ethnomusicologist Kyra Gaunt. For while she does not write on pentecostal or charismatic churches per se, her theory is still relevant for the understanding of pentecostal worship practices, especially in Africa, where movement and dance is such a core element of spirituality and liturgy.

Kyra Gaunt studies the link between the games girls play in school yards in North America and hip hop music. Her point is that the basic structure and the success of hip hop music can be attributed to rhythmical games played by African American girls. Why? Because the hand-clapping game songs, cheers, and double-dutch jump rope rhymes that were part of the communal and cultural practice of young girls across the black urban community inspired boys, who began sampling them and incorporating them into their own music making. Since the rhythms and rhymes were already well known in the community, hip hop became a “ready-made hit.”²⁷ The jump rope became the object

²⁶ Althouse and Wilkinson, 41.

²⁷ Kyra Gaunt, TED talk March 2018, “How the jump rope got its rhythm”, https://www.ted.com/talks/kyra_gaunt_how_the_jump_rope_got_its_rhythm/transcript?language=en (accessed 2019-09-04).

that carried cultural memory between generations, helping to “maintain these songs and ... the chants and the gestures that go along with it.”²⁸

To explain the process of traditioning cultural identity through playing games, Gaunt borrows the term “kinetic orality” from American philosopher Cornel West, who defines it as “dynamic, repetitive and energetic rhetorical styles that form communities.”²⁹ Gaunt adds, “We can appreciate the significance of these sites of musical meaning-making by focusing attention on the conjunction of *orality and kinetics*: the flowing together of sounds, behaviors, and concepts passed down by word of mouth and invested in body language.”³⁰ It is the conjunction of kinetics and orality that is the key to understanding the significance of school yards and games as sites of musical meaning making, she says. It is the ‘flowing together’ of sounds, behaviours, concepts, and body language that matters for forming cultural identity. She continues:

Once we attend to the underexamined role of ‘kinetic orality’—the conjunction of orality and embodied language and meaning in black musical discourse—the role of the lived phenomenology, or subjective embodiment as musical expression, will become apparent. The use of embodiment to participate in music, and to create complex and socially produced sound textures and vocal expressions, explains why one can literally *feel* part of a phenomenology—of an experience of being musically black—not only as some imagined musical past, but as a lived musical present that refashions an ‘African’ past to re-present a new way of being ‘African’ in contemporary U.S. culture.³¹

The role of kinetic orality is underexamined, Gaunt states, but it does offer an important key to understanding the lived phenomenology of black musical discourse. There is a way in which socially produced, participatory musicking creates an ‘experience of being musically black’. It is the conjunction of orality and embodied language that contributes to a sense of ‘being African’, not only as a historical fact, but as part of ‘a lived musical present’ in contemporary U.S. culture.

28 Kyra Gaunt, TED talk March 2018, “How the jump rope got its rhythm”.

29 Cornel West, ‘Black Culture and Postmodernism’, in *A Postmodern Reader*, ed. Joseph P. Natoli and Linda Hutcheon (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 395. Compare background discussion in Kyra D. Gaunt, *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop* (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 3–12.

30 Gaunt, *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop*, 61.

31 Gaunt, 62.

When Pastor Kamau says that all the dancing and games playing ‘has a strong fellowship component’, then he is in accord with Kyra Gaunt. It is not only among young African American girls that the ‘flowing together’ of ‘sounds, behaviours, concepts, and body language’ make people feel a strong sense of community. That also happens in church. I am convinced that, when congregants ‘feel like they belong’ in Woodley, or feel like ‘a chosen generation’ in Mavuno (as discussed below), kinetic orality is an important factor in the mix. To me it seems plausible that the combination of orality and kinetic movement contributes in fundamental ways to a sense of ‘being Pentecostal’ and ‘being African’ in contemporary urban Nairobi. For while my focus in this book is not so much on ethnic as ecclesial identity and belonging, I do think that the way music and liturgical patterns from various cultural origins are creatively adjusted to and incorporated into the Kenyan context contributes not only to a sense of belonging to a local church or to the worldwide charismatic community, but also to a specifically African charismatic community. Through a local adaptation of charismatic ritual frames and music, musical modes of congregating can nurture community and belonging at multiple levels.

What can we learn from Gaunt in relation to pentecostal music making and liturgy in East Africa? I suggest her theory indicates the importance of studying identity and community at the intersection of embodied movement and orality. Pointing out the ‘oral’ character of pentecostal liturgy and theology is commonplace in pentecostal studies, but so far I have not come across anyone who links orality with kinesthetics. There is a great potential for further research at this intersection. The least one can say is that the role of kinetic orality is underexamined in the study of pentecostal-charismatic spirituality and it likely makes a much richer and more complex contribution than we have so far understood in forming cultural, theological, and ecclesiological identity and community.

To summarize, both the participants themselves and researchers who have studied ritual and music in charismatic contexts say that it contributes to forming community and a sense of belonging, and that kinetics and orality are important aspects of why this is so. However, this does not mean that every participant feels at home at all times or that there are no conflicts. There is a potential for tension and power plays at multiple levels, as I discuss in the next sub-section.

1.2 *Conflicts, Power Play, and the Body of Christ*

1.2.1 Handling Tensions behind the Scenes

As a foreign researcher you sometimes break rules and upset people unwittingly, just by your presence. Being a newcomer with an undefined role, and

unfamiliar with local practice, you may expose hierarchies and power relations that exist underneath the surface without realizing it. It seemed my presence could sometimes challenge structures and expose power plays, especially in a large, stream-lined, yet comparatively volatile and young organization like Mavuno. I found myself questioned by members of staff on a number of occasions, although each time I was questioned a higher ranking pastor stepped in to rescue me and restore order. I was a bit shaken sometimes, not wanting to upset anyone, but at the same time saw it as an opportunity to look into the dynamics behind the scenes. The small incident with my on-stage camera, described in the Interlude, is a good example of a situation that could not be resolved without the intervention of someone from a higher level of authority. In my mind, the image of Mavuno as a church that builds relationships, community, and 'a sense of family' was seriously challenged by the light the incident (and others like it) cast on the difficulties of organizing huge, professionalized church services; indeed, it cracked the image of Mavuno as a friendly and relaxed ritual space. I understood that for staff members, it can also be a space full of tension, conflict, and power plays.

Members of staff at Mavuno are strictly organized into departments, each with its respective area of responsibility and its own teams of volunteers,³² but areas overlap and sometimes clash. There are several pastors in mid-level leadership and it is not self evident who should adjudicate when two interests come into conflict. I witnessed this several times in relation both to myself and others, and some people also shared their struggles in informal conversations. Staff members seem sometimes to have a hard time trusting, respecting, and being generous towards each other, since the system forces them to fight their corner continually. It seems that the hierarchical way of functioning as a church has a flip side in terms of the kind of relationships that are possible to build within the organization.

When I later got an opportunity to interview a staff member involved in services, Pastor Nelly, I decided to ask about the presence of conflict within the team to see what she thought. Interestingly, she answered that this was not a problem, at least not in the team of volunteers. "We actually rarely have conflict," she said.³³ She added that at an earlier stage they had had many "ego clashes" in the team, but now they had learned from the mistakes: "We learnt that people are more important than the job and everybody has to know why

32 For a description of this system, see Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 89–109.

33 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

they are in the team and the purpose of the team.”³⁴ Ultimately, the “bottom line” is “to love people and to love God.”³⁵

Through establishing a joint understanding of their purpose and a sense of belonging, the team can avoid conflicts. As she explained,

on my production team and in the worship team there are established artists, there are professionals who have amazing jobs that I could never do in a million years, but who they are is more important than what they do. And so they have to understand that the minute they get on the team that their livelihood and their faith is more important, is what’s important. And then, and that’s why then we are happy that they would serve because it’s not only good for the people they serve, it’s good for themselves for them to serve. And so by the time we get to the job, establishing that sense of why we are here (which is for the purpose of the Gospel) and establishing the sense of family we rarely have internal, within our volunteers, we rarely have conflict, ja.³⁶

Despite the fact that she has a team full of established artists and professionals with amazing jobs, once they come to church and serve in church it is more important ‘who they are’ than ‘what they do’. What counts is their personal walk with God, their faith, and life, not their profession. Being on the music team is important since it deepens their faith and contributes to their spiritual growth.

And yet much of Mavuno’s success in terms of service and music production is due to the fact that they can attract professional people to their teams. If it were not for the large group of volunteers who spend hours preparing for and executing the different tasks that together form these event-like church services, they would never be able to arrange them. The top leadership level and the staff are highly dependent on a certain type of volunteer in order to execute the vision they have of services. Possibly this is also why it is so vital to work on the relationships within the teams, so that people want to join and want to stay. But the benefit is mutual; Mavuno is also a place where established artists can become even more established, and where up-and-coming artists can grow into professionals. It is a greenhouse for people with creative and artistic interests, and as such continues to attract new volunteers.³⁷ As

34 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

35 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

36 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

37 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 121–25.

Pastor Nelly expresses it, while serving on the team, they do a service to others as well as to themselves; artistic and spiritual growth take place side by side.

Having reflected on the situation among the volunteers, she explains that it is a different situation in relation to her colleagues. “I mean we have conflict maybe sometimes with the staff and with my colleagues and figuring out how do we do this and how do we do this and da da da da.”³⁸ Possibly the relationship with the team of volunteers is easier; the roles are more clearly defined between staff member/team leader and volunteer. Between members of staff, however, things become more complicated; they are on the same level of leadership and their roles are specified and yet overlap. In relation to the top-level leadership, roles are again more obvious: lower level pastors need to accept decisions made by superiors, regardless of whether they agree with them or not.

In this respect, I do not agree with the picture painted by Wanjiru Gitau, in which the formalized leadership structure co-exists with close relational bonds in a smooth and unproblematic way. In effect, to her, the “leadership pipeline”³⁹—the strict hierarchical way of functioning as an organization—is what ensures that the staff team can continue to “care for one another as a family and maintain a pastoral posture toward their large cohort of volunteers.”⁴⁰ This is especially important for the role of the Senior Pastor, Pastor Muriithi, who, according to Gitau, is seen as a “father figure”⁴¹ by many congregants, and who “affectionately calls the young pastors his ‘sons and daughters.’”⁴² Since “professionally skilled staff run the payroll, facilities, human resources, and other supervisory affairs,” they can “leave Muriithi out of the center of managerial problem solving” so that he can “mentor his pastors, trainees, and volunteers from a relational standpoint.”⁴³ In her description, the sense of family is intact and lives happily alongside a hierarchical system of leadership. My impression, from interviews and informal interactions and conversations with team members, is that the situation is a bit more complicated. The top leading couple are loved and cherished; but they are also to some extent feared and idealized, even the targets of toadyism. Although left out of daily management, they continuously put themselves back into it. There are good relations

38 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

39 Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 105.

40 Gitau, 109.

41 Gitau, 109.

42 Gitau, 109.

43 Gitau, 109.

between staff members but this does not preclude competition over space, influence, or the favour of senior leaders.

It might seem out of place to discuss power struggles in the midst of discussing embodiment, but I think that considering what happens behind the scenes and between services, not just during services, adds to the total picture of worship. The people who interact on stage, do so off stage as well, and they bring their relationships and conflicts with them into worship. Undoubtedly, a strong sense of community is built through musical modes of congregating, interaction ritual chains, and kinetic orality—as researchers and congregants confirm—but at the same time there are tensions. Where there is social life, there are power plays. Community and tension co-exist.

1.2.2 The Body of Christ

From a theological point of view we may reflect over the role of embodiment and community in light of the metaphor of the church as the body of Christ (Rom. 12:3–8, 1 Cor. 12:12–31). If the church is like a living organism, a body, consisting of many different parts, each with its own function and contribution to the whole yet interacting together as one, it is not hard to imagine that a malfunction can happen from time to time. Just as a child needs to learn how to coordinate their hands and feet, arms and legs in order to eat, walk, talk, and later to swim or jump, it takes practice for a church to become a well-functioning organism, truly living the life of love for which it strives. It is not merely about each individual finding their own purpose and gift, but also for the whole to begin to function together in synergy. Given the many bodies, or human beings, that come together in a congregation, a local expression of Christ's body, a certain amount of tension and conflict is to be expected. In fact, the tensions themselves are opportunities for growth, providing a chance to grow in love, thus deepening community and unity. Joint ritual action—singing and dancing and playing music together—can be seen as a 'practice-session' in the Body of Christ, ideally contributing to a sense of belonging and one-ness, helping to (re)create bonds of trust and (re)focus attention on the main purpose of life and worship: to love God and fellow human beings.

In this section, I have discussed embodiment from a congregational viewpoint: how bodies that come together in worship may become one body of Christ through musical modes of congregating, interaction ritual chains, kinetic orality, and even conflict. In the next section, I continue to elaborate on the role of embodiment in worship, but now in terms of micro-rites, dance, and other forms of concrete ritual action.

2 Bodies in Motion: Why Movement Matters

The above sections focused on the social functions of worship, showing how worshipping together contributes to making the congregation one with each other by nurturing fellowship, identity, and community. Yet worship also has other functions, with the mystical one, which creates a space where worshippers can meet with God, being central to pentecostal self-understanding. Again, kinetic and congregational dimensions are noticeable.

For Pentecostals, the “entire ritual field, and the ritual drama that emerges within that field, is aimed toward an *encounter*,”⁴⁴ according to Daniel Albrecht. This encounter is facilitated via an “*iconic dynamic*” whereby pentecostal ‘icons’ function as “windows or doorways into prayer” or “intersections between the human and divine.”⁴⁵ In the previous chapter, I mentioned sound as one such pentecostal ‘icon’, the other two pinpointed by Albrecht being ritual sights and kinesthetic dimensions in ritual. These icons are all intertwined and work together to create the ritual field. The icon of sight has to do with ritual objects and places (discussed in Chapter 5), but also with fellow human participants moving together as one, contributing with visual, emotional, and spritual stimuli through embodied action.

Instead of sacred icons fashioned in wood and in plaster and intended to draw the faithful into worship, these congregants are encircled by fellow believers. Together they represent living, active, human, embodied icons. ... From the worship leaders on the platform to the brother or sister across the aisle, Pentecostals influence each other’s forms of worship, gestures and behaviors as they participate together in their ritual enactment. It is not that they are necessarily focusing on or actively watching each other. Rather, it is as though they see through their fellow worshippers as through windows. They look beyond; they see deeper. They recognize in each other their object of worship, their God.⁴⁶

44 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 142. Emphasis in original. See further discussion in Chapter 8 and in Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*; Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*; Hegertun, *The Spirit Driven Church: Signs of God’s Graceful Presence*; Lindhardt, ‘Introduction’; Lord, ‘A Theology of Sung Worship’, and Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*.

45 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 142. Emphasis in original.

46 Albrecht, 147.

While Pentecostals may not have “explicitly spoken of their bodies and the gestural actions as icons of the holy”, they have nevertheless “functioned within this understanding.”⁴⁷ Here, the gathered congregation plays a key role. Seeing other people worship, and joining them in the same movements, congregants can encounter God in a deeper manner. Fellow congregants, filled with the Holy Spirit, and engaging in kinetic expression, mediate divine presence as living, active, embodied icons.

Albrecht relates this iconic role of bodies in motion to a particular understanding and experience of God.

According to traditional Pentecostal ritual logic, God is expected to move, but so are God’s worshipers. Human physical movement is closely tied to the movement of the Spirit. So, one does not praise God with the mind (or spirit) alone. No, praise is to be more holistic, expressed in motion as well as in words and thoughts ... Their kinesthetic experience speaks of a spirituality that cooperates and participates in the movements of God.⁴⁸

For pentecostal worshippers, bodies in motion become a sign of God’s movements in their midst. God is at work; he is active and not passive. He is close and not far. One can experience him in concrete ways, and participate in his workings, even cooperate with him. One way to do so is through holistic praise, which includes motion as well as words and thoughts. Thus, human physical movement is connected with the movement of the Spirit, Albrecht says. As worshippers move, they sense the movings of the Spirit. Even pentecostal parlance conveys an understanding of God as moving and touching; as Albrecht reports, ritualists speak of “being moved by the Spirit,” sensing the “touch of God” and feeling “warmth” or “electricity.”⁴⁹ His description resembles those by other scholars,⁵⁰ and also agrees with my own experience of the language used in pentecostal circles, which underlines a broad consensus within the

47 Albrecht, 148.

48 Albrecht, 148.

49 Albrecht, 148, fn. 73.

50 Klaas Bom, “I Feel the Presence of God in My Tears”: On the Theological Contribution to the Research of Latin American Pentecostalism’, *Exchange* 44, no. 2 (2015): 177–200; Csordas, ‘Somatic Modes of Attention’; Csordas, *Language, Charisma, and Creativity: Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*; Luhmann, ‘Metakinesis: How God Becomes Intimate in Contemporary U.S. Christianity’; Luhmann, ‘How Do You Learn to Know That It Is God Who Speaks?’; Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*; Ulland, *Guds Karneval: En Religionspsykologisk Studie av Toronto-Vekkelsens Ekstatiske Spiritualitet*. See further discussion in Chapter 1 and 2.

pentecostal-charismatic tradition on the importance of kinetic and tactile dimensions for pentecostal spirituality; joint human physical movement serves as a window onto the Divine, a sign of God, an icon of the Holy.

In the sections below, it will become clear that this certainly holds true for urban Kenyan Pentecostalism. Dance and other kinesthetic expressions are at the core of ritual practice in the two case churches, making worship a thoroughly holistic experience. To some extent, of course, bodily movement in church is inevitable, since humans interact using their bodies, while kinetic activity is arguably at the very centre of charismatic worship, constituting an essential feature without which worship would be utterly different. At the same time, musical modes of congregating also give rise to tensions, as we saw in the previous section. Dance is one such potential point of tension, where different views and values come into play and ritual practice needs to be negotiated among participants. The following sections will map out local practice, providing an example of how embodiment and ritual action, especially movement, intersect in pentecostal spirituality, and local sentiments and interpretations of that same practice, thus providing a glimpse of local theology.

2.1 *Kinesthetic Dimensions of Worship*

2.1.1 Micro-rites and Embodied Movement

The pentecostal liturgy is built on a fundamental structure of primary rites and transition rites, its flow and rhythm detailed in the previous chapter. This general structure is then personalized and varied via the use of micro-rites, consisting of a range of bodily movements, often paired with appropriate sounds and words, from which ritualists may choose. Mark Cartledge links this combination of freedom and structure to the role of orality in the charismatic tradition, saying,

In this tradition the liturgical process is not written down but memorised. That is, the sequence of anticipated events is internalised by the members of the group. In this way there is a combination of an understood format and the opportunity for spontaneity to occur. The liturgy is continually in the making and it is a corporate event requiring participation by all those present.⁵¹

The idea here is that the liturgy itself is internalized; it is not something outside of participants (in a book or on paper), but inside (in their bodies and minds),

⁵¹ Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*, 60.

learned through the process of continual participation. This requires their full engagement, facilitates liturgical change, and allows for a democratization of spiritual power.⁵² A concrete example of how orality may work in practice is the use of electronic projection instead of song books, which enables people to use their bodies freely, in appropriate ways, “unconstrained by a book in their hands.”⁵³ This does not mean that there is complete freedom or disorder within the service, for even though people are free to choose their preferred posture or behaviour during worship, “in practice the congregation would tend to do similar things at the same time.”⁵⁴

According to Daniel Albrecht, micro-rites may emerge “spontaneously or intentionally”⁵⁵ within the fundamental structure or framework of ritual, contributing to a sense of freedom and flexibility, as well as order and stability. The “multitude of potential component practices, gestures, acts and actions (i.e. the microrites) ... are not mere ‘seasoning’ that stimulate the pentecostal tastes and senses”; instead, they “constitute the elements of the liturgy” and ultimately “provide the basic ingredients that make up Pentecostalism.”⁵⁶ So central is the worship service to pentecostal spirituality that Albrecht sees its components as the components of the tradition itself.

So, what kind of ritual action are we speaking of here? What are the practices, gestures, acts, and actions used in worship? What embodied movement can be traced? When observing and coding services, I took pains to note different forms of bodily movement/micro-rites and, inspired by Albrecht, ended up with a list of more than forty different ‘kinesthetic expressions in services’⁵⁷ and a total of more than four hundred coded instances of these. Naturally, my own research interests have guided the observations, notations, and coding that add up to form the total picture but, nonetheless, this rather astonishing number gives a hint of how central the kinesthetic dimension is to worship.

Hence, a great deal of embodied movement takes place on a Sunday morning in Mavuno and Woodley, as exemplified in the Interlude. When gathering and parting, congregants use their bodies in overt ways to say hello and good-bye to each other: shaking hands, waving at a friend further down the hall,

52 Cartledge, 56–60. See also discussion in Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*.

53 Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*, 58.

54 Cartledge, 58.

55 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 176.

56 Albrecht, 176.

57 Compare list of fundamental rites and micro-rites in Albrecht, 254–59.

embracing close ones, and, in Mavuno's case, high-fiving right and left. The same procedure, but now more formally as part of the liturgy, takes place during the community-building rites when other kinetic activity may also take place, with people being asked to raise their hands if they are newcomers or if they have had a good week, if they have made any New Year resolutions, or any number of other things. During the rite of pastoral message, the level of kinetic activity in the hall drops and most people naturally sit and listen, but occasionally in both churches people also stand, wave, or raise their hands at the request of the pastor.

Embodied movement is by far the most frequent in the rites of worship and praise and altar/response. In worship and praise bodies sway and rock, even jump and dance to the rhythm, hands clap or stretch towards the sky, heads are lifted and bowed, and mouths smile, sing, or pray. During the altar/response time, congregants lift hands or come forward to the space in front of the platform, and sometimes they lay hands on each other while still standing or sitting in the pews. Not everyone partakes in all this kinetic activity; some people tend to be more active and some less, even to the point of not responding at all to the requests and encouragement coming from worship leaders, hosts, and preachers. They may be new to the situation, or simply not feeling comfortable about joining in; there is, in consequence, a certain amount of freedom and flexibility despite the strong emphasis on movement in the congregations.

2.1.2 Types of Kinetic Engagement and Their Frequency

If movement as such is important, one may ask what kinds of movement are most and least frequent in Mavuno and Woodley churches. According to my data, the most common kinesthetic expression during the rite of worship and praise was dance (either communal expressions, or choreographed by leaders), closely followed by different forms of applause (praise offering and regular forms) and cheering. Some movements involved the whole body (such as standing and swaying to rhythm of music), some only part of body (such as lifting or clapping hands, or bowing heads) or even just the face (closing one's eyes or looking upwards).

Thus, apart from dancing, which is discussed below, several other forms of embodied ritual action play a key role in the service, especially different forms of applause. There is a general type of applause, used in much the same way as at a concert or in a theatre to show gratitude or appreciation to a human performer. Then there is also the charismatic type of applause that goes under the name of 'praise offering', which is sometimes spontaneous, bursting out as a collective response to praise, but more often spurred by the direct call of

ritual leaders.⁵⁸ The phrases, “Give the Lord a hand!” and “Let’s give the Lord a round of applause!” are common instructions in both Mavuno and Woodley,⁵⁹ as in many pentecostal-charismatic settings elsewhere. They are met with loud outbursts of cheering, clapping, and rejoicing.

At this point it is worth noting that the ‘icon of sound’ and the ‘icon of kinesthetic expression’ are intimately related.⁶⁰ In Chapter 5 I used the metaphor of waves to describe the way sound rises and falls in crescendos and diminuendos throughout the liturgy according to a certain pattern. These sound waves have their kinetic counterparts: for example, praise offerings and clapping, or closed eyes and bowed heads at peaks and in troughs, respectively. There is, thus, a set of appropriate sounds that go with a set of appropriate physical movements at any given moment within the flow of worship. Those who partake in pentecostal gatherings quickly learn the range of appropriate sounds and movements from watching other congregants and following the instructions given by ritual leaders. They learn to ‘go with the flow’, as it were.⁶¹ The learning process involves learning when it is appropriate to sit or stand, dance or clap. It is a social, spiritual, and embodied process guided by the group and its leaders, yet ultimately, according to pentecostal logic, directed by the Holy Spirit.⁶²

58 Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, 29–54; Johnson, “‘This Is Not the Warm-up Act!’: How Praise and Worship Reflects Expanding Musical Traditions and Theology in a Baptist Charismatic African American Megachurch”; Klaver, ‘Worship Music as Aesthetic Domain of Meaning and Bonding: The Global Context of a Dutch Pentecostal Church’; Muindi, ‘Ritual and Spirituality in Kenyan Pentecostalism’; Jacqueline Ryle, ‘Laying Our Sins and Sorrows on the Altar: Ritualizing Catholic Charismatic Reconciliation and Healing in Fiji’, in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, ed. Martin Lindhardt (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 68–97.

59 There are many variations on this theme, including instructions like, “Let’s give a clap offering!”, “Give Him a round of praise!”, “Let’s appreciate God!”, “Make a joyful noise!”, “Let’s celebrate the Lord!”, “Shout to the Lord”, as well as the more general “Give thanks to Jesus!”, all followed by cheering and clapping. Fieldnotes Woodley 2014-02-02; Fieldnotes Mavuno 2014-01-05; Fieldnotes Woodley 2014-02-02; Fieldnotes Woodley 2014-01-12). See Interlude for more examples.

60 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 143–48.

61 Compare Ingalls’ description of how young Evangelicals learn to express ‘freedom’ and ‘authenticity’ by experimenting with physical and vocal gestures in worship concerts, Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*, 54–55; see also Csordas, ‘Ritualization of Life’. On flow and pentecostal experience of God, see James H. S. Steven, *Worship in the Spirit: Charismatic Worship in the Church of England*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Paternoster Press, 2002), 117–18.

62 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 140.

This is not the same as saying that the exact positioning of bodies is prescribed in pentecostal worship. Unlike in the rituals that Humphrey and Laidlaw define as “liturgy-centered,”⁶³ there is a certain amount of flexibility and individual creativity, although within boundaries. In this sense, pentecostal worship practices fit better into the category of “performance-centered rituals,”⁶⁴ where the focus is not on ‘getting it right’ but ‘making it work’; in other words, the exact procedures are less important to the execution of ritual than the effect: whether congregants encountered God or not. Inasmuch as the ritual sounds, sights, and kinetic expressions all contribute to the iconic dynamics of worship, the exact positioning of bodies or ordering of services are of relatively minor importance.⁶⁵

This is also not to say that each embodied movement has only one usage, interpretation, or meaning—rather the opposite. Several of the most common kinetic expressions are different forms of hand gestures. As Albrecht observes, hand gestures are central to pentecostal ritual and the same gesture can be used in several different “modes of sensibilities,”⁶⁶ and so lend itself to several interpretations or meanings within the ritual. This is exemplified by the gesture often considered “a trademark of Pentecostal worship”⁶⁷—outstretched arms with lifted hands—which can express a broad range of experiences depending on the ritual mode with which it is combined. In the ‘celebrative mode’ it may express praises to God, in a more ‘contemplative mode’ it can signal vulnerability and receptivity, in ‘the ceremonial mode’ it can be used as part of a blessing, and in the ‘mode of transcendental efficacy’ it may instead be used as part of a healing ritual, reaching out towards God with one hand and towards one’s fellow human with the other.⁶⁸ The particularities of these different modes will be further explained below, suffice it to say here that small shifts in the positioning of hands and arms, paired with shifts in sound, music,

63 Humphrey and Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual: A Theory of Ritual Illustrated by the Jain Rite of Worship*, 8. See also discussion in Chapter 2.

64 Humphrey and Laidlaw, 8.

65 On the difference between ‘getting it right’ and ‘getting it done’ see Edward L. Schieffelin, ‘Introduction’, in *When Rituals Go Wrong: Mistakes, Failure and the Dynamics of Ritual*, ed. Ute Hüsken (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 3, and Björkander, ‘Who Got the Rite Wrong? The Mavuno Alternative Christmas Service and Charismatic Ritual’.

66 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 190.

67 Albrecht, 190. See also Csordas, *Language, Charisma, and Creativity: Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, 108–11; Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*, 17, 54.

68 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 190.

and modality, allow more or less the same gesture to take on different meanings within different sections of the ritual.

If dancing, clapping, and cheering are among the most frequent forms of kinesthetic expression in Woodley and Mavuno services, which are the least frequent? It is probably unwise to draw too many conclusions from the absence of references to a certain code in the analysis (it may be that I simply did not pay attention to a certain gesture, or that I did observe it but omitted to make notes or codes for it). However, some things can still be said in terms of comparison with other people's work. In descriptions of the Toronto Blessing and ministries and churches related to this revival, reports are common of people falling and lying on the floor "sometimes shaking and jerking, crying, or laughing"⁶⁹ under the power of the Holy Spirit. Similar embodied practices are reported from African churches, especially in connection with exorcism and charismatic healing.⁷⁰ Sometimes these features are seen as typical of pentecostal liturgy in general⁷¹ but they are not necessarily so and I saw no examples of it in the two case churches. It may be that it happens in other services, on other occasions, at other meetings, but it was not part of the Sunday service at the time of my visits. This tendency reflects my experiences in other pentecostal contexts as well, indicating that researchers may sometimes focus on 'exotic' features and select churches based on their 'otherness', leaving more 'mainstreet' (or dull) pentecostal and charismatic churches aside.

Another commonly reported practice among Pentecostals, 'glossolalia'—speaking in tongues—which is often described as *the* most typical feature of pentecostal-charismatic spirituality,⁷² was comparatively rare in Woodley and

69 Althouse and Wilkinson, 'Musical Bodies in the Charismatic Renewal: The Case of Catch the Fire and Soaking Prayer', 30; see also pp. 36–41. See also Percy, 'Adventure and Atrophy in a Charismatic Movement: Returning to the "Toronto Blessing"', 165, and Ulland, *Guds Karneval: En Religionspsykologisk Studie av Toronto-Vekkelsens Ekstatiske Spiritualitet*, 126–41. Compare also Csordas, 'Ritualization of Life', 143, where he discusses experiences of young people regularly simulating such manifestations due to the pressure to conform to the spiritual ideals of the Catholic charismatic group where they grew up.

70 Travis Kavulla, 'Troubled In Spirit: The Surprising Direction of African Christianity', *National Review* 60, no. 4 (2008): 42–45; Paul Gifford, 'The Primal Pentecostal Imagination', *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 34, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 44–52.

71 Travis R. Kavulla, "'Our Enemies Are God's Enemies": The Religion and Politics of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, MP', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 256.

72 For an excellent philosophical discussion of glossolalia, see Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, 123–50. For a brief historical sketch of the role of tongues in Pentecostalism, see Henri Gooren, 'Conversion Narratives', in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Berkeley:

completely absent from Mavuno Sunday services. This can be compared to other contexts where audible glossolalia is a common feature. For example, Martyn Percy reports “plenty of audible praying in tongues” that is “encouraged and orchestrated from the stage.”⁷³ On several occasions in Woodley, I observed the use of audible tongues by ritual leaders in the prayer meeting before the morning service. During the services, I heard both leaders and congregants speak in tongues ‘to themselves’ during times of concert praise or prayer, but only once did anyone use glossolalia as part of an ‘official’ prayer on the microphone—interestingly, this was not one of the Kenyan leaders, but a guest speaker from the West. Perhaps this instance could be seen as a form of ‘mistake’ in the liturgy, the guest not knowing the local congregational practice of restraining from the use of speaking in tongues in Sunday services.

Among classical Pentecostals, Spirit baptism with the sign of speaking in tongues is often considered essential to pentecostal theology. It is the “distinguishing doctrine”⁷⁴ that makes Pentecostals pentecostal, at least in their own understanding. However, in later forms of Pentecostalism, Allan Anderson observes that the “insistence on tongues is often absent and certainly of relatively minor significance.”⁷⁵ He concludes that, like Mavuno and Woodley, “many contemporary pentecostal churches seldom use speaking in tongues in public worship.”⁷⁶ In both these churches, it is likely that glossolalia is used more regularly at in-house gatherings, while the Sunday service is meant to be open to the public and so should not include elements that could be seen as repellent or internal. It might also be the case that the focus of different gatherings affects the use of tongues. Sunday services have several ritual functions, as we have seen: reaching out, community building, praise, prayer, teaching, and so on, while glossolalia is mainly for prayer and spiritual edification (1 Cor. 12–14), and so might be more suitable on other occasions.

University of California Press, 2010), 99–100. For an overview of research on glossolalia from a psychological perspective, Stefan Huber and Odilo W. Huber, ‘Pshychology of Religion’, in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 134–40. See also discussion on typology and definitions of Pentecostalism in Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’, 16–27. For a critical African ecumenical perspective, see Francis Machingura, ‘The Significance of Glossolalia in the Apostolic Faith Mission, Zimbabwe’, *Studies in World Christianity* 17, no. 1 (2011): 12–29.

73 Percy, ‘Adventure and Atrophy in a Charismatic Movement: Returning to the “Toronto Blessing”’, 165.

74 Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’, 25.

75 Anderson, 25.

76 Anderson, 25.

Nevertheless, in Woodley, leaders are keen to point out in interviews that they speak in tongues and believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit,⁷⁷ highlighting their classical pentecostal roots and their mission heritage through the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. In Mavuno, this is less of an issue, pointing to their baptist roots and evangelical charismatic leanings, although some of the interviewed pastors did mention glossolalia as part of their own or their church's practice.⁷⁸ Relatively speaking, however, glossolalia plays a minor role for pentecostal iconic dynamics in the two churches, at least at a liturgical level.

Above, I have presented a general overview of different forms of kinetic engagement in ritual, and linked this to pentecostal spirituality through the notion of the 'icons' of sound, sight, and kinesthetic expression. I have traced both frequent and less frequent forms of embodied ritual action and showed how they contribute to local ritual practice. In the following, I turn to a discussion of the role of dance in spirituality and liturgy.

2.2 *Dance, Spirituality, and Liturgy*

As was described above, embodied movement of various kinds plays a key role in pentecostal worship, nurturing community and identity, comprising constituent parts of liturgy, and facilitating divine-human encounters. One particularly salient form of kinetic engagement in East African pentecostal ritual life is dance. When I highlighted important elements of the rite of worship and praise in Mavuno and Woodley in Chapter 5, I briefly described different forms of dance (improvised, collective, choreographed) as part of worship in both churches. I also pointed to the "rhythmical impulse" and the "inseparability of music and dance"⁷⁹ in African musical contexts. In this section, I continue to elaborate on the role of dance for pentecostal liturgy and spirituality, exploring local practices, perspectives, and tensions.

The pentecostal-charismatic tradition has a somewhat ambiguous relationship to dance. On the one hand, spontaneous dancing is often encouraged in worship and commended in lyrics. The story of King David dancing in front of the Ark, unconcerned about the shame his actions might call down upon him (2 Sam. 6), is considered a model for wholehearted worship.⁸⁰ On the other

77 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

78 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11; Pastor Munga 2013-01-24.

79 *Cultural Theory: Black Music Part 1*; building on Floyd, 'Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry'; see also Floyd, *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States*.

80 Cartledge, *Encountering the Spirit: The Charismatic Tradition*, 52; Rebecca Uberoi, "Dance Your Sorrow Away!": Spirituality, Community and Wellbeing in Christ Apostolic Church, Dublin., *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 27, no. 2 (July 2016): 126. Compare Tim Hughes,

hand, some forms of dance and music have been viewed as sinful because of their potentially sexual inclination and perceived ‘worldliness.’⁸¹ This ambiguity plays out in the two case churches in various ways, as discussed below.

Dancing styles and the degree of inclusion of dance in a service differ between Mavuno and Woodley, but organized (even choreographed) dance is, nevertheless, integrated into communal praise in an indisputable way. And there are reasons for this.

2.2.1 Dancing Steps of Faith

When I visited the 12 p.m. service in Mavuno on 5th January 2014, something that the host said captured my interest. The service followed the same pattern, and included the same songs, as the 9 a.m. service I described at some length in the Interlude. In the second service, however, the host intervened in the middle of the afro-beats-and-aerobics-inspired choreography to the song *Ebenezer*. Pastor Kyama wanted to motivate the audience to dance along, and said:

Mavuno, I feel like I need to create some context for what we are doing [pause] and also explain what we are not. We are not in the middle of some dancing-and-sweating-fitness-lesson [pause, laughter]. There’s a reason for what we are doing.

How many people know that God has an amazing plan for them in 2014? [hands raised in response]. Alright, so this is what we’ll declare: 2014 is the year for you to step out [some clapping]. Somebody say: “Step out!” [Response: “Step out!”]

Which means step out in faith. Step out in what God has for you. Somebody say: “Step out!” [Response: “Step out!”]

So, we’re gonna do a few movements, to make your body understand what your heart is declaring in faith. In Jesus’ name—Hallelujah!

Here I Am to Worship (Baker Publishing Group, 2013), 31–33; Rory Noland, *Worship on Earth as It Is in Heaven: Exploring Worship as a Spiritual Discipline* (Zondervan, 2011), 148–49.

81 See for example discussion in Awet Andemicael, ‘Holiness and Worldliness: Theologies of Early Black Gospel Music in the Sanctified Church’, *Pneuma* 38, no. 4 (2016): 394–410; Kalu, ‘Holy Praiseco: Negotiating Sacred and Popular Music and Dance in African Pentecostalism’; Katrien Pype, ‘Dancing for God or the Devil: Pentecostal Discourse on Popular Dance in Kinshasa’, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 36, no. 3–4 (2006): 296–318. In Sweden, dance was prohibited for early generations of classical Pentecostals, among them my parents and grand-parents.

So the first movement, is a very simple one [pause]. We're taking steps of faith [pause] 1-2-3, step, step, step [teaches the choreography step by step and congregation follows].⁸²

Pastor Kyama is eager to explain the inclusion of dance in the liturgy in a way that is consistent with pentecostal theology to give it a theological rationale. He links this particular choreography to the 'Step out' theme of the sermon series, as well as to larger pentecostal frameworks of 'faith'. The dance movements, involving several sets of 'stepping' back and forth, left and right, are directly related to the theme. But that is not all. The reason for including dance movements in the worship session is 'to make your body understand what your heart is declaring in faith'. Through the theme, the kinetic movement is related to acts of faith, to trusting God's promises. Each dance step is a concrete way of declaring one's faith in God and stepping into the amazing, divine plans that are there for each and everyone's future.

In pentecostal understanding, walking in faith, or having faith, is often used as a way to describe trusting God with one's life, relying on his faithfulness and his good plans. It has a touch of both expectation, of anticipating great things for the future, and of exertion: those plans will not come to pass unless the believer also declares his or her commitment to God and submission to his plans. This declaration is usually made 'in Jesus' name', thus referring to the source of power that brings the plans to fruition. In the words of a community choreographer in a Catholic charismatic group in the U.S., charismatic dance is about "dancing our convictions, not our emotions"; it is a "praise-oriented activity," a "ground-level experience under God."⁸³ In other words, it is worship, *orthodoxa*.

What I find especially intriguing about Pastor Kyama's words in the above quote is the connection between an evangelical-pentecostal understanding of faith and personhood, and the inclusion of dance in the liturgy. What he does is to explain the motives behind the use of dance with reference to the relationship between 'the body' and 'the heart'. To him, there is a direct connection between what one does with one's body, what one believes with one's heart, and what one expects from God in life: in other words, between kinetic, somatic, and spiritual. The dance movements can teach 'the body' to have faith, a faith that already exists in 'the heart'. This points to a holistic view of faith as something that traverses the mind/body divide and has to do with

82 Fieldnotes Mavuno Sunday Service 2014-01-05.

83 Csordas, *Language, Charisma, and Creativity: Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, 190.

the whole person, in line with the discussions above on pentecostal spirituality. It also points to the revivalist roots of his theology; just like Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley in their time, he is situating the centre of faith—of the human being, possibly—in the heart, rather than the mind.⁸⁴ By participating in choreographed and communal dance, the congregant can allow faith to permeate his or her whole being, to flow from the heart and suffuse every part of the body.

A similar comment is made in one of the other observed services in Mavuno when the worship leader speaks in conjunction with a dance section in the midst of a song called “I know who I am”, by the Nigerian worship artist Sinach. Again the level of interaction is high between the congregation and the leader, and dance is motivated by its relation to faith and body/mind. He says:

We're gonna do a few moves, to let your body know what your spirit has already perceived. Amen, Mavuno?! [Response: “Amen!” Cheering]

Alright. So the first one is a simple step of faith, very simple. It goes like this [showing choreography]. Stepping out.

[He shows us the dance steps, first the legs, then the arms. Instrumentalists jam in the background. There is no singing in this section, just dance. Most people join in. They seem to be having a good time. Then the singing starts again with renewed energy: “Oh, oh oh, I know who I am.” The song ends in a crescendo of cheering and clapping while the leader shouts:]

Mavuno, isn't God good?!⁸⁵

The worship leader is again supporting the use of dance for worship with reference to teaching the body. He says that the moves will let the body know what the spirit has already grasped, which, in the context of a song speaking about being “a chosen generation ... called forth to show His excellence,” has to do with knowing one's true identity. This includes “walking in power,” “working miracles,” and living “a life of favour”; it is summarized in the song as knowing “who I am,” which is “who God says I am.”⁸⁶ This knowledge has already been perceived by the spirit of the person, and is now taught to the body through dance. It seems that the quiet assumption here would be that the body can have spiritual knowledge. There is thus a somatic-spiritual learning process

84 Clapper, ‘Orthokardia: John Wesley's Grammar of the Holy Spirit’.

85 Fieldnotes Sunday Service Mavuno 2014-02-02.

86 *I know who I am*, by Sinach <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7115745/i-know-who-i-am> (accessed 2020-07-14).

going on in the rite, and it is facilitated by kinetic movement. We could say that the rite enables not merely somatic modes of attention, as Csordas would have it,⁸⁷ but also somatic modes of understanding—an embodied epistemology.⁸⁸

Again, as in the example above, the dance steps are explained as ‘steps of faith’: stepping out into the plans that God has made, stepping out into being ‘called’ and ‘chosen’ by God. There is a strong neo-pentecostal element in this song, with its depiction of life in Christ as ‘walking in power’ and ‘working miracles’, something to which I return at a later stage. For now, I want to highlight the connection between faith, dance, and ideas about the human constitution—or ‘philosophical anthropology’.⁸⁹ In pentecostal circles it is quite common to see the person as a tripartite unit: body, soul, spirit.⁹⁰ In this taxonomy the ‘spirit’ is the part of a human being that is ‘dead’ without God, and comes ‘alive’ at the point of rebirth;⁹¹ thus, spiritual knowledge is only possible if one is spiritually alive (cf. 1 Cor. 2:1-16). The lived theology exemplified in the above quotes seem to suggest that such life and knowledge is fostered by dance.

An interesting convergence occurs here in relation to Tanya Luhrmann’s theory of metakinetic learning processes (discussed in Chapter 2). According to her, the process is one where the person learns to interpret bodily reactions as evidence of God’s presence with his or her mind/psyche. She suggests that the process starts in the body and, with the help of the community of believers (and their rituals), the mind learns to identify certain bodily and emotional states as signs of divine communication.⁹² Luhrmann’s perspective might be summarized as follows: by participating in the rite, *the mind* will understand *the body* through *faith*. In comparison, the Mavuno perspective onto what is going on might sound something like this: by participating in the rite, *the body* will

87 Csordas, ‘Somatic Modes of Attention’.

88 Compare discussion in Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, 48–62.

89 Smith, 57.

90 For a discussion on pentecostal views of the human constitution, see, for example, Matthew John Churchouse, ‘Renewing the Soul: Towards an Enhanced Pentecostal Philosophical Theological Doctrine of Human Constitution.’, *Department of Theology and Religion* (University of Birmingham, 2018); see also William Atkinson, ‘Spirit, Soul and Body: The Trichotomism of Kenyon, Hagin, and Copeland.’, *Refleks* 5, no. 1 (2006): 98–118; William Atkinson, *The ‘Spiritual Death’ of Jesus: A Pentecostal Investigation* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

91 As Pastor Nyaga in Woodley expressed it, echoing the New Testament, “for when the Spirit of God comes and indwells you, you’re a child of God, your spirit that was dead is made alive in Christ.” Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21; cf. Joh 3:1–8, Rom 8:11, Eph 2:5, Col 2:13.

92 Luhrmann, ‘Metakinesis: How God Becomes Intimate in Contemporary U.S. Christianity’.

understand *the faith of the heart/spirit*. It seems Luhrmann and the Mavuno leaders share a conviction of the importance of participation in communal kinetic activity—rites—to faith, while disagree on the starting point: mind, heart/spirit, or body. Does the heart/spirit teach the body, or does the body teach the mind?

Possibly the difference is one of culture and context. Luhrmann bases her theory on North American charismatic Evangelicals, while Mavuno operates in an East African environment. It might be that Americans are less prone than Africans to describe the body as cultivating spiritual knowledge, rather believing that whatever goes on in the body must be interpreted by the mind. We may compare this view with the ideas of the above-mentioned choreographer in a Catholic charismatic group in the U.S. In Csordas' summary of her perspective, "The discourse of the body in dance guides the mind into a pattern of thought, whereas mere words allow thoughts to wander."⁹³ Thus, kinetic activity serves to facilitate mental activity, to form 'a pattern of thought', something that 'mere words' would not do as efficiently. The assumption seems to be that faith is very much about ideas, and that liturgical dance—and presumably embodied ritual as such—serves as a tool for mental processes. Stretching the Mavuno perspective would lead more or less in the opposite direction, towards the position that faith is about the body acting in preferred ways ('stepping out in faith', 'walking in power'), with dance and other kinetic ritual activity serving as a tool for somatic-spiritual learning processes. Because of this theological position, they sensibly and skilfully include choreographed dance in the worship session, to help foster (embodied) faith and deepen (holistic) spirituality.

While spontaneous dancing, both on the platform and in the pews, is not uncommon in contemporary pentecostal-charismatic churches around the globe, choreographed dancing is more of "a rare genre"⁹⁴ in charismatic ritual performance. Albrecht even suggests it is "unthinkable"⁹⁵ as part of pentecostal liturgy. In my experience, if it occurs in the West, choreographed worship dance (praise dance/ liturgical dance) is mostly performed as a specific presentation by a specific group of people. As when choir performances are

93 Csordas, *Language, Charisma, and Creativity: Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, 190.

94 Csordas, 190.

95 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 102. Possibly a certain development has taken place since Csordas and Albrecht wrote their studies. Tuija Hovi describes a situation where praise dance is novel in Finland, but where inspiration is taken from neo-charismatic circles in the U.S., Hovi, 'Praising as Bodily Practice: The Neocharismatic Culture of Celebration', 135–36.

incorporated into the liturgy, the congregation sits and listens and takes part in the worship in their hearts, but not with their bodies. The liturgical practice of African and Latin American migrant churches in the West is an exception to this, it often includes organized dancing as part of communal praise. Another regular exception is children's ministry in ethnically 'white' communities where choreographed dance is both common and accepted. Further studies are warranted to understand the diversity and nuances of dance practice within the global pentecostal-charismatic tradition and the various rationales behind it, as it is a field that has been under-researched.

In Africa, however—or at least in the settings that are part of this study—communal, choreographed dancing led from the pulpit, is common. In Mavuno, the singers in the worship team are as much dancers as vocalists. In Woodley, the choir often turns into a dancing choir, walking down from the altar or combining their singing with a set of gestures. Both groups seldom perform their dances *in front of* the congregation, rather they *lead the congregation* in dance. The difference might seem miniscule, but in terms of ritual performance it is significant, pointing to underlying differences in theology and spirituality.⁹⁶

Dance as a communal, congregational worship practice is a significant aspect of East African pentecostal ritual life, and distinguished from Western Pentecostalism. My impression is that the African holistic worldview and profound understanding of the embeddedness and embodiedness of spirituality are important reasons for this difference. Here, the African church displays a deep theological insight into the connection between body, faith, community, and spirituality from which I think the Western church has much to learn.

2.2.2 Handling Tension and Debate over Dance

In the excerpt from my observation on 5th January 2014, Pastor Kyama is not only presenting dance as a tool for internalizing faith and saying something about the relationship between body and heart, as was discussed above, he is also eager to make sure no one misinterprets the situation as something other than worship. It is not 'some dancing-and-sweating-fitness-lesson' as some might think; rather, there is 'a reason for what we are doing'. He does it with a smile on his face, and from the response it is clear that most members of the congregation are already convinced that street-style dancing is an appropriate thing to do in church. Nevertheless, there is an edge to what he is saying; some

96 Compare discussion in Uberoi, "Dance Your Sorrow Away!": Spirituality, Community and Wellbeing in Christ Apostolic Church, Dublin'.

people might think dance should not be part of a church service, or, at least, not this type of dance and not this type of music.

His intervention highlights a tension in the Kenyan ecclesial context wherein Mavuno, with its creative and innovative liturgy, has triggered discussions on what may or may not be included in a service. Not everyone appreciates the inclusion of contemporary music or attempts to cross over into urban youth culture. Possibly Pastor Kyama is trying to counteract potential critique from people in the audience reflecting accusations of Mavuno's being 'secular' and 'liberal' in its approach to Christian faith, and of leading young people astray.⁹⁷ This critique was mirrored in the research survey, with some respondents who were unsatisfied with Mavuno worship commenting that the use of 'secular music' in church was problematic. It is likely that the goals of removing some of the doubts and creating joint understandings of the ritual situation lie behind the pastor's words.

The inclusion of contemporary dancing styles is to Mavuno a matter of mission, of reaching out. Pastor Kamau puts it this way, "There's someone who hasn't been to church before who'll come in and listen to the music and sing the songs and dance and say, 'Wow! This is the only church I've been to where it's okay for me to dance' [pause]. So in that sense there's an outreach element to it."⁹⁸ Mavuno consciously tries to be that 'only church' where young people are allowed to remain in their youth culture and be born-again Christians at the same time. Of course, they are not the only church where it is 'okay to dance'; I observed different forms of dance in most of the churches I visited in Nairobi during my fieldwork. But Mavuno may be one of the churches that has taken it the furthest, in the sense of including highly elaborated street-style dance elements in each service, and also encouraging spontaneous dance throughout the worship session. Pastor Josh explains the rationale behind it in this way:

I believe that in this generation a lot of culture is being defined by entertainment which is largely music and music videos and movies. So just being able to be, being relevant in the music that is, that this generation is familiar with, allows us to be able to reach the people of this generation. So that's why we do the kind of songs that we do, we do the kind

97 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12; Interview Gideon Achieng 2014-03-14; Interview Pastor Munga 2013-01-24; see also Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*.

98 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

of dancing and praise that we do. And I would say we have fairly been successful in that venture.⁹⁹

To him, youth culture, especially music and music videos, is defined a lot by entertainment. In order to reach a young generation with the Gospel, it is paramount to include the type of music and dance in the liturgy with which they are familiar, otherwise it would be hard to remain relevant in their lives. That is also why Pastor Josh as a worship pastor watches a lot of music videos and tries to stay up to date on new music trends among young people.¹⁰⁰

That young people in Nairobi like to dance and want that to be part of worship is something that is confirmed by pastors of CITAM: “The youth need to jump and dance and show everybody the moves,”¹⁰¹ Pastor Rose says, although for the CITAM leaders, this is more of a challenge. They have a wider generational span in their churches and, therefore, need to accommodate the different preferences of the young, the middle aged, and the aged. Pastor Rose herself has a teenage daughter who listens to “a little bit of medium rock,”¹⁰² and she often wishes that she could include more of that type of music in church. At the same time she needs to be sensitive to church leadership and the generational divides: “Again, because we have older folks rather than more younger ones, even our dancing styles may not be as the youthful churches have. Really, I mean those guys have a blast. Um, yes, if I may put it that way.”¹⁰³

She smiles widely as she says that people in youthful churches ‘have a blast’. It is clear she would sometimes like to go much further in dancing and musical styles than her liturgical context allows. As she told me, in a former ministry position in another church, the congregation was of a younger age group and “we all jumped and danced.”¹⁰⁴ This is not possible in the same way in CITAM. To her this presents a real challenge in terms of the future of the church. When asked to envisage her church’s music ministry ten years ahead, Pastor Rose reflects on the challenge by saying, “my children’s generation have a very

99 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

100 Interview Pastor Josh 201402012. Pastor Rose in Woodley instead struggled with how to overcome the fact that the church leadership has put a ban on watching YouTube videos on the office computer, since it impedes her preparations. Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

101 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

102 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

103 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

104 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

different way of worshipping. We may not want to accept it as yet, but maybe in reality we may need to come to terms with it.”¹⁰⁵

The ‘reality’ is that the younger generation has ‘a very different way of worshipping’, and unless the church leadership and the worship styles of the church change, they risk losing a lot of young people to other churches—churches like Mavuno, churches with a different demography that are willing to experiment more freely with worship styles. Pastor Rose says, not without pain, “We’re actually right now treading on very gentle grounds because we’ve had a lot of young people going and leaving for Mavuno. And we’re saying, ‘What’s drawing you there?’ And it’s the music. It’s their style.”¹⁰⁶

Pastor Munga of Mavuno denied in our interview that their congregants come from other churches, although confirming that this is a critique often heard from other pastors.¹⁰⁷ My own impression from interacting with Mavuno staff members and to some extent their church visitors is that many of them do, in fact, have backgrounds in other churches, not least CITAM. What for Pastor Josh and Pastor Kamau is understood in terms of ‘outreach’, is experienced by Pastor Rose as ‘young people going and leaving for Mavuno’. The attraction that youthful churches with a contemporary worship style have for young people is a real challenge for more established churches. Music styles, including dance, play a key role in drawing the crowds.

Pastor Rose continues to reflect on the issues of style and dance from a spiritual perspective. To her, what is most important is not the style of worship but what remains with the participants as they go home. When she works with her teams she tells them, “You know after we’re through the hype and the styles, when you go home will those songs you sung ring in your head? Will those words help you in your daily walk with the Lord?”¹⁰⁸

Unless the songs and the styles help people in their ‘daily walk with the Lord’ they are not of much use. It is only when songs continue to ring in people’s heads as they go home, aiding them to live with and for Christ in daily life, that the ritual has truly ‘worked’. And suddenly her perspective is not so far from that of the Mavuno leaders. Worship in the form of songs and dancing has to do with ‘walking’ with Jesus: living one’s life for him and with him. The musical practices are only viable if they become *orthodoxa*, true worship in everyday life. If it becomes simply a matter of style, then it loses its purpose. Here

105 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

106 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

107 Interview Pastor Munga 2013-01-24.

108 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

we see how the concrete practice of worship is expected to further the overall spirituality of Pentecostals. I will return to this theme in the last chapter.

Still, as a liturgical leader, Pastor Rose needs to handle potential tensions and make decisions about the dancing styles that are allowed in church. She says that some of the “African dancing styles ... cannot be allowed on the pulpit” because of their sexual implications; in her view, they “could be suggestive.”¹⁰⁹ To an outsider, the styles may not look particularly suggestive, but they are interpreted as such in the ecclesial and cultural context and therefore she has to walk cautiously. Yet it is not an easy question to know where exactly to draw the line. What are the limits to what one can do in church?

So you're very careful what you allow people to do. There's good dancing, I mean like what we do in aerobics sometimes; okay, even aerobics gets crazy [chuckles]. But still ... where do you draw the line? That's sometimes a tricky question. Amongst the young people you almost feel like there's no line drawn. ... But when you have the older people in your midst and, um, it's interesting. They'll write emails, they'll pull you aside and they'll say, “That was not pleasing to God.” So I think, “Whoops, okay, what wasn't pleasing to God?” you know? Is it the style?¹¹⁰

From a CITAM perspective—and here I believe one can see a clear heritage from holiness Pentecostalism—there is ‘good dancing’ and there is a ‘line’ to be drawn that excludes sexually suggestive dancing. In other words, there are dancing styles that are spiritually and morally appropriate for liturgy, and there are those that are not and that ‘cannot be allowed on the pulpit’. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the church building, and especially the altar or pulpit, is regarded as holy and set apart and not any type of dance will be suitable for that space. For the young, there is almost ‘no line drawn’—any type of dancing style may fit the liturgy—while for the older generation, certain types of dance (or music and dress) may be upsetting. As a minister Pastor Rose will get emails or comments from congregants to the effect that a certain element of the service was ‘not pleasing to God’, and she often gets the impression that the problem is the style more than anything else. At the same time, she herself likes dancing, and presents King David as one of her “key characters” in the Bible, particularly because of the way he danced: “I love him because of his joy in just loving God and dancing for Him and, and just being so real.”¹¹¹ Dance

109 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

110 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

111 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

signals authenticity; it is a way to express oneself that comes from deep within. A king who dances in adoration and joy before God is one who is commendable and awe-inspiring in every way.¹¹²

Thus, it is important to underline that in this context, it is not dance as such that is a problem; rather, it is certain kinds of dance and the way to draw a line between ritual practice that is appropriate ('right') and inappropriate ('wrong'). The difference in relation to Mavuno seems to be one of degree: how far is one willing to go in including elements from the surrounding culture into the liturgy? Is there a line, and should it be drawn? At a theological level, the question is one of ecclesiology. It has to do with the degree to which one sees the church as holy and separate from the world, or, conversely, as there being a continuation between culture and church. Is the church a holy place, a separate place, where only certain types of dance are allowed, or is it an ordinary place where most forms of dance are a fit? This question separates Mavuno and Woodley, in that Mavuno thinks of church as on a continuum with culture, and Woodley thinks of it as rather separate and distinct. The same question also surfaces in the topic to be discussed next: dress. What is an appropriate way to dress in church and what is not?

3 Bodies Dressed for Service: Why Clothes Matter

In this chapter I am discussing embodiment in pentecostal worship from different angles—sensory, kinetic, aesthetic, emotional, and somatic—showing how intimately connected these aspects are to each other and how they build on each other to create a total experience of worship. One aspect of embodiment that has not had enough attention in the study of Pentecostalism to date is dress.¹¹³ It might sound self-evident, but it is worth pointing out how closely related embodiment is to the issue of apparel. Anthropologist Karen Tranberg Hansen writes in her introduction to *African Dress: Fashion, Agency, Performance*, that body and dress are “intimately entangled”¹¹⁴ and must be

112 See also discussion in Chapter 7 and 8 about King David as a key biblical worship model.

113 But see Anita Yadala Suneson, 'The Contextual Significance of Clothes and Jewellery: Lived Religion among Pentecostals in South India', *PentecoStudies* 20, no. 2 (2021): 173–94; and Anthea D. Butler, 'Unrespectable Saints: Women of the Church of God in Christ', in *The Religious History of American Women: Reimagining the Past*, ed. Catherine A. Brekus (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

114 Karen Tranberg Hansen, 'Introduction', in *African Dress: Fashion, Agency, Performance*, ed. Karen Tranberg Hansen and D. Soyini Madison (London: New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 3.

discussed together. Yet, while “dress cannot be understood without reference to the body and while the body has always and everywhere to be dressed,”¹¹⁵ not all studies of embodiment consider the role it plays. Hansen quotes Jennifer Craik’s observation that “clothes are activated by the wearing of them just as bodies are actualized by the clothes they wear,”¹¹⁶ meaning that dress and body are “deeply entwined with the biographies of their wearers and particularities of time, space, location, site and context.”¹¹⁷ In my case studies, the particularities are governed by a spiritual and ecclesial context and I am mostly interested in ideas of dress on a group level. What role does dress play in worship in Mavuno and Woodley? What are the particularities of pentecostal spirituality that suffuse embodied dress practices in these churches? How is this related to style and aesthetics? To moral values and theology?

When I discuss dress as part of worship, I lean on the understanding put forward by cultural anthropologist Lynne Hume, who explains religious dress as the way “anyone covers, reveals, adds to or in any way decorates his or her body in the name of religious or spiritual beliefs or activities.”¹¹⁸ Dress is not just clothes, it is the way we cover or reveal, decorate and adorn our bodies. When this is put in a religious context and given a religious or spiritual interpretation, we can speak of ‘religious dress’. This does not necessarily imply costumes made specifically for ritual purposes but, rather, any way that people adjust or adapt their way of covering, revealing, or decorating their body in the name of spiritual beliefs or activities. It has to do with dress itself, with personal feelings attached to dress, and with the cultural interpretation of dress in a specific context.¹¹⁹ Further, as Hume writes, “Dress distinctions function to set one religious community apart from other religious communities, and they also operate within a religion to distinguish hierarchies, power structures, gender distinctions, ideas of modesty, roles, mores, group identity and belief and ideology.”¹²⁰ The way people dress in church on a Sunday morning is not arbitrary, but comes with distinct interpretations and sometimes strict rules, especially for those engaged in ministry. In what follows, I show how these dress practices are spiritually and theologically motivated, and so, rightly, may be called ‘religious dress’ following Hume’s definition.

115 Joanne Entwistle (2001) in Hansen, 2–3.

116 Jennifer Craik (1994) in Hansen, 2.

117 Hansen, 3.

118 Lynne Hume, *The Religious Life of Dress: Global Fashion and Faith* (London: New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 2.

119 Hume, 1–5.

120 Hume, 1.

Closely tied to dress is the notion of ‘style’. Anthropologist Birgit Meyer writes that attention to style “allows researchers to take seriously the actual appearance of religion—in the built environment, in mass-mediated audio-visual images, and in bodies of religious practitioners—without reducing appearance to a mere outward expression.”¹²¹ Thus, taking into account the way people dress, in terms of style and aesthetics, and the emphasis they place on appearance, is a “suitable point of entry into an approach to religion from a material, sensory angle.”¹²² Style and dress are thus appropriate themes when sensory and somatic aspects of pentecostal worship are considered. I have already mentioned the role of dress and costume in Chapter 5 when discussing core elements of the worship ritual. I argued that the coordinated clothing that music teams in both Woodley and Mavuno wear contribute to the overall visual and aesthetic effect of the liturgical setting. In this chapter, I want to take a step closer and examine the ideas and practices that are connected to clothing in the respective churches, and how they relate to issues of moral value, group identification, and cultural belonging. As we shall see, the two churches differ considerably in their approach to dress; holiness and gender stand out as important themes in Woodley, while in Mavuno, style is everything.

3.1 *Dress Codes and Holiness Ideals in Worship*

In the history of revival, dressing differently has sometimes been a way to show that conversion has indeed taken place. For example, Anabaptists were known to “shun costly clothing” and “hold to a plain and simple style”¹²³ as a way to mark their new status after adult baptism. Their heirs, the Amish, prescribe clothing that is “in every way modest, serviceable and simple.”¹²⁴ Long, full dresses; solid, subdued colors; flat heels and no jewellery are among the rules for women. For Mennonites, another Anabaptist group, conformity to dress is a key way to show acceptance of, and belonging to the community, especially for women. It is also a way to show one’s inner state since the “outward appearance is considered to reflect the inner religiosity.”¹²⁵ As Lynne Hume says of the Anabaptist approach, “With the emphasis on ‘no frills’, their plainness overtly articulates their separation from the world outside their communities and their strong sense of belonging and identity within their communities.”¹²⁶

121 Meyer, ‘Pentecostalism and Globalization’, 126.

122 Meyer, 126.

123 Johannes Kessler (1525) and the Strasbourg conference of Anabaptists (1568), quoted in Hume, *The Religious Life of Dress: Global Fashion and Faith*, 36.

124 Hume, 39.

125 Hume, 48.

126 Hume, 35.

3.1.1 CITAM Dress Codes and Their Rationale

Dress codes for ministry purposes are clearly defined within CITAM churches. This goes for the choir and musicians as well as for the pastors and elders. The style is conservative and rather strict, with a strong emphasis on modesty and respectability. It is neat, formal, and nice; not too fashionable and not too simple. Among congregants, clothing is more varied; many follow the example of those in ministry positions, while others adopt either a dressier or a more simple style. Even though the church deliberately targets the middle class and elite in society, the congregants come from a wide range of societal backgrounds, which is also mirrored in their way of dressing. The ethnographic vignette in the Interlude should give a clear idea of how this looks in practice.

The reasons for having a particular dress code for those in ministry is explained by research participants as a matter of spiritual focus, gender roles, and cultural values. Pastor Rose spoke extensively on this in our interview and shared her experiences as a worship leader, as well as a female pastor, a mother, and a daughter. I report her perspective on the dress code at some length since I find it captures the tensions and considerations that are involved in an important way. As she explains:

For the music team at CITAM Woodley—just so that you can identify who it is—there’s a uniform, a dress code that is expected on a Sunday, because you do not want to be a distraction as a lady—no tight skirts, no short skirts, no above the knee skirts, no tights—stuff like that because we’re in an African cultural setting. I know we’re in Nairobi and people wear minis and people (including my daughter) wear tight skirts with short tops, but because we’ve come to focus on God, then we purposefully choose how to dress. So for the uniforms for the guys, again, also just normal trousers and a shirt that’s the same colour scheme across the board.¹²⁷

The uniform is there so that congregants may identify who is in the music ministry on any given Sunday; it marks the transition from being a congregant among others to having a ritual role. This is the first function of purposeful dress. The second is to help the congregation ‘focus on God’ instead of being distracted by dress. The strictest rules apply to women, because ‘you do not want to be a distraction as a lady’, but even men have rules. For women the rules are negatively formulated as a sequence of prohibitions: ‘no tight skirts,

¹²⁷ Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

no short skirts, no above the knee skirts, no tights', while rules for men are rendered in positive terms as 'just normal trousers and a shirt'. This mirrors the situation of many women in Africa, as well as many women in conservative religious settings around the world. The responsibility to act in morally acceptable ways, including ways to dress, is a heavier burden for women than men.

According to the CITAM logic, the responsibility is both moral and spiritual. By dressing in ways that are regarded as decent and inoffensive, women in ministry can help the congregation stay focused on God. One of the members of the music team in Woodley had similar ideas on dress in relation to spiritual focus and distraction, explaining them as follows:

I think for the presence of God to be there, everyone has to feel they're comfortable. Like when the congregation watches the person who is the worship leader: how would they see the person? For example if they see like the person is in a very short skirt, you see, there'll be that division between the flesh and the spirit ... So why there is that order in the way you dress is because you want the Spirit of God to flow and then to connect with other believers, or other people in the congregation, yes.¹²⁸

The worship leader functions as a point of contact between 'the Spirit of God' and 'other believers', and, by dressing in an orderly manner, she (the example assumes a female person) can facilitate this spiritual connection. On the other hand, if the worship leader dresses in 'a very short skirt', some people in the congregation might feel uncomfortable, leading to 'a division between the flesh and the spirit'. It seems that congregants, presumably male, will have a hard time focusing on divine matters when the embodied persona on stage evokes carnal desires, to the point of blocking the Spirit of God.

While unsuitable clothing can hinder the presence of God, it is not the only thing that may do so. Once Pastor Rose has explained the uniform, she adds that "beyond the outward there's an inward";¹²⁹ in other words, in addition to preparing their physical appearance, a worship leader or pastor must also prepare their inner being, their hearts. "It's not just the outward adornment, it's your heart as well. So that when we come corporately on Sunday if I'm having issues in my life and I haven't let the Lord deal with them, even if I dress so beautifully those things will act as a hindrance."¹³⁰ The beautiful dress and

128 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

129 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

130 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

outward adornment will not in itself guarantee the presence of God in worship; instead, each person should ask the Lord to deal with their personal struggles (it is not clear if she is referring to sin, temptation, or other issues such as relational, physical or emotional struggles), before leading the congregation in worship. This is the personal responsibility of each team member, in line with their inner preparations, as discussed in Chapter 5. These issues may otherwise impede the flow of the Spirit in corporate worship, regardless of whether the team has dressed beautifully or not.

3.1.2 Dress Practices and the Holiness Tradition

In interviews and church services, reference was often made to similarities between the organization of worship in the Old Testament and in our time. Worship leaders and choir members were seen as the successors of priests and Levites, creating points of contact between the human and the divine realm.¹³¹ Pentecostal theologian and Old Testament scholar Jerome Boone describes the role of priests as “facilitators” who “live and work at the boundary between the holy and the common, between the clean and the unclean.”¹³² Through living a life of “personal piety and integrity,” they “image God in the very way that they live.”¹³³ In doing so, they follow the command given by God: “You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2), a command repeated time and again throughout both the Old and the New Testaments. It is against this background that we need to understand the notions of hindering or facilitating the flow of the Spirit. As ‘priests and Levites’ worship leaders have a special responsibility for the integrity and holiness of the community, and they exercise this mandate by keeping careful watch over their own way of life.

This emphasis on holiness and sanctification has a long history in the pentecostal tradition, dating back to its revivalist roots in Pietism, Methodism, and the Holiness movement.¹³⁴ This has been an especially important issue in classical Pentecostalism, even dividing different types of classical Pentecostals into those who see sanctification as “a second work of grace” (after conversion), to be followed by “the third experience of Spirit baptism” (Holiness

131 Interview Woodley Music Team; Interview Mavuno Music Team, Interview Pastor Rose; and Interview Pastor Josh.

132 Boone, ‘Worship and the Torah’, 25.

133 Boone, 25.

134 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 47–57; see also Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*; and David Bundy, *Visions of Apostolic Mission: Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission to 1935* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2009).

Pentecostals), and those who see sanctification as “an outgrowth from conversion”¹³⁵ (Baptistic or Finished Work Pentecostals), including the Assemblies of God.¹³⁶ But, regardless of whether one sees sanctification as an instantaneous gift or a gradual process, there is an emphasis on moral perfection and separateness from ‘the world’. The post-conversion life should be different from the pre-conversion one. Through surrendering oneself “*wholly*”¹³⁷ to God, motives and desires are cleansed and perfected, and the born-again can lead a different kind of life, a life of faith, a ‘holy’ life.¹³⁸ He or she has become a “new creation in Christ Jesus” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Although classical Pentecostals have not gone as far as the Amish or the Mennonites (mentioned above), something of the same values, dating all the way back to the Radical Reformation and the Anabaptist movement, still linger in their attitudes. Among classical Pentecostals—as opposed to Neo-Pentecostals—many still hold to a ‘plain’ ideal when it comes to dress: no extravagance, no excessiveness, no frills. Instead, they opt for plain colors, simple hair styles, few accessories, and not too much makeup. Modest dress becomes a way to show that one is ‘wholly surrendered’, different and set-apart from the world, that one is indeed ‘holy’, ‘sanctified’, and in every way ‘serviceable’ to the Lord. Historian Anthea Bulter has observed a similar pattern with regard to gender, dress, and holiness in women of the Church of God in Christ in late 19th century America,¹³⁹ and Anita Yadala Sunesson reports it from contemporary pentecostal churches in South India.¹⁴⁰ In CITAM, these ideals are especially salient in the official dress codes used by those who serve on Sundays, most of all for women. People conform with them as a way to show acceptance of and belonging to the group and its teachings. In private life the rules are less strict and there is more room for individual expression.

3.1.3 Handling Tension with regard to Dress and Culture

For Pastor Rose, the purposeful way of dressing is also related to the fact that they are in an ‘African cultural setting’.¹⁴¹ Limiting certain dancing styles is a

135 Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’, 17. Anderson also includes a third (Oneness) and a fourth (Apostolic) sub-group among classical Pentecostals.

136 Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’.

137 Virginia Lieson Brereton (1991), quoted in Gooren, ‘Conversion Narratives’, 98. Emphasis in original.

138 Gooren, 97–99.

139 Butler, ‘Unrespectable Saints: Women of the Church of God in Christ’.

140 Yadala Sunesson, ‘The Contextual Significance of Clothes and Jewellery: Lived Religion among Pentecostals in South India’.

141 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

way to accommodate different generations in the same room, and something similar applies to dressing respectfully. It is about respecting the older generation, those who are still very much impacted by “how things are done up country,”¹⁴² in rural parts of Kenya. Although the church is in urban Nairobi—where ‘people wear minis’—the point of reference for many congregants is still “African traditional culture.”¹⁴³ It is this culture that determines what clothes are appropriate or not, what is deemed modest and tasteful or not. As a mother, Pastor Rose must navigate between her children’s need to express themselves in a way that suits urban youth culture, and the opinions that older generations, including her own mother, may have about such expression.¹⁴⁴

As a female pastor, “a lady pastor”¹⁴⁵ as she calls herself, Pastor Rose must constantly be aware of these considerations and adapt her own appearance to fit the context. Since she was not brought up in the countryside, she will “break a lot of rules” and “accommodate a lot,” like wearing “big earrings” and allowing women to have makeup “as long as it doesn’t run on stage.”¹⁴⁶ Sometimes people who meet her in private are surprised to see her dressed in a style that differs from the official dress code, leading to amusing situations. She recalls the following exchange with a congregant:

Let me get a funny one. Somebody came to visit me in the office another day and said, “You wear short skirts!” I said, “What do you mean I wear short skirts? I even wear trousers.” They said, “We’ve never seen you.” I said, “Because you only see me on Sundays in my long skirts and for me that’s a dress code—an official dress code.”... So the shock on the person that said, “You wear short skirts!” You know, I said, “I can horrify you more—I also wear trousers” [laughs]. But not intentionally.¹⁴⁷

Her private outfits are less conservative than her official ones, and may raise some eyebrows, although she laughingly comments that she does not ‘horrify’ anyone ‘intentionally’. In fact, she is constantly aware of the environment and adapts to whatever local culture demands. When she travels to rural areas these considerations are even more important. “I can’t go to minister with my red paint up country,” she says. “I’d have to have colourless nail varnish,

142 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

143 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

144 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

145 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

146 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

147 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

little studs, no braided hair, long skirt, to be accepted as a minister.¹⁴⁸ We may note how closely the ritual authority and ritual style are related to questions of embodiment and culture. It is as if her authority as a leader and pastor takes concrete and visual form through her choice of outfit, as if spiritual matters can be physically embodied. As Hume noted, inner religiosity is thought to be reflected in outward appearance.

In Chapter 2, I quoted Ronald Grimes who said that because ritual is “in and of bodies,” it is also “cultural, since bodies are enculturated.”¹⁴⁹ Considering the role of dress for worship, this link becomes apparent. Culture defines limits for what is an appropriate and modest way to dress, but these limits are not static. They are negotiated and challenged on a daily basis, while different cultural norms kick in according to context; the norms of the church or denomination intersect with those based on age, gender, socio-economic status, or place of residence, to mention just a few. Tensions arise, and individuals and churches need to find a way to navigate within them. Pastor Rose again: “So that’s how intertwined a cultural thing is ... It’s, I can’t call it tension, and yet it is some, but it, [sighs] how do I put this? Um, it’s adapting, it’s an adaptation of, okay, this is the environment we are in, this goes, this is acceptable. Okay, we’ll receive it.”¹⁵⁰

In Woodley, worship practices, including dress choices, are thoroughly embodied, culturally defined, and yet highly contested and constantly negotiated. The ‘cultural thing’ is so intertwined in the way people think that adaptation to the environment is necessary, she argues. Just as some dancing styles ‘cannot be allowed on the pulpit’, certain types of dress will be considered improper and provoke discussion. Unless those in ministry adapt their style of dress to the official standard, what they do in church will not be ‘acceptable’ and received.

Again, we see that what we may call ‘the ritual style’—the type of music, dance, and dress deemed appropriate in church—may simultaneously act as both an attraction and a deterrent depending on which sub-group of the congregation is considered. An urban and contemporary style risks upsetting the senior congregants, while a traditional style may chase the younger generations away. Pastor Rose does not want to call it a tension, but I would say that this is exactly what it is: a tension between the Christian sub-culture and the culture of the surrounding society, a tension between rural and urban culture, and a tension between older and younger generations. It is also a tension between

148 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

149 Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 195.

150 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

the plain aesthetic ideals prevalent among classical Pentecostals and more extravagant ideals prevailing in neo-pentecostal circles. CITAM tries to solve this tension through “merging”¹⁵¹ these different subcultures, while Mavuno chooses to leave as much of the ecclesial subculture as possible behind and opts for a full adaptation to urban youth culture and neo-pentecostal aesthetic ideals. In the next section I discuss how this contemporary Mavuno style is embodied in dress.

3.2 *The Social Skin: When Style Is Everything*

Anthropologist Terence Turner once coined the notion of “the social skin”¹⁵² in reference to dress, capturing the dual quality of dress as something that both touches the body and faces outward towards others. Commenting on Turner’s formulation, Tranberg Hansen writes, “This two-sided quality invites us to explore both the individual and collective identities that the dressed body enables.”¹⁵³ Clothes are personal, they touch the individual body, but at the same time they are social, speaking to and reflecting the collective of which the individual is part. “Yet the subjective and social experiences of dress are not always mutually supportive but may contradict one another or collide,” Hansen continues, and as a result, “dress readily becomes a flash point for conflicting values.”¹⁵⁴ In Woodley and CITAM, the tension is between conflicting value systems within the same congregation, while in Mavuno this seems to be a minor problem. Instead, the tensions appear in relation to the surrounding ecclesial or ecumenical community.

3.2.1 Dress Codes in Mavuno and Their Rationale

Mavuno has taken up the task of reaching out to the “young, African, English-speaking, educated professional,” a type that Pastor Kamau considers a “new people group.”¹⁵⁵ For other groups in society the situation is different. There are plenty of good churches around that reach “the urban, non-educated, lower-income people,” he says; indeed, they are “spoilt for choice as far as churches are concerned.”¹⁵⁶ But for young, educated professionals who do not “talk their ethnic languages” and are “more exposed to media,” “there are not that many options” since churches like the “mainline denominations” have

151 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

152 Terence Turner (1993, 1980), referenced in Hansen, ‘Introduction’, 2.

153 Hansen, 2.

154 Hansen, 2.

155 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

156 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

not “adapted their communication”¹⁵⁷ sufficiently. As in the case of musical styles and dance, Mavuno has been criticized by other Christians for their use of youthful, urban style dress in services. The way the church handles this critique is to stay firm or even take their own general stance one step further. They are convinced Kenyan churches need to change their overall modes of communication and, therefore, have no plans to change their own way of doing things.

So, how *are* they doing things? In the previous chapters, I have painted a picture of Mavuno as a young and stylish church when it comes to dress. This goes for on-stage, back-stage, and congregational spaces. Groups with different roles wear coordinated outfits: the worship team, tech team, hosts, ushers, welcome team, and so on. The idea that your clothes are dictated by your role is very common in churches, as it is in Kenyan society at large. The difference in Mavuno is that they adopt a youthful and hip style across the board. Ushers may wear jeans and t-shirts printed with a Mavuno message, or black trousers with a white shirt. The tech team wears all-black trousers and t-shirts. The worship team coordinates in terms of colours and style, but allows individual expression in the details. For example, they may all have squared shirts but not the same type, or they may all wear glasses but of different shapes, or they may all be in denim but in slightly different shades, or any other variation on a given theme. Hosts and preachers are allowed more freedom of individual expression; they are sometimes dressed in a very elaborate and sometimes a plainer manner.

There is a lot of creativity channelled into on-stage clothing in Mavuno and it is all very carefully planned. The on-stage people deliberately choose their clothes to suit the theme of sermon and service as well as the overall Mavuno style and message. In Chapter 5, I quoted Pastor Josh as saying that adjusting visual, musical, and sartorial communication to the tastes of the younger generation functions like a “bait” or a “net” since it draws people into church; once they are there, they get the Gospel, although packaged “differently” to meet the needs of young people with “certain standards.”¹⁵⁸ This attitude affects ritual performance in an obvious way, again emphasizing ritual language and ritual style as important elements of worship.

Pastor Kamau argues along a similar line when he likens young, educated people in Nairobi to an ‘unreached people group’. As they have a different aesthetic language than other groups, the Gospel must be translated to them

157 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

158 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

so that they may understand it, otherwise it is like “speaking Swahili and Chinese.”¹⁵⁹ As a pastor, he carefully thinks about how he uses language to communicate, everything from which “dialect of English” he uses—“I could speak and it sounds like King James, you know.”¹⁶⁰—to quoting pop songs or using video clips as part of his sermon. Clothes are part of the total communication package. “If I wore a collar or I wore a tie on a Sunday morning, I’ve lost them, I’ve lost; that’s not their aesthetic language.”¹⁶¹

To Pastor Kamau, adjusting the aesthetic language to young people’s standards is a way of following the missiological principle of ‘translation’ rather than ‘adaptation’ in relation to culture.¹⁶² Explaining that there are two ways to look at relevance, he says that one is to “take what you have, look at the culture that you have outside, and adapt it.”¹⁶³ This he finds problematic since it somehow presupposes that what you have is not enough or not right. Instead, he says Mavuno takes “a different view.”¹⁶⁴

[My] theological synthesis of what we are doing is that first of all we recognize that the Gospel is good for all time. And so nothing about our understanding of the Gospel has changed or is about to change. And so in that sense we are very, you know, some say we are obviously conservative; we are very, we have not liberalized ourselves so that we can become relevant. We still hold, you know, what has been held true, among evangelical Christians. But we do recognize that this Gospel has to be communicated within the current cultural space. And so that means that we have to find language and metaphors that can communicate what we are saying without really changing the message ... So a good one, a good one that is often used in World Christianity is ‘translation’. So what we are doing is that we have become translators of the Gospel to a new people group.¹⁶⁵

159 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

160 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

161 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

162 On different models of how church interacts with culture in mission, see discussion in Stephen B. Bevans and Roger Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 32–72; Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 368–457; see also Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992); and Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).

163 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

164 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

165 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

Theologically they adhere to what has been held true among evangelical Christians before them, even to the point where others may say that they are ‘obviously conservative’ in theological matters; thus, it is not their understanding of the Gospel that has changed. What has changed compared to other churches is their method of communication, their ‘language’. Coming from a firmly Anglican background himself (with some pentecostal ingredients), Pastor Kamau explains with a laugh that, although carrying a lot of things from his background into his current ministry, the one thing he has not carried is “the clothes”.¹⁶⁶ Ceremonial costume is not part of the Mavuno-packaged message. Here, the Gospel is stylishly dressed.

Style is an important matter for most congregants as well, judging from what they wear on a Sunday morning. I have written words like ‘cool’, ‘hip’, ‘stylish’, ‘trendy’, and ‘chic’ in numerous places in my notes. Here, for example, is an excerpt from my observations of 29th December 2013:

People in here are extremely chic! Beautiful dresses, tight jeans, light blouses, cool printed t-shirts, and nice shirts. I can see one man in a *kanzu*, but he is probably the only one with an African/Arabic style of dress. Apart from that it is urban, contemporary (or should I say Western?) across the board. People are well groomed, clean, and tidy, clothes seem new. I can see no one with ragged clothes or a shabby appearance. High heels. Polished shoes. Sneakers. Girls have spent a lot of time on hair, makeup, and accessories. Latest hairstyles. Well-thought-out outfits. This is the elite. The in people. A church with attitude for people with attitude.¹⁶⁷

On other Sundays more people wore African-styled patterns and prints, and occasionally I did see someone with a shabby appearance but, apart from that, the description is representative of congregational dress styles. It seems the people who come to Mavuno either belong to the intended target group of young professionals or, at least, take pains to dress as if they did. As for Woodley, we see that there is some sort of interaction between the dress code (however informal and subtly conveyed) of on-stage people and congregants in the hall. The style of the leaders is determined by the style of imagined recipients, and the style of actual recipients is consolidated and reinforced by the style of leaders.

¹⁶⁶ Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

¹⁶⁷ Fieldnotes Mavuno Sunday service 2013-12-29.

3.2.2 Style, Dress, and Neo-pentecostal Aesthetic Ideals

The preoccupation with style and aesthetics among neo-pentecostal Christians has been noted by several authors. Birgit Meyer states that “it is commonly acknowledged that appearance is a prime concern for those participating in Pentecostal churches,” since a person’s appearance “is seen as an indication of an interior spiritual state.”¹⁶⁸ In consonance with the prosperity gospel, where wealth is seen as an indication of the blessings of God,¹⁶⁹ Meyer argues that “there is much emphasis on what might be viewed as ‘mere outward things’ from a more orthodox Christian perspective.”¹⁷⁰ In her research in West Africa, she met many young people attracted to mega-churches who told her they could not attend church in the same dress every Sunday, and so had developed “mutual dress exchange systems” to “avoid embarrassment and shame.”¹⁷¹ She also met people who backed out because they could not afford “to model themselves in line with the ideal Christian appearance.”¹⁷² Since “clothing indexes wealth,”¹⁷³ a lack of suitable apparel is interpreted as a lack of blessing or success.

168 Meyer, ‘Pentecostalism and Globalization’, 126.

169 That Mavuno shares neo-pentecostal aesthetic ideals does not mean that they promote the so-called ‘prosperity gospel’ in their teachings. In common with other educated, middle-class churches in the Progressive Pentecostal category, they have a different attitude toward miraculous material blessings than earlier generations of Neo-Pentecostals. Theirs is a theology that encourages economic accountability and transparency along with a holistic view of salvation. See discussion in Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 147–59; compare Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*. There is a vast literature on the prosperity gospel in African Pentecostalism, see for example: Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments Within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, 201–32; Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context*; Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 112–35, 150–59; Gifford, ‘The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism’; Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 255–59; Martin Lindhardt, ‘More Than Just Money: The Faith Gospel and Occult Economies in Contemporary Tanzania’, *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, no. 1 (2009): 41–67; Machingura, ‘The Significance of Glossolalia in the Apostolic Faith Mission, Zimbabwe’; see also Katherine Attanasi and Amos Yong, *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic Movement*, Christianities of the World (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2012).

170 Meyer, ‘Pentecostalism and Globalization’, 126.

171 Meyer, 126.

172 Meyer, 126.

173 Adeline Masquelier, ‘Forging Connections, Performing Distinctions: Youth, Dress, and Consumption in Niger’, in *African Dress: Fashion, Agency, Performance*, ed. Karen Tranberg Hansen and D. Soyini Madison (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 144.

Interestingly, the principle is the same as that mentioned above, that the outward appearance is supposed to reflect an inner spiritual state, although the aesthetic-spiritual ideals vary. In Neo-Pentecostalism, and especially in prosperity-oriented churches, the ideal is for a born-again Christian to be wealthy and successful; in classical Pentecostalism, with an Anabaptist heritage, the ideal is to be upright, virtuous, and set apart from the world. Both ideals are shown through outward appearance: stylish or plain. Yadala Sunesson found in South India that ideals of clothing and jewellery may indeed affect a person's choice of church. Some women were hesitant to join a holiness-oriented church due to the heavy restrictions put on female dress, and instead opted for mega-churches with different ideals, since that gave them the freedom to retain important cultural practices.¹⁷⁴

For the sake of analytical clarity, I distinguish between these two pentecostal stylistic ideals, but in reality they mix in any given church context. Woodley honours the ideals of their Anabaptist heritage, but many congregants are equally affected by neo-pentecostal ideals when it comes to dress. The same could be said of Mavuno: the leaders honour the 'young, professional, and successful' ideals, while some congregants prefer to dress according to the classical pentecostal style described above. Neither Woodley nor Mavuno displays a 'pure' type of classical pentecostal or neo-pentecostal aesthetic ideal, but the tendencies towards one or the other are certainly there.¹⁷⁵

While it is true that wealth, generation, class, gender, and theological preferences may be exposed via embodied dress practices, it is also true that clothing can allow people to play with the very same features. A person may display his or her identity and values through clothing but may just as well seek to hide them or beguile his surroundings in some respect. Writing about youth in Niger, Adeline Masquelier describes how they adopt certain clothing styles to signal wealth and success, despite an economic situation marked by unemployment and poverty—or to signal piety and modesty—while at the same time breaking the rules of the religious community in private. She notes, "[A] young man's new sneakers and fancy watch may suggest that he has resources when in reality he is jobless. The deceptive potential of clothing enables people to create

174 Yadala Sunesson, 'The Contextual Significance of Clothes and Jewellery: Lived Religion among Pentecostals in South India'.

175 This is not to say that the importance of dress, or the connection between style and theology, is unique among pentecostal Christians. Christians from all traditions have ideas about dress, and different understandings of what consists appropriate dress for worship. For example, wearing 'Sunday best' is common in many Protestant churches around the globe.

an appearance of wealth that contradicts their actual economic status. Dress, people say, is not always a good indicator of who a person really is.¹⁷⁶ Rather, it may speak of who they “aspire to be”¹⁷⁷ in the eyes of their peers, partners, or parents.

This perspective is important to keep in mind as we discuss Mavuno clothing and style. Just because many attending Mavuno dress in what look like expensive clothes, it does not necessarily mean that they are rich, only that they aspire to be, or wish to appear as such when they go to church. In fact, in my research survey, as many as eleven per cent said they were unemployed and looking for a job.¹⁷⁸ Likewise, just because Mavuno pastors adopt a youthful style of dress, it does not necessarily mean that everyone is young, only that they aspire to creating a youthful space. In fact, many key leaders are born in the 1960s and ‘70s and are no longer young. Of course, this principle is also true of Woodley’s preferred dress code: just because they dress in a way that signals modesty and holiness, this does not necessarily mean that people adhere to strict moral rules in their everyday life.

3.2.3 Creating a Social Skin through Clothing Competence

In Turner’s terminology, we may say that dress enables individuals and groups to create a ‘social skin’,¹⁷⁹ a layer between themselves and society, thus presenting themselves in ways that suit their aspirations, hopes, and dreams. They can choose to reveal, display, hide, and beguile accordingly. To some extent, dress practices can become self-fulfilling prophecies. A church that dresses in a young cosmopolitan style is more likely to draw young cosmopolitans to its services. A young professional who wishes to become wealthy can dress accordingly and draw the attention of others in the same category. To be successful in this endeavour, it takes what Hansen has called “clothing competence,” the critical skill of knowing how to create a “total look”¹⁸⁰ suitable for a given context. A look may succeed or fail depending on the context in which it is presented. This competence, or “*clothing habitus*”¹⁸¹—as she also calls it—is learned through socialization and is dependent on our social backgrounds

176 Masquelier, ‘Forging Connections, Performing Distinctions: Youth, Dress, and Consumption in Niger’, 143.

177 Masquelier, 143.

178 Mavuno research survey, conducted by researcher and research assistant, March 2014. See Introduction and Appendix 5 for details.

179 Terence Turner (1993, 1980), referenced in Hansen, ‘Introduction’, 2.

180 Hansen, 3.

181 Hansen, 4. Emphasis in original.

and embodied activities. Those who master the skills can use them to advocate their own cause, be it ecclesial, economic, political, or something else; nonetheless, using dress as a way to speak efficiently in a social setting, is “hard work.”¹⁸²

Undoubtedly, volunteers and staff in Mavuno work hard to communicate to just the right people with the right message. There is constant evaluation and preparation aimed at getting things right and allowing dress to speak in just the right way. At the same time, congregants and visitors work hard to communicate their connection with the group or their aspirations to belong to it. Many spend considerable time preparing their appearance before church, as the Mavuno identity is built through clothing and other material and visual means. It is communicated from stage and enforced by those coming to church. This happens in all ecclesial communities to some degree, as it happens in all social groups, but Mavuno is especially deliberate in their approach and highly competent in building a total look, a ‘clothing habitus’ as it were. And they do so without explicit dress codes and seemingly without ‘rules’. Dress is not about holiness or gender in Mavuno; it is not about paying respect to a holy place or a holy ministry, or communicating inner purity through outward looks as in Woodley. Rather the opposite: they deliberately seek to break with the rules that other churches uphold, which many young people experience as too strict, instead using dress to consolidate their place as the in-church for young people. In doing so, they distance themselves from the older churches in some respects.

Yet dress is not only hard work; Masquelier argues that it is also fun, a way to play. Through clothing styles, young people can play with religious and cultural norms and find a way to challenge and change them. She says that Nigerien youth “perceive dressing up as a fun, pleasurable, and occasionally irreverent endeavour driven by the desire to challenge the status quo,” adding, “play is both experimentation and escape from the world of labor, adulthood, and social responsibilities.”¹⁸³ There is a certain sense in which Mavuno provides a place where clothes do not matter, which young people perceive as a place of freedom. By allowing the young to dress in the same way in church as they would when hanging out with friends, Mavuno communicates that this is a space where ‘you can be yourself’. They seem to hold the same views as young people in Niger who claim that dress “is about self-expression, not conformity to religious or cultural norms.”¹⁸⁴ If we are to understand the Mavuno

182 Hansen (2009:118), quoted in Masquelier, ‘Forging Connections, Performing Distinctions: Youth, Dress, and Consumption in Niger’, 149.

183 Masquelier, 149.

184 Masquelier, 138.

approach to dress, both on stage and off, we need to recognize the value of having fun, of experimenting and expressing oneself as an individual and as part of a community.

Thus, in one respect dress in Mavuno is taken very seriously and given a lot of thought, and in another it is not taken seriously at all, providing a space where young people can enjoy life and express themselves, while at the same time playing with cultural norms and acting irreverently in some small way. This does not mean there is not tension. Masquelier argues that the youthful, playful, experimental approach to dress “is marked by a tension between a desire to belong and a desire to ‘distinguish [one]self before others.’”¹⁸⁵ I think this also is true of Mavuno, both on a subjective and a social level. Individual Mavunites try to distinguish themselves in the eyes of others through the use of dress, at the same time trying to communicate their belonging to the group. Mavuno as a church tries to distinguish itself as a youthful and playful church, at the same time retaining much of the structure, theology, and content of mainstream evangelical and charismatic Christianity. It is sometimes about walking that fine line where their experimental and provocative approach to dress, dance, and music narrowly avoids becoming too much to bear for the rest of the local ecumenical community.

In sum, together with other embodied strategies, congregational and on-stage dress contributes to ritual performance in obvious and vital ways. It becomes a language to communicate the Gospel, as well as a way to convey and foster a sense of belonging and community. Clothes can add to, even create, a feeling of being ‘us’ and ‘not them’. In Woodley, it is a sense of being set apart, born again, and holy that is reinforced through dress, while in Mavuno it is one of being young, free, and professional. In both cases, clothes act as a social skin—simultaneously social and subjective—that speaks of both collective and individual identities, whether desired or already achieved.

4 Bodies Feeling and Not Feeling: Why Emotion Matters

While the above analysis has focused on community, movement, and clothing in relation to embodiment, this last section addresses emotion: the sensing and sensitive body as it were. Thus, while the previous sections examine the body in worship ‘from the outside’, this depicts how worship feels ‘from the inside’ or ‘under the skin’. Of course, as researchers we are not able to get

¹⁸⁵ Masquelier, 149.

into people's hearts (or bodies) to know exactly what they feel; we must rely on what they report about their feelings in relation to worship. The first part considers affective dimensions of worship by exploring the atmosphere and affective states that are expected in worship and how they are furthered and facilitated by music, while the second part depicts the personal feelings of a worship leader in leading worship: the joy, anxiety, and exhaustion that comes from engaging in such emotionally charged ritual performances. While underlining the centrality of emotion and affectivity for pentecostal worship, the following sections also shed some light on the difference between *orthopathos* and *pathos*: between affective states that are expected and desired in worship and those that are there unsought. In some ways, there are feelings that come across as 'right' for worship and other feelings that seem to be 'wrong'. In concrete ritual practice, it is paramount for leaders to nurture and facilitate the 'right' feelings, helping participants to enter into a mood that makes them receptive to the Spirit of God. Efficiently adopting different ritual modes and monitoring their own emotional-spiritual states are essential in achieving this aim.

4.1 *Affective Dimensions of Worship*

From a pentecostal theological perspective, understood as an ideal type, charismatic worship is affective and affectionate. As we saw in the theoretical introduction in Chapter 2, worship mediates an intimate and emotional relationship of love that is at the same time communal and personal. Music and singing expresses and manifests a corporate longing and desire for God, meanwhile mediating divine love through the Holy Spirit to the congregation. These affective dimensions of worship are in line with the Wesleyan Holiness heritage of pentecostal spirituality, as presented by Steven Land, where God's love and love for God play a central role.¹⁸⁶

The centrality of feelings, desire, and love for pentecostal theology is underlined by Amos Yong who states that the encounter with the Spirit can be understood as an experience whereby "God is perceived to break through into the very depths of the human domain and awaken people's affections."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*. See also discussion in Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, on holiness heritage, page 59–74, and on Land, page 76–80. Compare Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*; Clapper, 'Orthokardia: John Wesley's Grammar of the Holy Spirit'; Lord, 'A Theology of Sung Worship'; Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism*. See further discussion in Chapter 8.

¹⁸⁷ Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 55.

This is a deep and holistic experience, involving the whole person. Pentecostal spirituality is one of love and desire. Prayer, and especially glossolalic prayer, is described as expressing the individual's existential longing for God, while praise and worship expresses the corporate desire of the church.¹⁸⁸ He continues, "Thus Pentecostals meet God not merely as rational creatures but as embodied, feeling and desiring ones."¹⁸⁹ In practice, of course, people can experience worship in a range of ways, both emotionally and spiritually; hence, there is no direct or inevitable link between the desired experience and the actual one, the ritual has to create the right pre-conditions anew each time. And yet, ultimately, the God-encounter is beyond human control.

4.1.1 Cultivating a Receiving Atmosphere through Music

As I also discuss in Chapter 8, many interviewees referred to the emotional capacity of music when asked if it is essential for corporate worship. For example, Pastor Nyaga in Woodley said that "music is critical,"¹⁹⁰ partly because of its biblical precedents, partly its emotional capacity. He likened it to the way a soccer game can engage people at an emotional level and in a similar manner: "worship and emotions cannot be separated."¹⁹¹

Pastor Rose, also in Woodley, describes worshipping through music as "a wholesome practice. It's very enriching."¹⁹² And although she does not want to call its effects "trance" or "ecstasy", as a Western professor with whom she interacted had labelled them, she nevertheless sees the similarity with yoga or other types of deep meditation where people enter a transcendental "mind space."¹⁹³ Music facilitates a transition into a different reality, a different realm. It "just helps you to access a heavenly realm," she says.¹⁹⁴ The sort of emotional and physical engagement that worship can generate is hard to explain, but it involves a deep immersion, to the point where "you could just be lost in the Lord even in your own personal quiet time"; it can also be experienced when communal worship rises to a "crescendo" where "you feel elated."¹⁹⁵

Music helps congregants to put aside their immediate feelings and instead enter a different realm. Certainly, not everyone comes to church feeling

188 Yong, 53–55.

189 Yong, 55.

190 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

191 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

192 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

193 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

194 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

195 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

thankful or jubilant. Pastor Rose recalls the following conversation with a congregant:

And sometimes, depending on who's in your congregation, even though they're an English-language speaker, they may not be thankful that morning. One person told me to my face, he said, "Rose, I couldn't sing *Great is Thy faithfulness*." I said, "Why couldn't you sing that?" He said, "Because I don't think God's been faithful to me." And he was being very honest and blunt and like, "Okay. Um, this is painful but thank you for telling me." And there was another one who said, "I can't say 'Thank you.'" And I thought, "Ouch."¹⁹⁶

To hear that someone is not able to be thankful, despite the fact that the person is an 'English-language speaker' (belonging to a privileged group in society), is 'painful' for her. Yet she appreciates the honesty and the fact that he still came to church and also told her his feelings. She was able to receive and harbour his doubts and his anger towards God (whom he thought had 'not been faithful'), and yet she herself could see that he had indeed received a great deal in life already. Singing, or not singing, was a key part of his interaction with God. Reflecting on this conversation in relation to praise and worship, she says that worship creates "an atmosphere of God's presence," helping people to get to "a point of acknowledging that whether their week was good or bad, God is involved."¹⁹⁷ Regardless of whether they think God is 'faithful to them' they are given an opportunity to thank him and "just have that atmosphere of 'Okay Lord, now I'm ready for what you want to say to me through your servant!'"¹⁹⁸ Music thus facilitates the atmosphere that makes people ready to receive God's personal communication to them through the sermon, and to experience God's presence.

Several of my other interviewees also used the word 'atmosphere' when trying to describe the role of music in church. A member of the Woodley Music team said that music "creates an atmosphere" where the congregation can "connect to God" and where their hearts are "ready for him." Someone else referred to this as music "piercing the bone marrow" and yet another described it as bringing hearts into a "submissive mode" where they are "softer" and more "broken" before God.¹⁹⁹ In a similar manner, Pastor Kamau in Mavuno used

196 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

197 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

198 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

199 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

the expression “a very lively atmosphere” when explaining the attraction that a pentecostal church had for him as a child. Compared to the Anglican church they normally attended, this was a “very engaging church” where people were “loud” and “really engaged.”²⁰⁰ We may note the connection here between sound (being ‘loud’), embodiment, and affectivity in this type of spirituality, also discussed in Chapter 5.

Thus, ‘atmosphere’ is key, and it is at the same time connected to bodily action, sensory input, emotional engagement, and spiritual connectedness. This confirms the picture presented by Dagfinn Ulland, building on Csordas’ work, and quoted in Chapter 2, who describes the section of music and singing in the liturgy as engaging the body in “somatic modes of attention” and surrounding people with “a receiving atmosphere”²⁰¹ through ritual actions, bodily movements, and repetitive verbal elements. It also confirms the depiction by Mark Cartledge that, from a pentecostal perspective, “the Holy Spirit is mediated via both internal and external aspects” and the “ritual pole” and the “emotional or affective pole”²⁰² are dependent on each other: the Holy Spirit makes God present through emotions and rituals alike. Even though my research participants would not express themselves that way, they do seem to agree that embodied musical practices are central to creating the appropriate emotional and spiritual atmosphere to facilitate a God-encounter.²⁰³

Since feelings and emotion are so central to pentecostal-charismatic worship, it also follows that some feelings seem to be valued more than others, and are sought or even expected as part of worship. As Yong observed above, praise and worship “articulates a desiring heart in reception of divine love” and “unfolds the congregational or corporal affections of the church.”²⁰⁴ Understood as an ideal type, it is full of longing, desire, and love. For leaders, it is thus paramount to try and create the perfect environment for this type of longing and desire, this ‘atmosphere’, to arise. While people can come to church in any state of mind, once there, they should enter into an appropriate one through praise and worship. Only then can they experience the ‘crescendo’ and ‘feel elated’ as Pastor Rose expressed it. At the same time, as a pastor, she needs to watch over her congregation, to ensure that things do not

200 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

201 Ulland, *Guds Karneval: En Religionspsykologisk Studie av Toronto-Vekkelsens Ekstatiske Spiritualitet*, 221.

202 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 64–65.

203 Compare Althouse and Wilkinson, ‘Musical Bodies in the Charismatic Renewal: The Case of Catch the Fire and Soaking Prayer’.

204 Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 53.

get overly emotional. Worship should not be just “hyping yourself up” and “getting emotionally ecstatic,”²⁰⁵ she warns. So, as much as the emotional side is there, it must be balanced with other aspects. There is order to the right kind of atmosphere.

4.1.2 Modes of Ritual Sensibility

One important way to make sure that the whole congregation is at the same spot, following the flow and order of liturgy while experiencing the same type of atmosphere or affective state, is through a deliberate use of different moods, or modes, within the service. Daniel Albrecht refers to this phenomenon as ‘modes of ritual sensibility’, by which he means the “embodied attitudes” with which the participants “perform and experience the ritual”;²⁰⁶ as such, they “help orient and animate”²⁰⁷ each of the rites, actions, and acts included in the liturgy. Albrecht argues that it is impossible to attain a proper understanding of pentecostal ritual without probing the embodied attitudes with which rites are performed. Even though pentecostal rites do maintain a structure, a structural analysis alone will not suffice, since it is the sensibilities that give pentecostal ritual its vitality and authenticity. He identifies seven different modes of ritual sensibility within pentecostal services: celebration, contemplation, transcendental efficacy, penitent/ purgation, ecstasy, improvisation, and ceremony. “Theoretically,” he says, “any rite or practice could be matched with any mode of embodied attitude,” although some “seem more appropriate to particular rites”²⁰⁸ than others. For example, a ceremonial mode is more common in the transitional rites and a pragmatic mode of ‘transcendental efficacy’ characterizes the altar/response time.

In his study, the rite of worship and praise was found to be connected primarily to the ‘mode of celebration’ and the ‘mode of contemplation’. The celebrative mode “takes root in the action and attitude of *play*,” Albrecht says, which is “an attitude characterized by expressiveness and a quality of spontaneity.”²⁰⁹ Since this mode usually begins the whole service, Albrecht suggests that it sets a boundary between “the world of the commonplace (the mundane)” and “Pentecostal liturgical worship”;²¹⁰ thus, celebration, “with its play-like quality,” frames the whole of pentecostal ritual and provides a way to “shut out all the

205 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

206 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 179.

207 Albrecht, 177.

208 Albrecht, 179.

209 Albrecht, 180–81. Emphasis in original.

210 Albrecht, 181.

influences of the week.”²¹¹ It creates that ‘mind space’ that Pastor Rose mentioned. Yet pentecostal spirituality and worship cannot be understood from the perspective of celebration alone; this would present a one-sided image. While the celebrative mode is important, it is not the only mode in a pentecostal service or in the rite of worship and praise. “Usually, a dominant celebrative mode precedes a dominant contemplative mode,” and both are “integrally linked to the music.”²¹² While the celebrative mode is one of ‘play’ and ‘expressiveness’, the contemplative ritual mode, on the other hand, is characterized by a “deep receptivity and a sense of openness to God,”²¹³ Albrecht observes. He continues, “This mode shapes the Pentecostal ethos. In the rites of the Pentecostal service and as an ideal for all of life, Pentecostal people seek to ‘be open to the work of the Holy Spirit’. They hold as an ideal and actively cultivate *docility* before their God.”²¹⁴ Thus, praise and worship is as much about ‘docility’ as it is about ‘play’. This picture is confirmed by my observations in Woodley and Mavuno. As much as worship makes people feel ‘elated’, as much as it brings joy and gratitude, it also makes the heart ‘ready’, ‘broken’, and ‘soft’, and puts it in ‘a submissive mode’. It is as much about listening to and waiting for God as it is about singing or dancing before God.

Again it is helpful to think of the two basic phases of praise and worship, and the associated “philosophy of worship”²¹⁵ described by Ingalls. As described in the initial ethnographic vignettes and discussed in Chapter 5, there is often a flow within the rite of worship and praise from up-beat jubilant songs to slower, more mellow ones, a structure that is well-known in charismatic circles around the globe. Sociologist Margaret Poloma explains the way these different types of music elicit different emotional responses by reference to neurology. In the first phase of the worship section, “Ionian music” is dominant—a type of music that is “associated with the release of dopamine and endorphins”²¹⁶—while the second phase features “Lydian music”, a type “correlated with a contemplative, relaxed mood that releases serotonin in the brain.”²¹⁷ Since both types of music tend to be used extensively in any given service it is “likely that the music played during the revival rituals can cause a neurological

211 Albrecht, 181.

212 Albrecht, 184.

213 Albrecht, 183.

214 Albrecht, 183.

215 Ingalls, ‘Introduction’, 6; see also Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* and discussion in Chapter 8.

216 Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 48.

217 Poloma, 48.

response that may be related to emotional, mental, and physiological changes in worshippers.”²¹⁸

From my analysis so far, it should be clear that the flow within the rite of worship and praise is a combination of musical sound and kinetic movement, each phase of the rite paired with its respective sonic landscape and embodied ritual action. Now we may add that the flow is also one of emotion, attitude, sensibility, or affectivity. It is a flow of different ritual modes that moves from celebration to contemplation, and sometimes even into yet another mode, “the penitent mode.”²¹⁹ Music plays a key role in these modal transitions, affecting worshippers in a very real sense, even at a neurological level.

Albrecht says that in the churches he studied, this last mode, characterized by an attitude of “contrition, repentance, remorse, sorrow, lamenting or grieving”²²⁰ was most likely to emerge during the altar/response rite, and not during worship and praise. Although he has observed exceptions, he says that if the penitent mode does occur during worship and praise, “it seems in principle odd” or “inconsistent.”²²¹ From my observations, this is also the case in Mavuno. Their worship is dominated by celebration and also gives some space to contemplation, while I did not observe cases of the penitent mode in connection to music. There were cases when it surfaced briefly at the time of altar/response, and it is possible that it does occur in other ritual settings, such as in small groups or on worship nights, but in the Sunday services that I observed it had a very restricted role. This, however, is not the case in Woodley.

In Woodley, a ‘penitent mode’ dominates the liturgy at the time of communion, marked, for example, by a solemn tone of voice and a quiet demeanour, and since communion is normally integrated into, or at least held in conjunction with the rite of worship and praise, this also affects musical choices. In my interview with her, Pastor Rose narrated a situation in which the time for communion was approaching and the worship leader of the day “still had really nice vibrant songs” with “a celebratory tone.”²²² The Senior Pastor then leaned over to her (they were both seated in the front row), saying, “When is she going to get into the communion spirit?”²²³ And although Rose promised to help him once they got to the front (meaning that she would aid him with a musical transition before the eucharist), “they still said at second service, ‘Please bring

218 Poloma, 48.

219 Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 184.

220 Albrecht, 184.

221 Albrecht, 185.

222 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

223 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

the slower song earlier so we go into a reflective spirit and mood in the communion time".²²⁴ It is as if the next sequence of the liturgy could not be celebrated correctly if the ritual action and the ritual mode were out of step with each other. The music had to move from a 'celebratory tone' into a 'reflective spirit and mood' before communion could start. Worship leaders in training must learn to 'get it right': that is, to bring in the appropriate songs at the appropriate times of the liturgy, so that the flow of the service is facilitated and not disturbed. There is a certain sense in which the 'right affection' or 'right mode of sensibility' (*orthopathos*) must be in step with the 'right practice' (*orthopraxis*) for the liturgy 'to work'. If not, the rite may 'go wrong', as it were.²²⁵

Another aspect of getting the ritual 'to work' is for the leaders themselves to get into the right mood, to enter the proper mind space or atmosphere. Serving God and the community is not something that is done lightly or casually; it is emotional work that involves the whole person. Thus, another way to consider the affective dimensions of worship is to ponder the feelings of those who minister in worship, a discussion to which we now turn.

4.2 *The Emotions of a Worship Leader*

Above, I have discussed the emotional significance of music on a group level: the affective states that research participants report, seek, or even expect to have in connection to worship, as well as the flow of different moods within the service. In this section, I change my perspective to deal with the personal emotions of worship leaders. Rather than examining what the congregation experiences, or what the leaders try to facilitate or achieve in terms of atmosphere and modality, we now look at how they themselves handle the situation of leading a large group of people in an emotionally engaging activity. I concentrate on what Pastor Josh from Mavuno told me, since he was the one who was most open about his own feelings, and shared them with me on this aspect of his task. Other interviewees hinted at similar emotions, but none gave me a close account. Pastor Josh was one of the last to be interviewed and, benefitting from my findings up to that point, I was motivated to question him directly on the matter.

Before answering my question on how he feels when he is on stage leading worship, and how he feels before and after, Pastor Josh explains how he sees his role as a worship leader. He says that he sees himself as a "facilitator,"

²²⁴ Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

²²⁵ On ritual disruption, see, for example, Hüsken, *When Rituals Go Wrong: Mistakes, Failure and the Dynamics of Ritual*; McClymond, *Ritual Gone Wrong: What We Learn from Ritual Disruption*.

someone who is “pointing people to God” and inviting them “to a place where they’re able to focus their life and everything about them to God,” a place where the congregation together can “call on God to just take pre-eminence in everything.”²²⁶ Since his role is to point to God, not himself, he knows that it is a delicate position that can easily be misused or ‘fail’ in the sense of not achieving the goal of worshipping God alone.

4.2.1 Before

With this as a backdrop he explains his emotions before getting on stage:

So, before I get on stage, many times I would say I’m actually a bit anxious because I don’t know how it’s going to go because, like I said, it’s not about how excellent we are, it’s not about how much we’ve rehearsed, it’s not about how good the song I chose was, but it’s about, it’s about all of us, including myself, being in a space where God is able to just come and just, just take His place and all the glory and all the worship goes to Him. Other than people coming to a place where they are, they’re in awe of our technical skills as we lead the people into worship. So I’m always, I’m always sensitive.²²⁷

As a worship leader he experiences a lot of tension before going on stage because he knows that so much depends on him. He is the one, together with his team, who is to make sure that people move into a different realm, ‘a space where God is able to come’ and ‘take his place’ and where ‘all the glory’ goes to him. He knows that their preparations are important but only up to a certain limit. Ultimately, the success of the ritual—whether the worship brings people into that receiving atmosphere where they are open to God and truly worship him—has to do with deeper aspects, including his own relationship with God.

Here the differences between an artistic performance and a ritual become clear. Conventional artists can happily accept most of the glory personally, and do not have a problem if the audience is ‘in awe’ of their ‘technical skills’ or think that they are ‘excellent’. But for a worship leader, this would be a failure, since that would give him some of the glory due to God alone. Recalling advice given to him a long time ago, Pastor Josh says:

I remember having a discussion with a worship leader I looked up to and there’s one thing that I was told that I will never forget. He says, “Every

²²⁶ Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

²²⁷ Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

time before you climb the stage, [and] as you get down from the stage never forget to always give the glory back to God. Do not take any of that for yourself. Do not think it's about how you were in the performance, but it's always about God." So that's something I've kept with me for over, over ten years.²²⁸

Conventional artists may certainly want the audience to have a deep musical experience and get into an emotionally engaging space, and they may not be overly interested in the plaudits, but it is not 'wrong' if they are. For worship leaders however, it is not appropriate to 'take any of that for yourself'; they must remember 'always to give the glory back to God'. This is a rather complicated role to have; they are expected to be good performers, good musicians, and to have rehearsed well, and yet they must cultivate profound humility and self-abnegation. The success does not depend on 'how you were in the performance', yet, at the same time, performance matters. Thus, Pastor Josh says that he is 'anxious' and 'sensitive' before the service begins; he knows that much is at stake, and he is not sure how it will work out. One can sense his tension in handing over the control to factors beyond himself: 'it's always about God'. As a worship leader, he is important, and yet utterly unimportant. He is to facilitate a deep and wholesome God-encounter, yet, ultimately, that encounter is beyond his control.

4.2.2 During

Once he gets on stage, things are different. The anxiety is gone and instead he is enfolded in the situation. He describes it this way:

Being on stage is, it's exciting. I love music and I love good music. And being able to have, being able to have music, and good music at that, and doing it for God is exciting. It's, I feel like it's, for me it's pleasurable knowing that I am, I am lifting up, I'm lifting up something that I believe will be of pleasure to God. So, I think it's exciting for me when that happens. And then being able to call people into that space where I'm able to make them understand and feel the pleasure that God will get and that they will also get from being able to worship God. So, it's pretty exciting for me and quite fulfilling as well.²²⁹

²²⁸ Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

²²⁹ Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

Although the task of a worship leader is hard, and the responsibility seems to lie heavily on his shoulders, Pastor Josh nevertheless experiences a deep fulfilment once he is in ministry. It is as if the spiritual dimension—‘doing it for God’—adds an extra layer to his experience as a performer. It is highly rewarding for him, not merely because he ‘loves good music’ and apparently enjoys being on stage, but because he knows that what he does will bring satisfaction to God himself. In leading worship, he is able to make the congregation ‘understand and feel the pleasure that God will get’ as well as the pleasure ‘that they will also get from being able to worship God’. To him, God is a God of feeling and emotion, a God who can experience pleasure, while worshipping through music provides the community with a taste of that same pleasure. Therefore, leading worship is a deeply satisfying task even at a personal level; it is ‘exciting’, ‘pleasurable’, and ‘fulfilling’.

4.2.3 After

Yet leading worship is also tiring. When asked to describe his feelings after a performance, Pastor Josh says, “I feel like a lot of energy has left me because it’s very emotional, it’s very spiritual, and also physically engaging as well. So, I feel tired.”²³⁰ Since worship engages him on so many levels, requiring him to get involved emotionally, spiritually, and physically, it also drains him of a lot of energy. To recover from this demanding task, he loves “to rest” and “be quiet”²³¹ after ministering. Again, he describes the position as being in a certain space or place where he can experience God. “I check myself into a space where I’m able to receive so I’m not giving from a place of emptiness,” he says.²³² In his own personal devotion, he enters into the ‘receiving atmosphere’ of worship, to recharge his energy and “get refreshed in God’s presence.”²³³ As a leader he must watch his own life, continuously restocking his spiritual, emotional, and physical resources, so that he is able to give generously to the congregation. Again, being a worship leader is a responsibility that he takes very seriously. It is fulfilling and yet demanding. And no wonder; if you are there to facilitate an encounter with the Divine, and your performance matters and yet it does not, then that is no small task. It is easy to understand if it feels daunting at times. On the whole, however, positive emotions seem to outweigh negative ones.

230 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

231 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

232 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

233 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

Here, it is worth noting the connection he makes between emotional, spiritual, and physical elements: between regaining energy and spending time with God. It is when his spirit is resting with God that his body is also restored; or rather, personal devotion is a place for both spirit and body to rest in the arms of his heavenly Father. This connection seems self-evident to him, mentioned in passing and not unpacked, yet it is clearly part of his understanding of worship. In this, he is in line with several other research participants quoted in this chapter who describe worship as a ‘wholesome practice’ that engages body, heart, and mind at the same time. We may think of it as another example of what anthropologists and theologians have tried to capture when saying that pentecostal-charismatic spirituality is ‘embodied’ and ‘affective’. It is also worth noting the close integration of affectivity and pentecostal theology illustrated by Pastor Josh’s comment that God can ‘get pleasure’ out of human worship. Here is an example of when *orthopathos* meets *orthopistis*, and *othopraxis* is the bridge that connects the two. Ritual practice facilitates an embodied spiritual-emotional experience of God, while at the same time expressing and forming cognitive aspects of faith, including images of God. Together these dimensions form a holistic practice of worship, an integrated spirituality that affects all facets of life: they become *orthodoxa* (more on this in Chapter 8).

In sum, this section has pointed to the critical role of music in cultivating ritual modes and moods, and demonstrated the close connection between emotional, spiritual, and somatic in pentecostal worship, a connection that comes through in ritual practice as well as in the personal lives of leaders. More research is warranted on the affective and embodied dimensions of worship, with close attention paid to the emotional experiences of being a worship leader.

5 Conclusion: The Embodied Character of Worship

In this chapter, I have illustrated and discussed the ways in which the pentecostal rite of worship and praise can be considered an affective and embodied practice. Throughout the chapter, I have grappled with this manifold issue—drawing on perspectives presented in anthropology, psychology of religion, ritual studies, sociology, ethnomusicology, and pentecostal theology—in order to fulfil my commitment to demonstrating the links between embodiment, spirituality, and theology and how these links may take concrete form in a liturgical setting.

The chapter has centred around an analysis of four key dimensions of embodiment.

The first part of my discussion considered the link between embodiment and community, especially through the theoretical concepts of interaction ritual chains and kinetic orality. My Kenyan interlocutors are in agreement with researchers from several fields that musical forms of congregating indeed foster fellowship and community; however, the discussion also observed that this does not exclude conflict or power plays among those involved in worship.

The second part delved into kinesthetic expressions of worship and elaborated on the ways bodies move within the service, examining the role of dance and rhythm, and the tensions that arise in connection with them. The discussion established the centrality of movement for pentecostal worship and spirituality, and its connection to key theological themes such as faith, the human constitution, and the image of God.

The third part looked at the role of dress, and the different take the two churches have on this issue. Where Woodley favors a dress code that signals modesty and piety, in line with their Holiness background and desire to accommodate older generations in church, Mavuno favors a stylish dress code, in accordance with neo-pentecostal aesthetic ideals, and as a way to communicate the Gospel to young people.

Although embodiment and affectivity are thoroughly intertwined, and emotion and feelings have come up throughout the chapter, the last part dealt explicitly with the affective dimension. It was established that some emotions are expected and sought out in worship, their emergence facilitated by the utilization of different ritual modes, while the lack of those same feelings may present a challenge for worshippers and pastors alike. Special attention was directed to the feelings of the worship leader and the difficulty of handling a role that involves such high personal demands physically, spiritually, emotionally, and musically. Together these four dimensions point to a practice that in its ideal form is deeply embodied and affective, and experienced as highly engaging by many practitioners. It also indicates the limits of such affectivity and embodiment, showing how tensions arise in relation to community, movement, dress, and emotion, tensions that are not always easy to solve. I hope it has become clear to the reader that in pentecostal-charismatic worship, it is impossible to separate the somatic from the affective, the communal from the individual, the practical from the theological, or the transcendent from the immanent. Worship is a holistic practice and must be researched as such.

The analysis above also makes it clear how essential empirical research is to plumbing the depths of pentecostal spirituality. As Amos Yong has pointed

out: “If pentecostal spirituality is deeply affective and embodied, as it has in fact been characterized, then empirical research should be able to shed light on at least some aspects of this phenomenon with analogical implications for theological reflection.”²³⁴ Having described pentecostal worship and ritualization in Chapter 5 and affectivity and embodiment in this chapter, the next chapter devotes more room to theological reflection, before I weave all these themes together in the last chapter.

²³⁴ Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 90.

Orthopistis: Worship as Theologizing Practice

The ancient principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, reminds us of the centrality of prayer to the formation of faith. Liturgical practice is a theologizing practice, wherein the words and actions included in the liturgy both express and craft theology. This includes songs and music: the singing practice of a church forms its faith in fundamental ways. Roberta King has underlined the importance of song in African Christianity by shifting the maxim to *lex canendi, lex credendi*,¹ a shift that also rings true in pentecostal settings across the globe. Hence, the faith of the church—*orthopistis*—can be ‘read’ from its worship—*orthodoxa*.

In this investigation of worship in Mavuno and Woodley, the time has come for a closer look at theology or, more specifically, the doctrinal aspects of their sung corpus.² For, although it can indeed be argued that theology and spirituality are inseparable in Pentecostalism, and that theology is more than doctrine—as I did in Chapter 2—it is nevertheless also doctrine. As a whole, this case study places worship in a concrete liturgical, theological, and cultural context and probes experiential, ritual, and embodied aspects along with doctrinal ones. However, my aim in this particular chapter is to explore lyrics, making a careful exegesis of songs used for worship in the two case churches. Through a close reading of texts and an analysis of names, titles, verbs, and pronoun use, as well as deciphering biblical references, patterns of what is believed to be true about God are uncovered (specifics on the methods used can be found in Chapter 3). The focus of this chapter is thus theology in a more classic sense, the sense of explicit belief. Following Archer and Saliers, I have chosen to call this *orthopistis* (right believing) to separate it from *orthodoxa* (right worship).³

1 King, ‘Bible: Lex Canendi, Lex Credendi’.

2 Note that I deliberately refer to this as a *sung* corpus, highlighting the connection to a concrete liturgical practice, unlike Michael Tapper who speaks of his selection as a “song corpus”. Tapper, *Canadian Pentecostals, the Trinity, and Contemporary Worship Music: The Things We Sing*, 133.

3 Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 11; Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine*, 40. See further discussion in Chapters Two and Eight.

There are many possible roads into a community's theology: statements of faith, sermons, teaching materials, publications, and so on. In this chapter I focus specifically on the songs used for worship, examining important theological themes and doctrinal content. It is assumed that the songs carry theological weight and that the lyrics both express and craft local theology. The sung corpora of Mavuno and Woodley include a whole range of theological motifs and I have not been able to include everything in this chapter. Rather, the theological content analysis concentrates on two main aspects: the role of the Bible, and the centrality of Christology for theology proper. These themes stood out in the analysis, and, therefore, I choose to include them here. In Chapter 8, I return to the theological content of songs when discussing the role of salvation, transformation, and integration in pentecostal spirituality.

The fundamental question addressed in the rest of this chapter is: On the basis of song content, what do these churches believe? The chapter has two main parts, reflecting the main theological themes that came out of the analysis: the Bible as the Word of God re-oralized into song, and Christology as the centre of the pentecostal view of God. In a theological sense, both have to do with revelation: the written and living Word of God expressed in concrete form through communal liturgical practice.

1 What Does the Bible Sing? Singing the Scriptures

One of the questions that initiated this project for me was the issue of the relationship between music and theology, between singing and believing. Other scholars have also pondered this question, among them pentecostalian Clifton R. Clarke. In the edited volume, *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, he proposes a theological method based on the musical pattern of call-and-response. The dialogical call-and-response pattern of audience participation has been called the “trope of tropes”⁴ of black music and is a basic structure in all kinds of African-derived compositions and music performances. And yet, this is not only a musical principle, it is also a spiritual one, as repetitive and interactive musical patterns have direct correlations with those that are repetitive and interactive meditative.⁵ Clifton Clarke explains the background thus:

4 Floyd, ‘Ring Shout! Literary Studies, Historical Studies, and Black Music Inquiry’.

5 *Cultural Theory: Black Music Part 2*, 2019, <http://sk.sagepub.com/video/cultural-theory-black-music-part-2>; Johann Buis, ‘Deep Structures: Black Gospel as Prayer’ (Paper, Christian Congregational Music Conference, Cuddesdon, July 2017); Mills, ‘Musical Prayers: Reflections on the African Roots of Pentecostal Music’.

In Sub-Saharan African cultures, call-and-response is a pervasive pattern of democratic participation. In 'call-and-response' drumming and singing, a leader plays or sings a phrase or line of music, known as a 'call'. The rest of the group, the chorus, answers back by playing or singing another phrase or line of music, and this is known as the 'response'. ... Call-and-response is the characteristic epistemological mode of an African universe in which everything is interconnected.⁶

Call-and-response is more than a musical practice, it speaks to a larger picture of the way people understand their world and interact with each other. It has to do with epistemology and ontology as much as music. To Clarke, this pattern becomes a metaphor for a "theological method"⁷ wherein the authoritative sources of theology interact with the way people respond to and interpret these sources.

Connecting his model of call-and-response to pentecostal distinctives, Clarke utilizes the key text in Acts chapter 2 to highlight the importance of sound, sight, and speech to pentecostal theologizing processes. The 'call' of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was an audible, visible, and verbal one, to which the disciples gave audible, visible, and verbal response. In a similar manner, modern-day Pentecostals in Africa experience the call of the Holy Spirit in concrete and embodied ways, responding with sound, sight, and speech.⁸

Explaining the background of the 'call' within an African traditional context as usually "initiated by an authoritative source," such as the king or chief, and warranting a response from "the wider community,"⁹ he identifies three distinct calls (sources) of theology, as well as a number of ways in which African Pentecostals respond to these through participatory and experiential spirituality (songs, dance, prayer, testimony, healing, etc.); these are: the Bible, African church history, and the African religio-cultural context.¹⁰ Ultimately, their authority comes from the Holy Spirit. Consequently, "in the context of this quest for an African theological method," Clarke defines "call-and-response as an ongoing dialectic between the Holy Spirit (the call) and the existential experience of the African people (the response)."¹¹

6 Clarke, 'Call and Response: Toward an African Pentecostal Theological Method', 28.

7 Clarke, 27.

8 Clarke, 36–39.

9 Clarke, 29.

10 Clarke, 29–36.

11 Clarke, 28.

To say that the Bible is the principal source of authority among Pentecostals is hardly an exaggeration. Many scholars have noted this, among them Allan Anderson who says that for “most Pentecostals and Charismatics, theology is inseparable from the Bible.”¹² Scripture, he says, is universally acknowledged “as the source of their theology.”¹³ Therefore, anyone who wants to grapple with pentecostal theology must also grapple with its hermeneutics.¹⁴ Comparing it to evangelical discourses on the unity and inspiration of the Bible, he says that although Pentecostals do agree with “the ‘evangelical’ position on biblical authority,” they are rarely “preoccupied with polemical issues” or “theological niceties.”¹⁵ He demonstrates how different the positions are in focus, with the (Western) evangelical position emphasizing “‘correct’ biblical hermeneutics” and “written theology,” while pentecostal positions “rely on an experiential rather than a literal understanding of the Bible.”¹⁶ What this means is that for most Pentecostals, their “purpose in reading the Bible is to find there something that can be experienced as relevant to their felt needs.”¹⁷ This happens through “spiritual illumination,”¹⁸ when the Holy Spirit makes the text come alive for every new situation. For Pentecostals, “the word of God is alive and active”¹⁹ as Hebrews 4:12 says, and so can speak in multiple ways with “experiential immediacy.”²⁰

Paul Gifford argues in a similar vein when he discusses the use of the Bible in African neo-pentecostal churches, saying that the participants in these churches “would presume the Bible is inerrant, but in what it promises *for me*, not in what it claims about history or science.”²¹ The historical question “simply

12 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 225.

13 Anderson, 225.

14 Anderson, 225.

15 Anderson, 225; see also discussion in, Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 249–69; and Gifford, ‘The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism’, 187; as well as Robbins, ‘The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalization’, 64, on the difference between fundamentalism and Pentecostalism.

16 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 226.

17 Anderson, 225.

18 Anderson, 226.

19 Hebrews 4:12. The verse says: “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” NIV.

20 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 226; see also Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, 266–69; and Clarke, ‘Call and Response: Toward an African Pentecostal Theological Method’, 29. A deeper discussion of pentecostal hermeneutics can be found in Yong, *The Hermeneutical Spirit: Theological Interpretation and Scriptural Imagination for the 21st Century*.

21 Gifford, ‘The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism’, 187. Emphasis in original.

does not arise.”²² In these churches, the Bible is approached as a “contemporary document,” a “record of covenants, promises, pledges, and commitments between God and his chosen.”²³ The narratives, primarily in the Old Testament but also in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are read as types or models for the current situation according to the principle: what was true in the past (of God’s promises) can be true today (for us, here and now). This leads to a performative use of the Bible, one in which God’s promises are declared, or proclaimed, in a ritualized manner through preaching. Gifford links this to speech act theory, which explains how words used in a ritual setting become acts in themselves. That is, the words spoken (“I declare you husband and wife”) achieve what they say (render two people husband and wife). Words are not merely words, but speech acts or performative utterances.²⁴ Providing lengthy examples from faith gospel preaching in Kenya, Gifford illustrates how promises are “effected in the believers’ lives through proclamation.”²⁵

Although I find Gifford’s suggestion that Pentecostals view the Bible as a contemporary document is a bit too restricted (it is, rather, regarded as both a historical and a contemporary one),²⁶ I think that his observation on the declarative/performative use of the Bible is very helpful. I have heard that way of preaching many times in Kenya and elsewhere and, as we will see below, it also has a bearing on the local understanding of worship.

Neither Anderson nor Gifford discuss the relationship between songs and Scripture in pentecostal theology. Anderson does mention songs as an important expression of theology, but he does not delve into it.²⁷ Gifford does not

22 Gifford, 187.

23 Gifford, 179–80.

24 See further discussion below; compare Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 68–69.

25 Gifford, ‘The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism’, 180; compare discussion in John Gallegos, ‘African Pentecostal Hermeneutics’, in *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, ed. Clifton R. Clarke (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 52–57.

26 Compare ‘precritical readings’ of the Bible, where the reader fits himself into the biblical narrative through a figural interpretation, discussed in Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1977), 1–50. John Gallegos refers to this interpretive process as an “interaction,” between text and reader, Gallegos, ‘African Pentecostal Hermeneutics’, 43; while Ulrik Josefsson prefers the term ‘transhistorical biblicism’ (*transhistorisk biblicism*) Josefsson, *Liv och Över Nog: Den Tidiga Pingströrelsens Spiritualitet. Abundant Life: The Spirituality of the Early Pentecostal Movement in Sweden*, 189; see also discussion in Aron Engberg, *Walking on the Pages of the Word of God: Self, Land, and Text among Evangelical Volunteers in Jerusalem. Currents of Encounter: Studies in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

27 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 227.

even make the connection, which I find surprising given the theme of “ritual use of the Bible.”²⁸ The use of the Bible is most obvious in sermons and testimonies, which is probably why most scholars tend to offer examples from those sources;²⁹ however, the Bible is no less central in rituals that include singing. This has been noted by Clarke,³⁰ who summarizes the African pentecostal theology of Scripture in the following manner:

Firstly, Scripture is connected to God’s historical self-disclosure or revelation. Secondly, Scripture as text is re-oralized through preaching, singing, prayers, and narrative in such a way that it participates in the oral universe of the African purview. Thirdly, Scripture is heard in the vernacular and, therefore, participates in the universe of African imagination, oral tradition and oral history.³¹

We may note how Clarke emphasizes both the historical and the contemporary sides of pentecostal views of the Bible, as well as the connection with orality, African culture, and vernacular languages. Through the rituals, the biblical text is ‘re-oralized’ in such a way that it becomes part of the African pentecostal universe. We may also note how he connects the Bible to God’s self-disclosure, explaining the theological basis of biblical authority as rooted in special revelation. When Pentecostals sing songs based on Scripture, they re-oralize the Word of God—ultimately, in some small way, reflecting God’s self-revelation in their own context.

The connection between songs, the Bible, and theology is, of course, not unique to Pentecostals; it occurs in different manners in all Christian traditions. Speaking of the African church in general, Roberta King says that the Bible “serves as foundation and source of African Christian songs, a workplace of theology.”³² Through a dynamic interaction with Scripture, in utilizing oral musical patterns Christian songs provide Africans with an important tool for

28 Gifford, ‘The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism’, 179–97.

29 Compare Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 249–69; Gallegos, ‘African Pentecostal Hermeneutics’, 40–57.

30 Land made similar observations about classical Pentecostals in the early 20th century, Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*; while Ruth & Lim has commented on this aspect in relation to contemporary worship music, Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*.

31 Clarke, ‘Call and Response: Toward an African Pentecostal Theological Method’, 29; see also Clifton Clarke, *African Christology: Jesus in Post-Missionary African Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

32 King, ‘Bible: Lex Canendi, Lex Credendi’, 118.

theologizing in contextual ways and for “embedding the Christian faith in the soil of Africa.”³³

I find it illuminating to think of a re-oralization of Scripture, since much of the biblical text was oral in nature from the beginning. This is true of the narratives but even more so of the songs. The Bible is full of songs, and songs sung in pentecostal churches constantly echo biblical texts, especially biblical songs. The question, ‘What does the Bible sing?’ thus becomes as relevant as the more common, ‘What does the Bible say?’ Another way of posing the question guiding the analysis in this section is to ask, ‘In what way do songs in Woodley and Mavuno re-oralize biblical ways of singing?’—but that is far too complicated for a heading.

In what follows, I illustrate the relationship between songs, Scripture, and theology, using several different approaches. First, I examine local understandings of the relationship, then I look at how two specific biblical texts (songs) reoccur in lyrics, and lastly, provide an analysis of the sung corpus in terms of its functional likeness to the Psalter. Throughout the chapter, I have included references to relevant passages from the Bible to further underline the connection.

1.1 *Emic Voices on the Bible in Worship*

1.1.1 Spreading Kingdom Propaganda

What is the relationship between songs, Scripture, and theology? How do local Pentecostals see it? One way to answer this is to listen to how the Mavuno music team discussed the issue when I met them for a group interview. One of the participants commented on my being a theologian, saying:

You, you said something that when you mentioned that you’re a theologian, um, something that we do, some of us don’t even know that we do it, but we, with our music and our song selection we actually teach doctrine because we know a lot of the people who come here are not churching so they don’t know certain things about God—the stuff that we take for granted. So, we are very deliberate.... Um, and it’s not something that’s new, um, like our forefathers in the faith have done it time and time again, where they [pause]. Like, it’s a deep theological truth, but they might not read the book about it, so let’s put it into a song so that we can get it [chuckles]. Yeah.³⁴

33 King, 120.

34 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02, M61.

To him, it is apparent that the music and song selection teach doctrine, especially to people who may not ‘read the book about it’. Since some of the people that come to Mavuno are ‘not churched’, they may not know ‘certain things about God’, things that regular church-goers find self-evident. Songs become efficient tools with which to teach the basics of faith. He also notes that not everyone may be aware of the didactic function of music, but as a worship leader he has learnt this from experience. In the interview he says that he can see from the reactions on people’s faces if they are struggling with the message, and also when it comes through to them. However, he also notes that teaching doctrine through music is not a novelty in Christian theology: ‘our forefathers in the faith have done it time and time again’.

The conversation continues in the group, with others noting the importance of art for communication in general and that in all cultures, art contributes to communicating cultural or political messages. Someone gives the example of World War II, saying that the Nazi politicians could not state clearly to people what they were up to; instead, they put their ideologies into songs and music. Likening war in the civil realm to war in the spiritual realm, they ponder the role of music in spiritual warfare. Half-jokingly someone says about the music team, “We are spreading propaganda. Kingdom propaganda.”³⁵ Some of the others in the group chuckle at his choice of words, but seem to agree. People learn where they belong, and who they are in Christ, through songs. At the same time, music can also bring “relief and comfort” in times of war, one of the other team members says. In situations where “there is no harmony, song is the one way that people, you know, bring harmony back.”³⁶ She asks rhetorically: in the battle where “the kingdom of darkness” is “fighting the kingdom of God ... how do we address this case?” and answers her own question, “It is through a song.”³⁷ Music can help win the battle. It builds community and identity, communicates faith and brings harmony back.

1.1.2 We Sing the Word of God

The function, however, is understood not solely as a matter of ‘teaching’, ‘communication’, or even ‘propaganda’. They are keen to underline that there is a prophetic dimension in songs that has to do with connections to the biblical texts. Songs, they say, are not just words, “they are prophecies and proclamations,”³⁸ speaking God’s truth over the music team and the congregation

35 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02, M61.

36 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02, F86.

37 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02, F86.

38 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02, F93.

alike. Even when people do not understand what they are singing, they are still doing something deeply meaningful, changing the spiritual realm along with their own identities. The following exchange in the group illustrates the general view:

F90: So, it's a powerful thing, yeah, because you can't just go around saying "I'm on top of the devil," as in [pause] that will manifest.

F91: Yeah, that will manifest in your life.

F92: Whether you mean it or not.

F90: Whether you mean it or not. And so, um, one that is a catchy song and people will sing it—whether they understand it or not, it is already meaningful, like it's already sunk somewhere in your life, it will manifest.

F94: I love what you're saying, because what we sing, we sing the Word of God.

F93: Yeah, and there's no way the Word of God will go forth and not accomplish something.

The group: Mmm.

F93: Yeah.

F94: It will not come back in vain.³⁹

To these worship leaders, singing is a 'powerful thing', precisely because they 'sing the Word of God'. If people sing that they are 'on top of the Devil', then this will have concrete bearing on their lives. In some way or the other 'it will manifest'. They do not merely learn something; rather, they and their circumstances are transformed via biblically informed music. This is motivated by reference to a quote from Isaiah 55:11 in which God says,

so is my word that goes out from my mouth.
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.⁴⁰

Scripture is thought to manifest itself—that is, become real—through its own power, regardless of human understanding. The Word is never preached (or sung) in vain, it always achieves its own purpose. Similar sentiments were also shared by the Woodley worship team, who said that the songs are "from the

39 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02.

40 Isa. 55:11, NIV.

Word” or contain stanzas that are “declarations” from the Bible, and therefore bring people to Christ.⁴¹

This seems to suggest that songs have a performative function in the sense of the speech act theory discussed by Gifford. When words are ‘spoken’—or rather sung—in the ritual context, they accomplish what they say. It is not just pentecostal preaching that uses the Bible in this declarative or performative manner, songs do likewise. Music does not merely *teach* people who they are in Christ, but it *proclaims* them so. As people sing that they are “a chosen generation,”⁴² (for example), they become just that. This does not happen haphazardly, or with any type of song; the prophetic power of music is connected to a specific understanding of the Bible. From a pentecostal perspective, it is a matter of the spiritual power of the text, whereby the Word of God is ‘alive and active’ and accomplishing God’s purposes in the lives of worshippers. Thus, authority is transferred from the biblical text to songs, so that they borrow the transformative and creative capacity of Scripture.

The worship teams of both churches are convinced that their songs are ‘taken from the Word’, but are they right? Do the lyrics contain stanzas from the Bible? Do they really ‘sing the Word of God’? Borrowing the concept from Clarke, do pentecostal worship songs ‘re-oralyze’ biblical texts? If so, in what way? To me it is obvious that songs used for worship in both Mavuno and Woodley have a very clear connection with Scripture. As I demonstrate in the exploration below, I think it is fair to say that the Bible is actually sung in these congregations. This does not mean that the whole biblical corpus is represented in song, nor that all songs are ‘biblical’ in a normative sense, that is, in line with the total biblical message (whichever way that is interpreted). What it does mean is that references to the Bible are present in almost every song in some way or other: through direct quotes, as well as through biblical motifs and a “biblicized style.”⁴³ This close connection to the Bible also manifests itself through the structure and function of worship songs, a theme to which we return below. First, however, I show how two biblical stories recur in contemporary songs and function as theological motivations for sensory, kinetic, and embodied forms of worship.

1.2 *Tabernacle and Throne: How Selected Passages Recur in Song*

In their exploration of the historical development of contemporary worship, Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth highlight how important Scripture has been at

41 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

42 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02 referencing the song, *I know who I am*, by Sinach. Compare discussion in Chapters Six and Eight.

43 Gifford, ‘The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism’, 188.

different stages of this development. It is both a matter of writing lyrics based on contemporary translations of the Bible and of finding the biblical foundation for new liturgical practices. Among Pentecostals who have adopted these ritual formats, some texts have played an especially important role in developing a “Pentecostal scriptural theology for contemporary worship.”⁴⁴ These include depictions of worship in “the tabernacle of Moses, the tabernacle of David, [and] the temple of Solomon,”⁴⁵ along with New Testament depictions of worship at God’s throne and biblical songs, not least from the Psalter.⁴⁶

Similar ideas were aired by interviewees in Mavuno and Woodley. When leaders described why worship through music is important to them and why it is part of the church liturgy, they often referred to the Psalter and to the two related biblical images of tabernacle and throne. Singing and making music in church is like coming before God in the tabernacle, just like in the Old Testament, or at his throne, just like in the Book of Revelation. With the same logic, the present-day worship ministry is similar to the biblical ministry of priests, Levites, elders, and angels; in fact, it is a way to participate in that same ministry.⁴⁷ The focus on biblical worship models spills over into lyrics, so that many songs in their respective repertoires draw on these passages or contain verbatim quotes from biblical songs or prayers. Some specific pericopes recur in several different songs, and some songs allude to several pericopes with similar themes.

In what follows, I discuss two selected biblical texts and show how they appear in the lyrics of five different songs, demonstrating how the two related images of tabernacle and throne recur in songs and act as motivations for kinetic-oral-embodied forms of worship.

1.2.1 First Chronicles Chapters 15 and 16

This Bible passage narrates the events surrounding King David’s restoration of the Ark of God to Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite where it had been ever since a previous, failed, attempt to move it back from Kiriath Jearim.⁴⁸ This time, King David had prepared a place for the ark, a tent, and he had made sure that the priests and Levites had consecrated themselves for

44 Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, 111.

45 Ruth and Lim, 112.

46 Ruth and Lim, 105–20, 129. For the importance of the throne motif in Isaiah for early Pentecostalism, see Jacqueline Grey, ‘The Book of Isaiah and Pentecostal Worship’, in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Worship*, ed. Lee R. Martin (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016), 28–38.

47 Interviews Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02; Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08; Pastor Josh 2014-02-12; Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

48 1 Chron. 13:1–14.

their ministry and knew how to carry the ark according to the Lord's command. Some of the Levites were appointed as musicians "to make a joyful sound,"⁴⁹ and a man called Kenaniah was "in charge of the singing of the choirs";⁵⁰ their commission was "to minister before the ark of the LORD, to extol, thank, and praise the LORD, the God of Israel."⁵¹ As the ark was brought up to Jerusalem, with singing and music and shouts, King David danced and celebrated in front of it. Once the ark had been placed inside the tent, "they presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before God,"⁵² and then they sang, "Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done."⁵³ In line with discussion in the previous chapter, we may note just how kinetic and oral this ministry was: celebrating with sounds and shouts, song and dance. No wonder it is a favourite passage among Pentecostals, and one often mentioned by interviewees when discussing theological rationales for the inclusion of dance and song in the liturgy.⁵⁴

The song that is described as being sung when the ark was restored, 1 Chron. 16:8–36, appears in different manners in two of the songs sung in Woodley, *The Lord is Good* by Patrick Nakaya, and *Haiye* by Kaberia & the Klan.⁵⁵

As we can see from Table 8, the lyrics sometimes draw very closely from the text and sometimes only vaguely indicate or hint at it. Different aspects of the same passage may be highlighted in different songs. The first song elaborates more on the theme of proclamation and God's mighty deeds, while the second concentrates on his goodness. The order of the biblical passage is not kept in either of the songs, neither is the whole pericope included in the songs. The authors have chosen some verses and stressed these (most notably verse 34, where the same thing is said in several ways) and left some out entirely (particularly verses 13–22, speaking of the covenant with Israel).⁵⁶ The central message of both songs is to give thanks to God for his goodness. In addition, they

49 1 Chron. 15:16, NIV.

50 1 Chron. 15:27, NIV.

51 1 Chron. 16:4, NIV.

52 1 Chron. 16:1, NIV.

53 1 Chron. 16:8, NIV.

54 Interviews Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02; Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08; Pastor Rose 2014-01-31. Compare Ruth and Lim, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, 113–14.

55 In addition to 1 Chron. 16, these two songs draw on the following passages: 2 Cor. 5:13, 7:3, Ezra 3:11, Ps. 106:1, 107:1, 118:1, 29, 136:1.

56 Compare findings in Tapper on the scarcity of references to God's actions with the people of Israel. Tapper, *Canadian Pentecostals, the Trinity, and Contemporary Worship Music: The Things We Sing*, 183–85.

TABLE 8 Comparison between 1 Chron. 16:9–34 (selected verses), *The Lord is Good* and *Haiye*

1 Chronicles 16, NIV	The Lord is Good ^a	Haiye ^b (translation)	Haiye ^c (original)
<p>9 Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.</p> <p>12 Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,</p> <p>23 Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day.</p> <p>24 Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.</p>	<p>Sing aloud and declare His wonderful deeds, Shouting aloud His wonderful praises, Have your soul not forget His wonderful deeds,</p> <p>Give thanks to the Lord, He alone does mighty deeds.</p>	<p>I will sing to the Lord, for He is good.</p> <p>Yahweh, Yahweh, the earth praises him, Haiye!</p>	<p><i>Nitamwimbia Bwana,</i> <i>kwani yeye ni mvema.</i></p> <p><i>Yahweh, Yahweh,</i> <i>Dunia inamshangilia,</i> <i>Haiye.</i></p>

a By Patrick Nakaya. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLRQsg40qc4> (accessed 2021-05-10)

b Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam.

c By Kaberia & the Klan. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqw1r1ODPPDA> (accessed 2020-07-14).

TABLE 8 Comparison between 1 Chron. 16:9–34 (selected verses), *The Lord is Good and Haiye* (cont.)

1 Chronicles 16, NIV	The Lord is Good ^a	Haiye ^b (translation)	Haiye ^c (original)
25 For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods.	Give thanks to the Lord above all other gods.		
27 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his dwelling place.	Awesome glory, mighty wonder.		
34 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.	Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His love endures forever.	He is good, He is good, He is good, He is good,	<i>Yéye ni mwema, Yéye ni mwema,</i>
Give thanks to the Lord, for His love will never fail, His love endures forever.	Give thanks to the Lord, for His love will never fail, His love endures forever.		
The Lord is good, He is very good, He's very good, He's good to me.	The Lord is good, He is very good, He's very good, He's good to me.		

state how this is supposed to happen—namely, through songs and shouts—indirectly confirming and motivating oral-kinetic-sensory forms of worship.

The following text, inviting us into heaven, again paints a vivid picture of sound, sight, and sensation.

1.2.2 Revelation Chapters 4 and 5

These two chapters describe a scene where the author, traditionally assumed to be the Apostle John, gets a chance to look into heaven, reporting the events thus:

At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy,
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.”⁵⁷

And the elders fell down to worship the one on the throne, casting their crowns before him, paying him tribute. Then suddenly, something new happened. The Apostle saw a scroll with seven seals on it, and heard the voice of an angel calling out for someone worthy to open them. This made the Apostle weep at first, because no one seemed able to open the scroll. Then one of the elders reassured him that there was indeed someone who was worthy; the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the one who had triumphed. Then, the Apostle “saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne,

57 Rev. 4:2–8, NIV.

encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.”⁵⁸ The elders ministered before the Lamb, each one with a harp and a golden bowl of incense. Now, together with the four creatures, hordes of angels and every possible creature in the cosmos, “they sang a new song.”⁵⁹

This scene, including the heavenly songs that Revelation 4–5 describe, have inspired countless Christian songs, not least contemporary worship songs. The sung corpus of Woodley and Mavuno offers a few examples, including the global worship hit *Worthy is the Lamb* by Darlene Zschech, *Hallelujah*, by Israel Houghton, and *Unastahili*, a Swahili chorus picked up by Kaberia & the Klan. They each draw on different parts of the biblical passage, which the following chart in Table 9 illustrates.

While *Worthy is the Lamb* focuses on Jesus Christ, his identity as the Lamb, his death on a cross, and his elevation to reign victoriously, the *Hallelujah* song focuses more on the priestly ministry of God’s people, their status as set apart and holy and their worship as a sacrifice before him. The Swahili chorus is less elaborated in terms of text, but concentrates on quoting parts of the heavenly worship verbatim. All three songs express the passage’s central message of proclaiming God/Christ as worthy and places contemporary worshippers alongside heavenly creatures in front of God’s throne.

To me, the examples in Tables 8 and 9 of how lyrics ‘re-oralize’ biblical texts, indicate at least two things: (1) the writers are well-versed in Scripture and rely heavily on biblical material; (2) they make their own selection based on theological convictions and appropriateness to the present-day context. Biblical texts are not included in songs haphazardly but according to certain ideals of worship and with the aim of fostering those same ideals in the congregation. Thus, text and context interact to form theological convictions in a communal setting, and worship becomes a theologizing practice, expressing and crafting theology at the same time.

The same goes for the process of including certain songs and not others in the liturgy. ‘Biblically sounding’ songs are certainly favoured in Mavuno and Woodley: that is, songs that have a biblicized style, belong to a genre that resembles the biblical songs, or have lyrics that echo important passages. Not any and every part of Scripture is re-oralized in songs used for worship, but those that are, are in line with the general theology and understanding of worship. To say that ‘we sing the Word of God’, is a somewhat modified truth, for it is always a matter of selection and appropriation; nevertheless, if one misses

58 Rev 5:6, NIV.

59 Rev 5:9, NIV.

the biblical sounds ringing through songs, a possible key to understanding worship is also missed. The songs are part of a large theological universe, infused with biblical narratives and biblical motifs, and although not all congregants consciously think of the links to the biblical passages, songs contribute to a feeling of being part of the biblical story. Indeed, to be singing in church is at least partly to be ministering ‘in the tabernacle’ or worshipping ‘before God’s throne’ together with the angels. Those are powerful images, and they set the tone for pentecostal worship. I return to this theme when discussing theological motivations for worship in Chapter 8.

In the above sections, I have demonstrated how the two related images of tabernacle and throne recur in songs, while in the next section, I highlight the relationship between the sung corpora and the Psalter. The process instigated above is thus reversed; now I start in the songs and move to the text, rather than the other way around.

1.3 *A Psalter-Inspired Typology of Worship Songs*

1.3.1 A Form-Functional Typology Inspired by the Psalter

For this study, I collected a total of 90 songs used for worship in Woodley and Mavuno, forming them tentatively into two sung corpora, as explained in Chapter 3. Instead of categorizing songs in my analysis based on their musical style or origins, I decided to build a typology on the content of the lyrics and the liturgical function of songs. In this regard, I was inspired by the so-called “form criticism”⁶⁰ in Old Testament studies, especially that concerned with the Book of Psalms. Form criticism, first developed by German scholar Herman Gunkel, is a method of literary analysis that “groups the psalms by genre, and sometimes by content.”⁶¹ The main categories identified by Gunkel are “individual and communal laments, songs of thanksgiving, royal psalms and hymns.”⁶² Later scholars have developed this idea of categorizing the psalms according to form and content, among them Tremper Longman, who identifies seven basic genres: the hymn, the lament, the thanksgiving psalm, psalms of confidence, psalms of remembrance, wisdom psalms, and kingship psalms.⁶³

60 Michael David Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 69, 460–66.

61 Coogan, 460.

62 Coogan, 460.

63 Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Leicester: Apollos, 1995), 219–25.

TABLE 9 Comparison between Rev. 4–5 (selected verses), *Worthy is the Lamb, Hallelujah* and *Unastahili/You are Worthy*

Rev. 4–5, NIV (selected verses)	Worthy is the Lamb ^a	Hallelujah ^b	You are Worthy ^c (translation)	Unastahili ^d (original)
4:9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,				
10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:	Crown You now with many crowns, You reign victorious.	Hallelujah, Your name be praised in all the earth. Hallelujah, Let every voice declare Your worth.	You are worthy, You are worthy, You are worthy, Lord. To receive glory, honor, and power. You are worthy, Lord.	<i>Unastahili,</i> <i>Unastahili,</i> <i>unastahili, Bwana.</i> <i>Kupokea utukufu heshima na uweza,</i> <i>Unastahili, Bwana.</i>

^a By Darlene Zschech. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3217555/worthy-is-the-lamb> (accessed 2020-07-14).

^b By Cindy C. Ratcliff & Israel Houghton. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4194354/hallelujah> (accessed 2020-07-14).

^c Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam.

^d Traditional Swahili chorus, picked up by Kaberia & the Klan. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQnqsrkbpko> (accessed 2020-07-14).

TABLE 9 Comparison between Rev. 4–5 (selected verses), *Worthy is the Lamb, Hallelujah* and *Unastahili/You are Worthy* (cont.)

Rev. 4–5, NIV (selected verses)	Worthy is the Lamb ⁴	Hallelujah	You are Worthy (translation)	Unastahili (original)
created and have their being.”				
5:9 And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.	Thank you for the cross, Lord, Thank you for the price You paid, Bearing all my sin and shame, In love You came and gave amazing grace. Thank you for this love, Lord, Thank you for the nail pierced hands. Washed me in Your cleansing flow, Now all I know, Your forgiveness and embrace.		It is you [who] are worthy, <i>Ni wewe wastahili</i> , It is you [who] are worthy, <i>Ni wewe wastahili, Bwana</i> . Lord.	

TABLE 9 Comparison between Rev. 4–5 (selected verses), *Worthy is the Lamb, Hallelujah* and *Unastahili/You are Worthy* (cont.)

Rev. 4–5, NIV (selected verses)	Worthy is the Lamb	Hallelujah	You are Worthy (translation)	Unastahili (original)
¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”		Let our worship rise to You, Jesus. Let the fragrance please Your Heart. Pure in spirit and in truth, Jesus Hear our passion hear our cry Set apart and called Your own, Jesus Hear our passion hear our cry		
¹² In a loud voice they were saying: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”	Worthy is the Lamb, Seated on the throne, Crown You now with many crowns, You reign victorious, Worthy is the Lamb, Worthy is the Lamb, Worthy is the Lamb, Worthy is the Lamb,	Shout to the King of Glory, Jesus. Worthy, so worthy You are.	You are worthy, You are worthy, You are worthy, Lord	Unastahili Unastahili, Unastahili, Bwana

TABLE 9 Comparison between Rev. 4–5 (selected verses), *Worthy is the Lamb, Hallelujah and Unastahili/You are Worthy* (cont.)

Rev. 4–5, NIV (selected verses)	Worthy is the Lamb	Hallelujah ¹³	You are Worthy (translation)	Unastahili- (original)
<p>¹³ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:</p>			<p>To receive glory, honor, and power, You are worthy, Lord</p>	<p>Kupokea utukufu heshima na uweza, Unastahili, Bwana</p>
<p>“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”</p>				
<p>¹⁴ The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.</p>		<p>Humbly we approach Your throne, Jesus. To behold Your holiness Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, Amen.</p>		

Working with lyrics from Woodley and Mavuno, I was intrigued by the number of biblical references in their songs, and by the fact that they themselves often referred to the Old Testament when discussing their rituals and use of music.⁶⁴ In addition, the importance of the Old Testament for African Christianity, and its affinity with African life-worlds, has been noted by several scholars, for example Matti Peltola, Knut Holter, Gerald West, and Musa Dube.⁶⁵ Therefore, I thought it was not too far-fetched to borrow some of Longman's basic genres for my own typology (in some cases re-naming them), adding other categories as I saw fit, depending on the data. Ultimately, I identified thirteen types altogether, and divided them into three larger groups: *God-oriented*—doxology (equivalent to 'hymns' in Longman's categorization), thanksgiving, proclamation (equivalent to 'kingship psalms'); *interaction-oriented*—lament, confidence, personal prayer, invocation, sacrament, sacrifice; *community-oriented*—testimony (equivalent to 'psalms of remembrance'), teaching, thematic-seasonal, and identity-building.

In what follows, I provide extensive examples of categories that have a counterpart in the Psalter, since my point is to highlight this link between charismatic worship and the Psalter (as also discussed by several other scholars),⁶⁶ while describing the rest of the categories somewhat more briefly. The point here is less the categorization itself (there are always many different ways to organize data), but the connection with biblical texts and literary structures. I have called this a 'form-functional typology', since it is not, strictly speaking, a formal, literary analysis according to all the standards of form criticism; rather it focuses on a combination of form (content-genre) and function (what it 'does' within the liturgy). At the end of this section, a table presents the sum of each type in the respective corpora. As in the Old Testament, there is considerable overlap between the types,⁶⁷ and many songs belong to more than one category.

64 Interview Mavuno Music Team 2014-02-02; Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08; Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21; Pastor Josh 2014-02-12; Pastor Rose 2013-01-20.

65 Holter, *Yahweh in Africa: Essays on Africa and the Old Testament*; Matti Peltola, *Vanhan Testamentin Käyttämistä Afrikassa (On the Use of the Old Testament in Africa, English Summary Pp. 79–86)* (Helsinki: Annales Societatis Missiologicae Fennicae V. The Finnish Society for Missionary Research, 1961); Gerald O. West and Musa W. Dube Shomanah, eds., *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

66 See, for example, David Davage, *7 Myter om Lovsång: Och Vad Bibeln Egentligen Säger* (Umeå: Davidmedia, 2020); Martin, 'The Book of Psalms and Pentecostal Worship'; Ruth and Lim, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, 108–11.

67 Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, 460.

1.3.2 God-Oriented Songs

One might be inclined to think that songs of worship are all ‘God-oriented’, since the whole point of worship is to worship God, and in a general sense they are (i.e., dealing with Christian faith rather than arbitrary topics); yet, in a more specific sense, many are just as focused on the God-human interaction, or the community, as on God himself. The entire focus of songs in this group, however, is on the non-human side of worship: on giving God honour for who he is (‘doxology’), thanking him for his goodness (‘thanksgiving’), and declaring his Kingship and power (‘proclamation’). In terms of pronouns, songs in this group can take several different formats. Those singing (the worshippers) speak in the singular or plural first person (‘I’/‘we’), and either address their song to God (‘You’) or speak about God (‘Him’) to others (‘you’/‘they’). Irrespective of pronominal usage, they say very little about the inner thoughts, feelings, or life-experiences of the worshipper and are not as ‘personal’ as the interaction-oriented categories. The songs in this group have a distinctively positive air to them, often combined with music that makes you want to dance or cheer (what Poloma refers to as “Ionian music”).⁶⁸ Ritually, they are most often utilized in the first part of the rite of worship and praise: the ‘outer courts’ of the tabernacle model.

1.3.2.1 *Doxology*

This category includes songs that give praise to God—what Longman and others call ‘hymns’—and it is the most characteristic genre both in the Psalter⁶⁹ and in my data. The songs focus on God, giving him adoration and honour for who he is. *Every praise*, by Hezekiah Walker, from the Mavuno corpus is an example of this category:

Every praise is to our God,
 Every word of worship, with one accord,
 Every praise, every praise,
 Is to our God.

Sing hallelujah to our God,
 Glory hallelujah is due our God,

68 Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 48.

69 Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 219. I have opted for ‘doxology’ rather than ‘hymn’, not to confuse it with the musical category ‘hymn’.

Every praise, every praise,
Is to our God.⁷⁰

Other typical examples include the Latin phrase, “*Gloria in excelsis, Deo!*”⁷¹ from the hymn, *Angels we have heard on high*, sung as part of the Alternative Christmas service in Mavuno, and the catchy gospel classic *In the sanctuary*, from the Woodley corpus.

We lift our hands in the sanctuary,
We lift our hands to give you the glory,
We lift our hands to give you the praise,
And we will praise you for the rest of our days, yes!
We will praise you for the rest of our days!⁷²

That doxology is a major genre in both churches is not surprising; after all, the whole concept of ‘worship’ in a pentecostal-charismatic setting, as discussed throughout this book, builds on the idea that God is honoured by the (sung) praises of his people. As I see it, this is a direct echo of biblical ideas of worship and music, something also underlined by the many Bible references in songs. The *Gloria* is a quote from the Christmas story, where angels sing, “Glory to God in the highest heaven,”⁷³ while the Kurt Carr song above includes a reference to Psalm 134:

Praise then LORD, all you servants of the LORD
who minister by night in the house of the LORD.
Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and praise the LORD.⁷⁴

Yet doxology is not the sole form taken by songs in Woodley and Mavuno. Worship includes many more aspects than ‘just’ adoration, including thanksgiving and proclamation among many others—categories to which we now turn.

70 By Hezekiah Walker & John David Bratton. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6623483/every-praise> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Mavuno 2013-12-29.

71 By James Chadwick. Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/angels_we_have_heard_on_high (accessed 2020-04-06).

72 By Kurt Carr. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3324039/in-the-sanctuary> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Woodley 2014-01-26, and played in Mavuno 2014-01-05.

73 Lk. 2:14, NIV.

74 Ps. 134:1–2, NIV.

1.3.2.2 *Thanksgiving*

Songs of praise and songs of thanksgiving are closely related.⁷⁵ Simply put, the former focus on who God is and the latter on what he has done, thanking him for his great deeds and goodness. Often songs include both elements, exemplified by *The Lord is good* by Patrick Nakaya, from the Woodley corpus.

Give thanks to the Lord for His love will never fail,
His love endures forever.
Give thanks to the Lord He alone does mighty deeds,
His love endures forever.

Sing aloud and declare His wonderful deeds,
Shouting aloud His wonderful praises
Have your soul not forget His wonderful deeds
Awesome glory, mighty wonder.

The Lord is good, He is very good,
He's very good, He's good to me.⁷⁶

This song alludes to the Old Testament liturgy, where varieties of the refrain “Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His love endures forever,”⁷⁷ occur in a number of texts both in the Psalter and elsewhere.⁷⁸ Another example is the soft ballad, *Thank you, Lord* by Don Moen, from the Mavuno corpus, where the refrain simply repeats “Thank you, Lord, I just want to thank you Lord.”⁷⁹ These are all songs in which an echo of Psalm 9 can be heard, “I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.”⁸⁰

1.3.2.3 *Proclamation*

Proclamation is a major feature of African pentecostal ritual use of the Bible, especially in the faith gospel sector, as we saw above,⁸¹ and something that is

75 Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 222–23.

76 By Patrick Nakaya. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLRQsg40qc4> (accessed 2021-05-10). Sung in Woodley 2013-12-29.

77 Ps. 106:1, NIV.

78 For example: 1 Chron. 16:7–43, 2 Chron. 5–7, Ezra 3:11, Ps. 107:1, 118:1, 29, 136:1.

79 By Don Moen & Paul Baloche. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4220833/thank-you-lord> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Mavuno 2013-12-29.

80 Ps. 9:1, NIV.

81 Gifford, ‘The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism’, 180.

evident in the sung corpus of both churches. Songs of proclamation declare the sovereignty of God and the Lordship of Christ over and against any other gods or powers in the world. In the Psalter, they have their counterpart in the Kingship Psalms, that either “extol God as king” or “extol the ruler of Israel as king.”⁸² With the new covenant and the New Testament interpretation of the Davidic kingdom, Jesus Christ is the King of David.⁸³ Within the sung corpora there are both songs that extol God as King and songs that extol Jesus as King. An example that combines the two categories can be found in the song, *Our God*, by Chris Tomlin, found in both corpora. In the verses, there is a clear reference to Jesus—“Water, you turned into wine, opened the eyes of the blind. There’s no one like you.”⁸⁴—while the refrain speaks more generally of God’s sovereignty, saying,

Our God is greater, our God is stronger.
 God, You are higher than any other.
 Our God is Healer, awesome in power,
 Our God, Our God.⁸⁵

In pentecostal theology, the sovereignty of God has consequences for the life of believers since it affects the spiritual battle around them. They can live in victory because of being on God’s side. The bridge says,

And if our God is for us,
 Then who could ever stop us?
 And if our God is with us,
 Then what could stand against?⁸⁶

There is a declarative, assertive tone in the song as a whole that proclaims ‘Our God’ as ‘greater’, ‘stronger’, and ‘higher’ than any other and the believer as unstoppable together with him. The lyrics reminds us of Psalm 135:5: “I know that the LORD is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods,”⁸⁷ as well as

82 Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 224.

83 See discussion on the Five-Fold gospel below.

84 By Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Jonas Myrin & Matt Redman. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/5677416/our-god> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Mavuno 2014-01-19 and in Woodley 2014-01-19.

85 By Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Jonas Myrin & Matt Redman.

86 By Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Jonas Myrin & Matt Redman.

87 Ps. 135:5, NIV.

Romans 8 that says, “If God is for us, who can be against us?”; “No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”⁸⁸ In the latter part of this chapter, I return to the songs that declare Jesus as King and also discuss how songs are used performatively as part of the liturgy.

1.3.3 Interaction-oriented Songs

While the songs discussed above say much about God, and only reveal the situation or thoughts of the worshipper indirectly, the next group of categories does the opposite. Here the interaction between the worshipper and God takes centre stage. Through song, worshippers express themselves before God: speaking of their hardships (‘lament’), hopes for the future (‘confidence’), need for God’s intervention (‘invocation’), and their heart’s desire (‘personal prayer’). Last in this group come the songs that focus on the here and now, what happens during the rite of worship: worshippers giving themselves to God (‘sacrifice’) and God mediating himself to his people (‘sacrament’). Most songs in this category speak in the first person, either singular (‘I’/‘me’) or plural (‘we’/‘us’), and so have a ‘personal’ feeling to them, as if speaking straight from the heart to God, or ‘personally’ about him. Songs in this group are often combined with mellow and soft music (which Poloma refers to as “Lydian music”),⁸⁹ and used in the mid or latter parts of the rite of worship and praise, (the ‘inner courts’ or ‘Holy of Holies’ according to the tabernacle model). Compared to the God-oriented songs, those that are interaction-oriented bring the worshipper and God into closer contact. If songs in the former group tend to depict God as transcendent, this group makes him highly immanent.

1.3.3.1 *Lament*

While the doxologies and the thanksgivings have a distinctly positive air to them, celebrating who God is and what he has done, the laments instead breathe of sorrow and distress, while the testimony songs (see below) occupy a middle space, displaying joy at what God has done and yet often also describing hardships and trouble. In the Psalter, many laments, while expressing the problems of life—which may stem from both internal and external sources (‘enemies’)⁹⁰—still include elements of joy when the solution to those problems comes in the form of God’s aid and salvation. These are features that also occur in Mavuno and Woodley, especially in Swahili songs. A few lines from the

88 Rom. 8:31, 37, NIV.

89 Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 48.

90 Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 220–21.

second verse of *Fundi wa Mbao* (The Carpenter), by Gospel Fathers, from the Mavuno corpus, will exemplify the tone of lamenting:

<i>Nimetafuta kwote,</i>	I have searched everywhere,
for quite a long time.	for quite a long time.
<i>Fundi wa kunitosheleza.</i>	[For] a carpenter that would suffice for me.
<i>Shida sio viti wala meza,</i>	The problem is not the chairs or tables,
<i>Ila nina mahitaji ya kindani.</i>	But I have inner needs.
<i>Nitaenda wapi wangu mwili</i>	Where will I go when my body is unable,
<i>ukizorota,</i>	
<i>Swali najiuliza.</i>	The question I ask.
<i>So, nahitaji fundi wa roho yangu,</i>	So, I need the Carpenter of my soul,
<i>atakayejenga nafsi yangu^a</i>	Who will build my soul [/self/spirit] ^b

a By Gospel Fathers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXmLqoiLbQo> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Mavuno 2013-12-22.

b Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam and Mika Vähäkangas.

In the above song, the pain and sorrow of the worshipper comes through vividly. His problem is not material needs, such as ‘chairs and tables’, but a matter of ‘inner needs’. Therefore, he turns to the Carpenter who can mend his soul and make him whole again. We may note in passing the innovative use of the title ‘Carpenter’ to refer to Jesus. Pain also comes through in another Swahili song from the Mavuno corpus, *Nibebe*, by Rose Muhando, that tells of persecution and betrayal, even by close friends and loved ones. One of the verses says,

<i>E Mungu, angalia kunena kwangu,</i>	O God, pay attention to what I am saying
<i>Na usikie sauti ya kilio change.</i>	And listen to the sound of my cry.
<i>Moyo wangu umechoka sana, Baba.</i>	My heart is very weary, Father.
<i>Kwa ajili ya wingi wa mateso yangu,</i>	Because of the multitude of my troubles,
<i>Nafsi yangu imegandamana na</i>	My soul is frozen to dust.
<i>mavumbi.</i>	
<i>Niokoe mikononi mwa midomo</i>	Save me from the paws and mouths
<i>ya mbwa.</i>	of dogs.
<i>Kwa nini ninateswa sana kwa ajili</i>	Why am I being persecuted because of
<i>yako, Babangu?</i>	you, oh my Father?
<i>Niokoe mikononi mwa watu wabaya,</i>	Save me from the hands of evil people,
<i>Fanya hima unisaidie nibebe.^a</i>	Hasten and save me and carry me. ^b

a By Rose Muhando. <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/ROSE-MUHANDO/Nibebe> (accessed 2020-01-10). Sung in Mavuno 2014-01-19.

b Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam and Mika Vähäkangas.

With vivid imaginary the song expresses an experience of suffering to which worshippers may relate in their own lives. The song is reminiscent of David's cry for justice and help in many of the psalms, including Psalm 69 that says,

Answer me, LORD, out of the goodness of your love;
 in your great mercy turn to me.
 Do not hide your face from your servant;
 answer me quickly, for I am in trouble.
 Come near and rescue me;
 deliver me because of my foes.
 For I endure scorn for your sake, and shame covers my face.⁹¹

Although songs of lament far from dominate the Mavuno and Woodley corpus, they are still present, and constitute an important balance for other more confident and positive sounding songs, like those in the next category.

1.3.3.2 *Confidence*

If the laments look at present trouble, and the testimony songs look back at what God has done in life, the confidence songs focus on the future, declaring the worshipper's hope and trust in God's help over the coming days. Unlike the laments, these songs often have a confident, almost triumphalist tone to them. They speak of a God who takes care of us, no matter what happens in life. In the Psalter, Psalms of Confidence often use "striking metaphors of God as a compassionate refuge,"⁹² such as a shepherd or a mother bird. Somewhat similar to what we find in this hymn from the Woodley corpus, *Leaning on the everlasting arms*:

Leaning, leaning, safe and secure from all alarms;
 Leaning, leaning, leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
 Leaning on the everlasting arms;
 Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
 Leaning on the everlasting arms.⁹³

91 Ps. 69:16–18, 7, NIV.

92 Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 223.

93 Hymn by E.A. Hoffman (1887). Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/what_a_fellowship_what_a_joy_divine (accessed 2020-04-06). Sung in Woodley 2014-02-02.

The worshipper has nothing to fear during the pilgrimage of life, but may lean confidently on the ‘everlasting arms’, sure of the protection and compassion that God has for her. She can have confidence in him, regardless of what may face her ahead. The song *Bwana u sehemu Yangu* (Lord you are my portion), a translation of Fanny Crosby’s hymn *Close to Thee*, is another example:

<i>Pamoja na wewe pamoja na wewe,</i>	Together with you, together with you,
<i>katika safari yangu nitatembea na wewe.</i>	On my journey I will walk with you.
<i>Pamoja na wewe, pamoja na wewe,</i>	Together with you, together with you,
<i>katika safari yangu, nitatembea na wewe.</i>	On my journey I will walk with you.
<hr/>	
<i>Bwana uu sehemu yangu,</i>	Lord you are my portion,
<i>rafiki yangu wewe,</i>	you are my friend,
<i>katika safari yangu, Nitatembea na wewe.</i>	On my journey, I will walk with you.
<i>Niongoze safarini mbele,</i>	Lead me on the journey ahead,
<i>unichukue mlangoni mwa mbinguni,</i>	take me towards the door of heaven,
<i>Nitatembea na wewe.^a</i>	I will walk with you. ^b

a By Elizabeth Nyambura. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4a-Ehd6HTWM> (accessed 2021-03-10). Compare: https://hymnary.org/text/thou_my_everlasting_portion (accessed 2021-03-10). Sung in Woodley 2014-01-26.

b Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam.

In this song the worshipper is ‘walking’ on a journey in company with the Lord. God is a reliable friend who guides and leads him all the way to heaven. We may recall the discussion in Chapter 6 about taking steps of faith, and learning how to do it via dance and rhythm. In Chapter 8 I return to this song once again, discussing worship as a way of life. Further, God is said to be the ‘portion’ of the worshipper, a reference to the system of inheritance in the Old Testament in which the priests and Levites did not get their own land; rather, the Lord promises to be their “portion,”⁹⁴ thereby providing assurance for the future. Similar expressions are found in the Psalter, for example in Psalm 16: “LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.” “You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.”⁹⁵

94 Num. 18:20, NASB. Compare Deut. 18:1–2.

95 Ps. 16:5, 11, NIV.

1.3.3.3 *Invocation*

Songs in this category are prayers that have a searching and almost desperate tone to them, calling on God to come and intervene with his presence, help or power. *Nibebe*, mentioned above, says in the refrain: “*Nibebe, nibebe, nibebe, nibebe*” (Carry me, carry me, carry me, carry me); “*Nibembezeze, nibebe*” (Comfort me, carry me).⁹⁶ Other examples include *I need thee every hour*,⁹⁷ and *Wewe watosha*, (You are sufficient),⁹⁸ both speaking of the desperate need for God in the life of the worshipper.

1.3.3.4 *Personal Prayer*

The same three songs could also be mentioned in the category of personal prayers—songs that seem to express the inner heart of the worshipper, speaking directly to God as a close friend or loved one. The Christmas hymn, *Away in a manger*, and sung in both churches, is from one perspective a thematic song, but at the same time a personal prayer saying, “Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay, close by me forever and love me, I pray.”⁹⁹ The Lord is immediately present for the worshipper, as close as a parent by the bedside.

The two final interaction-oriented categories have a different kind of immediacy to them. They speak of the here-and-now interaction with God, but not in the sense of interaction with God in life generally, but in the sense of interacting with God through music at this point in time. These categories have a ritual urgency to them in that they imply that the rite of worship is actually a situation where offerings are made and sacraments given. This sacramentality is important for understanding the role of worship in pentecostal spirituality, and is discussed further in the last chapter.

1.3.3.5 *Sacrifice*

Some songs present themselves as offerings to God. They speak of singing or worshipping as a form of sacrifice, clearly referencing the Old Testament temple liturgy, but replacing the burnt offerings with songs and music. This is also a common theme in the Psalter.¹⁰⁰ The most obvious example is *We bring*

96 By Rose Muhando. <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/ROSE-MUHANDO/Nibebe> (accessed 2020-01-10).

97 By Annie S. Hawks and Robert Lowry (1872). Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/i_need_thee_every_hour_most_gracious_lor (accessed 2004-06).

98 Swahili traditional chorus adapted by Kaberia & the Klan, AFLEWO (Africa Let's Worship). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQnqsrkbpko> (accessed 2020-07-14).

99 Attributed to Martin Luther. Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/away_in_a_manger_no_crib_for_a_bed (accessed 2004-06).

100 See for example Ps. 27:6, 50:14, 23, 51:17, 54:6, 107:22, 116:17, 141:2, compare Heb. 13:15.

the sacrifice of praise,¹⁰¹ from the Woodley corpus. Songs in this category, like *Withholding nothing*,¹⁰² which was sung in both churches during my fieldwork, also speak of ‘giving oneself’ to God.

1.3.3.6 *Sacrament*

Closely related to songs of sacrifice are songs of sacrament, the distinction here being that the first category of songs speaks of the worshipper giving something to God, while in the latter, God is the one who gives. In this category I have included songs that speak of God’s immediate presence, nearness, or gifts in the worship situation. One way to see this is that songs of sacrament and sacrifice together make up the category that in some circles is defined as ‘worship’ (as opposed to ‘praise’), the intimate singing that often takes place at the end of the rite of worship and praise (in ‘the Holy of Holies’).¹⁰³ Some songs combine the two themes, like the song *Take over*¹⁰⁴ by Tye Tribett, while most seem to focus on either/or, like *I come expecting Jesus*, where the sacramental tone is reinforced by an explicit connection to receiving “bread and wine” as part of “a holy moment in time.”¹⁰⁵

1.3.4 *Community-Oriented Songs*

The last group of categories have yet another orientation. This time, the community takes centre stage. Songs in this group create a sense of one-ness and together-ness in the community. They are there to build collective memory by reminding God’s people about his actions in the past (‘testimony’), to teach and educate in faith (‘teaching’), to mark the seasonal or liturgic rhythm of the community (‘thematic’), and lastly to build a common identity (‘identity-building’). Together they function as the cement for spiritual, theological, and ritual unity. Naturally, songs in this group often use a collective ‘we’, although the first person ‘I’ is also present, especially in songs of testimony. They frequently have a collective ‘you’ as their addressee, as if the choir/music team is speaking to the congregation, or the congregation is speaking to the ‘world’/ general society.

101 By Kirk Dearman. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/9990/we-bring-the-sacrifice-of-praise> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Woodley 2013-12-29.

102 By William McDowell. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7037764/withholding-nothing> (accessed 2020-07-14).

103 Compare discussion in Chapters 5 and 8.

104 By Tye Tribett. <https://genius.com/Tye-tribbett-take-over-lyrics> (accessed 2020-01-10).

105 By John Chisum & Nancy Gordon. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2119829/come-expecting-jesus> (accessed 2020-07-14).

1.3.4.1 *Testimony*

While songs of thanksgiving, mentioned above, often thank God in rather general terms for his goodness and mercy or his deeds in the past, the so called 'Memory Psalms' or 'Psalms of Remembrance'¹⁰⁶ have an element of the direct retelling of specific events in the past. In the sung corpus of Woodley and Mavuno, this takes the shape of personal testimonies, recounting what God has done in the worshipper's life, often focusing on salvation and redemption. Since the songs are 'personal' (in the sense of being sung in the first person singular), yet written by someone other than the worshipper and sung in a congregational context, they also build collective memory. This conforms with the tradition of giving testimonies as part of the liturgy in many revivalist and pentecostal churches.¹⁰⁷ A few phrases from *His blood still works* by VaShawn Mitchell, from the Woodley corpus, sets the tone:

His blood still works and I'm here to testify,
 God is not dead, He's still alive.
 The same blood that was shed, way back at Calvary,
 Is the same blood that's working now for me.¹⁰⁸

Another example comes from the song *Fundi wa mbao* (The Carpenter) by Gospel Fathers, mentioned above. The first verse says:

<i>Shida mingi [sic] mimi niliona wee.</i>	Many problems/troubles I have seen.
<i>Niliona mengi ya kuchosha wee.</i>	I have seen many tiring things.
<i>Toka mapande yote ya korna wee,</i>	From every corner,
<i>Shida zilizidi kuchomoka wee.</i>	Problems continued to crash.
<i>Nilimkumbuka mtu moja wee,</i>	I remembered one person,
<i>Huyu fundi aitwaye Mola wee.</i>	This Carpenter who is called God!
<i>Nilipiga goti na kumwomba wee,</i>	I knelt and prayed
<i>Naye fundi akaniokoa.</i>	And the Carpenter saved me.

106 Dillard and Longman, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 223.

107 Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 188; Gallegos, 'African Pentecostal Hermeneutics', 55. In Swahili this is referred to as the *Ushuhuda*, see recurrent discussion in Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*.

108 By VaShawn Mitchell. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7031270/his-blood-still-works> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Woodley 2014-02-02.

<i>Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel, ndiye fundi pekee.</i>	Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Indeed, the unique Carpenter.
<i>Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel, ndiye fundi pekee.^a</i>	Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Indeed, the unique Carpenter. ^b

a By Gospel Fathers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXmLqoiLbQo> (accessed 2020-07-14). Note that 'mingi' in the first line is grammatically incorrect, 'nyingi' is the correct format.

b Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam and Mika Vähäkangas.

Despite the many problems, the worshipper testifies that Emmanuel, 'the carpenter who is called God', has indeed rescued him. As we saw above, this song is also an example of another category, namely, 'the lament', as it speaks of the troubles and tiring experiences the singer has been through. Yet, in all the pain and suffering, Jesus came to save him and he can testify to that experience.

1.3.4.2 *Teaching*

Many songs are didactic in character, teaching the basics of Christian faith through song. They are loaded with theological content, often on a specific theme, such as the Christmas story, the Crucifixion, or telling the story of Jesus from start to end. Each song become a sermon in itself. Typical examples include *Cornerstone*,¹⁰⁹ sung in Mavuno, and *In Christ Alone*,¹¹⁰ sung in Woodley, both retelling the story of the cross in vivid colours. I return to them below.

1.3.4.3 *Thematic, Seasonal*

Since I did my fieldwork during the Christmas season, many songs that were sung in the two churches related to this theme. In both churches Christmas hymns, such as *Oh, come all ye faithful*,¹¹¹ were used as 'worship songs', according to the ritual patterns of praise and worship. Additionally, in the Woodley corpus there were thematic songs relating to communion, such as *Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?*¹¹²

109 By Edward Mote, Eric Liljero, Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan, William Batchelder Bradbury. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6158927/cornerstone>. (accessed 2020-07-14).

110 By Keith Getty & Stuart Townend. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3350395/in-christ-alone> (accessed 2020-07-14).

111 Hymn by John Francis Wade. Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/come_hither_ye_faithful_triumphantly_sin (accessed 2020-04-06).

112 Hymn by E.A Hoffman. Public Domain. https://hymnary.org/text/have_you_been_to_jesu_s_for_the_cleansing (accessed 2020-04-06).

1.3.4.4 *Identity-building*

Lastly, there were some songs that seemed to function as identity-builders for the community more than anything else. They spoke of the unity of the community, and connected them through their African, Christian/born again, or Kenyan identity. A song in this category, *I know who I am*, by Sinach,¹¹³ was discussed in a previous chapter. Another example is *Africa yote yakusifu*, (All Africa praises you), from the Woodley corpus, which identifies Kenyan ethnic groups and African nationalities and unites them in the refrain with the words,

<i>Kwa makofi, na nderemo,</i>	With clapping and shouts,
<i>Kwa Kucheza, na shangwe,</i>	With dancing, and praising,
<i>Hapa Kenya, Yesu, twakusifu.</i>	Here in Kenya, Jesus, we praise you.
<i>Hapa Kenya, Yesu, twakusifu.</i> ^a	Here in Kenya, Jesus, we praise you. ^b

a By Pastor Pat and Rev. Kathy Kiuna. <http://sifalyrics.com/lyrics/pst-pat-jane-afrika-yote-yakusifu-afrika-praises-god-lyrics>, <https://www.djomslyrics.iko.co.ke/afrika-rev-kathy-kiuna-ft-pastor-pat-and-jane/> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Woodley 2014-03-16.

b Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam and Mika Vähäkangas.

We may note the reference here to Psalm 47 where the psalmist calls on the congregation to sing praises, clap their hands, and shout to the Lord,¹¹⁴ also relating to our previous discussion on ritual patterns and embodiment. Clapping, shouting, dancing, and praising are all kinetic, oral, and embodied forms of worship that form identity and community. I return to both these songs in the final chapter.

Having now described all the different categories found in the sung corpus of Mavuno and Woodley, it is time to say something of the patterns of occurrence of these types in the two churches. As Table 10 below shows, the doxology type is the most frequent in both churches, which is predictable given the liturgical context of pentecostal congregational singing. A clear difference though, is that in Mavuno none of these are in Swahili, while in Woodley, Swahili songs constitute a good third. The second most common category in both churches is testimony, which may come across as surprising, but gains logic by reference to the pentecostal practice of giving testimonies. The songs act as stylized ways

113 By Sinach Kalu Okoro Egbu. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7115745/i-know-who-i-am> (accessed 2020-07-14).

114 Ps. 47:1, 5-7; compare Ps. 149.

TABLE 10 Frequency of songs according to type/literary genre

Type	Woodley (Swahili)	Type	Mavuno (Swahili)
Doxology	26 (9)	Doxology	14
Testimony	17 (5)	Testimony	12 (2)
Proclamation	17 (5)	Teaching	12
Confidence	15 (2)	Proclamation	11 (1)
Thanksgiving	12 (4)	Thematic, seasonal	7
Sacrifice	9 (3)	Thanksgiving	6
Identity-building	9 (2)	Confidence	6 (2)
Personal prayer	7 (2)	Invocation	5 (2)
Teaching	7 (2)	Sacrifice	5 (1)
Thematic, seasonal	7	Lament	5 (3)
Invocation	6 (2)	Identity-building	4
Sacrament	4 (1)	Personal prayer	3 (1)
Lament	4 (1)	Sacrament	1

to cultivate the tradition of publicly narrating what God has done in one's life within pentecostal ritual.

The order of the remaining categories differs slightly between the two churches. In Mavuno, didactic songs come third—hinting at the importance of teaching and discipleship in an evangelical setting—followed closely by proclamation songs, possibly hinting at a (neo-)pentecostal influence. In Woodley, proclamation is as large a category as testimony, again rather logical, highlighting the importance of the spiritual battle and the Kingship of Jesus in pentecostal theology. In both churches, confidence and thanksgiving are other large categories. The most unexpected result was that songs with a sacramental tone were not more common, especially since worship was so often explained in interviews as a meeting point between God and human. Sacrifice songs are a bit more common, but still a minor category compared to the top three in both churches.

It was intriguing to discover that the laments were as common as they were; sometimes modern charismatic worship has been accused of not acknowledging the sad side of life,¹¹⁵ but this is not the case here. Interestingly, many of

115 Compare discussion in Martin, 'The Book of Psalms and Pentecostal Worship,' 77–80.

these songs were in Swahili, as if the language itself is more open to addressing mixed experiences. In the African life-world the hardships and struggles of human existence are ever present, and it is possible that the use of language mirrors this situation. Where the West (*Ulaya*) represents success and a bright future, the African homeland (*Ubongoni*) represents struggles and a life best expressed in lament. These are two different (linguistic) dimensions of life, and they come across in the music.

Overall, the Woodley corpus includes many more Swahili songs, fairly evenly spread between all the types apart from the thematic group, of which there are none. In Mavuno, Swahili songs are less common, although some of the English worship songs included the local adaptation of a bridge or a verse in Swahili. Yet it is striking that the smaller categories in Mavuno contain Swahili songs, while the larger have very few; it is as if the more 'personal' topics of confidence, invocation, sacrifice, prayer, and lament are more easily addressed in a local language. The opposite pattern is evident in Woodley, where doxology is the most common category in both languages.

In sum, I have attempted to show two things in this section: that the literary form and liturgical function of worship songs is rich and varied—it is not all 'just' praising—and that the connection with biblical themes and texts is a real one. The previous section, where I demonstrate how two selected texts recur in songs, and this one, where I categorize songs based on an exegetical typology and show how a biblicized format filters through songs, together illustrate the close connection between songs and Scripture in charismatic worship. The music teams claim that they 'sing the Word of God', and, indeed, this is a fairly accurate description at a form-functional level—in terms of typology and literary genres—as well as at a textual level—with biblical texts being echoed in songs. Yet, as we saw above, it is a modified truth, since biblical texts, motifs, and styles are selectively incorporated into worship based on context and conviction. The 'call' of the Bible is given a local pentecostal 'response' through singing.

Having discussed the role of the Bible in worship, I now turn to the second important theme that stood out in my lyrical content analysis, namely, Christology.

2 Christology as the Hub of Pentecostal Theology

Pentecostal theologian Kenneth Archer has proposed that Christology, and especially the Five-Fold Gospel, may serve as an entry point to all pentecostal theology. The central narrative structure that proclaims Jesus as Saviour,

Sanctifier, Healer, Spirit Baptizer, and Soon Coming King, places Jesus at the centre of God's redemptive story, and invites the pentecostal community to take active part in the story as "the end-time people,"¹¹⁶ channelling God's grace in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. For Archer, all the classic theological loci—missiology, ecclesiology, pneumatology, eschatology, theology proper—may find their motivation and articulation in this narrative structure.¹¹⁷

Using an analogy from Ted Peters, he likens pentecostal spirituality to a wheel, with Jesus Christ as "the hub"¹¹⁸ and the Five-Fold Gospel its spokes.

The theological center is the person Jesus Christ, and protruding out of the center are the five spokes which serve to explain the significance of the story of Jesus Christ. The spokes are the central narrative convictions of the Pentecostal story. They are theological themes, which are doxological in nature and bring coherence to the Pentecostal story and provide stability for the rest of Pentecostal theology. Our Pentecostal doctrinal practices and beliefs are the wheel, connected to and stabilized by the spokes, while turning and spinning around its center—Jesus Christ. Pentecostal beliefs and practices, therefore, will always flow back to its center where it finds its ultimate significance.¹¹⁹

This does not imply that "Pentecostal theology is unconcerned with other doctrinal themes," but that "all doctrinal discussions in the end will come back to the theological center—the person Jesus Christ."¹²⁰ In what follows, I show how the sung corpora of Woodley and Mavuno revolve around Jesus Christ and that two of the spokes in the wheel are especially salient in their sung theology: Jesus as Saviour and Jesus as King.

116 Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 68.

117 Archer, 1–17, 65–82. Several other scholars have pointed out the importance of the Five-Fold Gospel for pentecostal theology; see, for example, Peter Althouse, 'Pentecostal Eschatology in Context: The Eschatological Orientation of the Full Gospel', in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World without End*, ed. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010); Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*; Matthew K. Thompson, 'Eschatology as Soteriological: The Cosmic Full Gospel', in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World without End*, ed. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010); Amos Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

118 Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 15.

119 Archer, 69.

120 Archer, 14.

2.1 *Patterns of Trinitarian Thought in Contemporary Worship*

With the precision of a surgeon, Wesleyan theologian Michael A. Tapper scrutinizes the lyrics of 103 contemporary worship songs in search of trinitarian doctrine in his book, *Canadian Pentecostals, the Trinity, and Contemporary Worship Music. The Things we Sing*.¹²¹ The songs were all popular in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC)—the mother church of CITAM—during the time period 2007–2015, and he utilizes data from the Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI)¹²² to form his sample.

Starting with the premise that the PAOC is firmly trinitarian, as evidenced in their statements of faith and their denominational history, Tapper seeks to evaluate whether there is an inconsistency between their explicit doctrine and the beliefs expressed in common songs. His findings show that there is indeed such a deficit, manifested in imbalances in how God is addressed, how his actions in history are described and how the relationships between Father, Son, and Spirit are referred to in songs, as well as in descriptions of human relationality and the world. Especially important in relation to my work are his findings on divine naming practices. Among the 103 songs, only three (3 per cent) referenced all three persons in the Trinity, while 54 per cent contained at least one explicit or implicit reference to the Second Divine Person, 15 per cent had a reference to the Father and—“Shockingly for a Pentecostal context”¹²³—merely 10 per cent to the Spirit. At the same time, 55 per cent of the songs contained vague or undefined divine names, while in 39 per cent of the songs, the latter were the only manner in which God was addressed.

When all the 1,335 names and titles are counted together as a cumulative sum total, a corresponding pattern occurs: vague or undefined naming is by far the most common, followed by implicit and explicit references to the Second Person of the Trinity. At the same time, a mere 3 per cent of the names referred to the First and Third Person respectively.¹²⁴ Given this “limited particularity” in naming the persons in the Godhead, “it follows that only modest and undeveloped examples of inter-trinitarian divine relationality were found within the song list.”¹²⁵ The same trends occurred when divine activity was

121 Tapper, *Canadian Pentecostals, the Trinity, and Contemporary Worship Music: The Things We Sing*.

122 CCLI is the largest copyright organization for Christian contemporary music around the world. Churches send in reports of what songs they use, and twice a year CCLI release the results and distribute royalties to song owners. <https://uk.ccli.com> (accessed 2023-03-03).

123 Tapper, *Canadian Pentecostals, the Trinity, and Contemporary Worship Music: The Things We Sing*, 178.

124 Tapper, 177–83.

125 Tapper, 190.

analysed: abstract, passive, and vague references were more common than concrete references to the history of salvation. References to creation, the fall, and Israel were particularly scarce, while references to incarnation and eschatology were present but not common. Redemption was the only phase of salvation history that was concretely referenced in a considerable number of songs.¹²⁶

Tapper concludes that the overall pattern is “a modalistic overemphasis on abstract divine oneness” and “an imbalance in naming particularity”¹²⁷ and that this is in agreement with the contemporary theological trends that Colin Gunton critiqued as a “‘flattening out’ of the distinctions between the unique divine persons,”¹²⁸ resulting in a bordering on docetic, even Gnostic view of God. Furthermore, the substantial focus on the Son and redemption, combined with “use of generic and sweeping christological titles” put contemporary worship at risk of becoming distorted by an “impoverished Christology”¹²⁹ that borders on “Jesus-centered Unitarianism”.¹³⁰ By overemphasizing God the Son, at the expense of God the Father and God the Spirit, trinitarianism is undermined and, instead, a view of God where Jesus Christ “assumes *all* the theological distinctions of *each* of the divine persons in the Godhead”¹³¹ is ultimately advanced.

In its detail and inclusion of so many songs that are sung in charismatic circles around the world, including in my case churches, Michael Tapper’s study is an important one when it comes to theologizing practices in charismatic worship, especially insofar as doctrinal content is concerned. At the same time, there are some limitations in Tapper’s work, as he readily admits. Since he uses the ‘Top 25’ list of songs (not the total list) and his sample does not include hymns (these are in the public domain and are no longer under copyright restriction), there may well be other songs commonly used in PAOC that have a different trinitarian profile. In addition, his analysis is purely textual and lyrical, and does not take into consideration the musical, liturgical, or local ecclesial context in which the songs were sung.¹³² That the analysis lacks insight into these hermeneutical keys ironically makes Tapper’s interpretation suffer from the same abstract and detached theological tendencies of which

126 Tapper, 183–87.

127 Tapper, 195.

128 Tapper, 196. Quote from Colin Gunton (2001).

129 Tapper, 199. Quote from Andrew Goodliff (2009).

130 Tapper, 200. Quote from Susan J. White (2012).

131 Tapper, 200.

132 Tapper, 159–61.

he accuses contemporary worship. Nevertheless, the results are clear and the study relevant for my own research based on the connection between PAOC and CITAM as well as on the overlap of songs between contexts and the joint Christological focus.

Other scholars report similar results from various contexts.¹³³ For example, Mark Cartledge includes an analysis of lyrics in his qualitative study of a British classical pentecostal church (also discussed in Chapter 5). His lyrical sample is much more limited in scope than Tapper's, but has the advantage of being set within an ecclesial-liturgical context rather than being purely textual. He analyses eight songs composed by the local worship pastor, five of which are based on Bible passages, especially from the Psalms. His results show that the "psalm-based songs are generally theistic, addressed to God or the LORD, but the others are distinctly Christological in focus. Even the hymnody that is based on the Psalms is interpreted Christologically, since the 'LORD' is interpreted as referring to Jesus."¹³⁴

The local hymnody lacks an explicit trinitarian grammar, Cartledge reports; instead, the "Christological centre is given a general theistic context."¹³⁵ The Holy Spirit was not "explicitly addressed as a person in worship," nor was there a "full trinitarian structure"¹³⁶ in songs. The same tendency was found in sermons, prayers, and general discourse in the congregation under study. Jesus was depicted primarily as Saviour and Healer, while the other themes of the Five-Fold Gospel were not represented in the sample of songs and were less prominent in general discourse. The "easy transference"¹³⁷ from the Old Testament 'LORD' to the New Testament 'Jesus', as well as the combination of a general theism, Christocentrism, and a weak trinitarianism is in line with broader tendencies in pentecostal theology, Cartledge states.

Along with a strong link between the Psalms and charismatic worship (as discussed above), the results of my lyrical assessment show a similar

133 See discussion in Tapper, 25–45, 195–228; and Grey, 'The Book of Isaiah and Pentecostal Worship', 44. This result also accords with those of ethnomusicologist Daniel Thornton. Out of the top 25 songs on the Australian CCLI list for 2019, the great majority address or reference the Second Person of the Trinity, a smaller group reference the Father, and only two songs mention the Holy Spirit. Daniel Thornton (2020) "What on earth are we singing? 2019 report gives snapshot," <https://www.etermitynews.com.au/culture/what-on-earth-are-we-singing-2019-report-gives-snapshot> (accessed 2021-05-11).

134 Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit: Rescripting Ordinary Pentecostal Theology*, 46.

135 Cartledge, 47.

136 Cartledge, 48.

137 Cartledge, 48.

Christ-centeredness, general theism, and weak trinitarian grammar, in line with Cartledge's and Tapper's studies.

2.2 *Jesus Is the Centre of It All: Not the Spirit*

Jesus at the center of it all,
 Jesus at the center of it all.
 From beginning to the end,
 It will always be, it's always been You, Jesus.

Nothing else matters, nothing in this world will do.
 Jesus, You're the center, and everything revolves around You.
 Jesus, You.¹³⁸

This song—popular in many charismatic circles around the world (including Mavuno at the time of my fieldwork), and drawing on Revelation 5:6 where the Lamb is “standing at the center of the throne”¹³⁹—serves well as a headline for the Mavuno and Woodley's sung corpus. The analysis shows that songs sung in my fieldwork churches certainly put Jesus ‘at the centre’, so that everything in a sense ‘revolves around’ him.

2.2.1 Naming and Addressing God

In my lyrical content analysis of the Woodley and Mavuno sung corpora, one crucial aspect was to map ways in which songs refer to God. What names and titles are used to address or designate God? To which of the persons in the Trinity do songs refer (if clear)? How many songs address God as Father? As Son? As Spirit? As neither? Are there any songs that show a clear trinitarian theology, for example mentioning Father—Son—Spirit in conjunction? Is there any difference between the languages? If so, in what way? These and similar questions have guided my analysis, and the pattern is striking to say the least.

The following table (Table 11) provides an overview of the number of songs addressing each person in the Trinity. The table presents direct ways of addressing/designating/describing God as Father, Son, or Spirit, or in similar terms. Songs that address the Son, for example, do not all say ‘Son’; they might say Jesus/Saviour/Messiah/Christ and so on. Sometimes the reference to a

138 By Israel Houghton, Adam Ranney, Micah Massey. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6115180/jesus-at-the-center> (accessed 2020-07-14).

139 Rev 5:6, NIV.

certain person of the Trinity is stated indirectly, saying ‘You’ and then speaking of the crucifixion, for example. The same is true of Father and Spirit. Explicit trinitarian theology refers to cases where Father—Son—Spirit are mentioned together in the same song, or where God is called ‘triune’. Indirect mentions are not counted in this table (for example the title ‘Son of God’ is an indirect mention of the Father). Songs can fall into more than one category since they may address or describe more than one of the persons in the Trinity.

TABLE 11 Divine naming, person in Trinity addressed

Number of songs addressing:	Woodley			Mavuno		
	Total	Swahili	English	Total	Swahili	English
The triune God	1	1	0	1	0	1
The Father	10	8	2	6	3	3
The Son	28	6	22	21	2	19
The Spirit	2	1	1	0	0	0
Unspecified or neutral name/title	29	11	18	20	2	18

In both churches the category of songs that address the Second Person in the Trinity is the largest one, closely followed by songs addressing God in a neutral or general manner (for example as ‘Lord’, ‘God’, or ‘You’). One might have thought that these were songs indirectly addressing the Father, but looking more closely it becomes apparent that many rather refer to the Son. Meanwhile, songs that address the Third Person comprise the smallest category in both churches; in Mavuno not a single song mentions the Spirit, and in Woodley only two songs do. The First Person is addressed in a few songs in each church, but these remain a comparatively small group. A clear trinitarian pattern can only be found in one song in each corpus, although often it is implied in other songs through expressions like ‘Son of God’ or ‘Word of the Father’. The total picture is unequivocal: in addition to being at the centre of faith, life, and everything else, Jesus is at the centre of the sung corpus.

Interestingly, when songs are differentiated according to language, the pattern changes. If only Swahili songs were considered in the Woodley corpus, songs focused on the Father are more common than those focused on the Son, while those with a neutral orientation are most common of all. In Mavuno, Swahili songs have a more or less equal focus on the Father, the Son, and

unspecified or neutral ways of designating God. Possibly the Swahili songs are added, consciously or unconsciously, to balance the doctrinal content in the direction of a more trinitarian theology. Nevertheless, since both case churches are English speaking (and, indeed, put a lot of emphasis on this aspect of their identity), and only a minority of songs are in Swahili, I think it is still fair to argue that the total picture is strikingly Jesus focused.

Methodologically speaking, this is a case where the singing practice in a local congregation may differ from the theological patterns of a certain musical category, which underlines the importance of ethnographic studies of actual congregational practice. Using a sample built on musical genre—for example, contemporary worship music as listed by CCLI—is not the same as using a sample based on actual practice. Compared to Tapper’s study, my own approach in analysing a *sung* corpus, rather than a *song* corpus, has a distinct advantage in this regard.

The Jesus centeredness of the sung corpora becomes even more apparent when names and titles are considered, as they are in Table 12. Among the eighty-five songs that I have analysed,¹⁴⁰ I found more than a hundred names and titles referring to or addressing God, the vast majority in English and relating to Jesus. Together the names form a picture of local theology proper.

Naturally, in some cases it was a matter of interpretation to decide to whom a title refers, and whether it should count as an unspecified/neutral one or not. In cases where the context of a general expression is clear—for example, when speaking of Jesus and then calling him ‘friend’—I have added ‘friend’ to the column of ‘Son’; when the expression is a general one, and the context is unclear or neutral, I have rather opted for the ‘Unspecified’ column. I have done my best to stay faithful to the textual context when deciding the column in which to place each specific mention.

TABLE 12 Divine naming, names and titles of God

Names and titles referring to:	The Father	The Son	The Spirit	Unspecified or neutral name/title
English	Heavenly Father	Blessed Son	The Holy Ghost	‘me’—not otherwise specified
	My Father	Carpenter	The Sacred Flame	‘You’—not otherwise specified

¹⁴⁰ 54 in Woodley, 36 in Mavuno, and 5 of them shared.

TABLE 12 Divine naming, names and titles of God (*cont.*)

Names and titles referring to:	The Father	The Son	The Spirit	Unspecified or neutral name/title
English (<i>cont.</i>)	My Friend	Christ		Alpha and Omega
	My Superstar	Christ the King		Deliverer
	The Father	Christ the Lord		Deo
	You	Coming Messiah		God
		Cornerstone		God Almighty
		Friend		God in the Highest
		Fullness of God		God Our Strength
		Giver of salvation		God of God
		Healer		God of now and afore
		Holy infant		Holy God
		Immanuel/ Emmanuel		Jehova/Jehovah
		Jesus		Lord/ the Lord
		Jesus Christ		Most Holy One
		King		My All in All
		King Jesus		My Comforter
		King of angels		My Friend
		King of Israel		My God
		Light of Light		My King
		Lion of Judah/Lion in the tribe of Judah		My Lord/Our Lord
		Lord Jesus		My Portion
		Lord of all		Our God
		Lord of Glory		Protector
		Lord of Lords		Provider
		Lord of my life		Redeemer
		My healer		Ruler
		My Savior		The God we serve
		Omnipotent Savior		The King of Glory
		Savior/ Saviour/ The Saviour		The King of Kings/ King of Kings
		Son		The Lord our God
		Son of God		The Most High God
		The Babe/ The Baby		The One I adore
		The Bridegroom		

TABLE 12 Divine naming, names and titles of God (*cont.*)

Names and titles referring to:	The Father	The Son	The Spirit	Unspecified or neutral name/title
English (<i>cont.</i>)		The Bright and the Morning star The Chosen One The Crucified The Darling of Heaven The Lamb The Lily of the Valley The little Lord Jesus The Root and Offspring of David The Solid Rock The Son of Mary Very God Word of the Father		
<i>Total:</i>	6	46	2	33
Swahili				
	<i>Baba</i> (Father)	<i>Bwana Yesu</i> (Lord Jesus)	<i>Roho</i> (Spirit)	' <i>Wewe</i> '—unspecified (you)
	<i>Baba yangu/ Babangu</i> (My Father)	<i>Fundi wa Mbao</i> (Carpenter)		<i>Bwana</i> (Lord)
	<i>Baba yetu</i> (Our Father)	<i>Kristo Simba wa Yuda</i> (Christ, Lion of Judah) <i>Yesu</i> (Jesus)		<i>Ebeneza kwangu</i> (My Ebenezer)
				<i>Mola</i> (God)
				<i>Mungu</i> (God)
				<i>Mungu aishiye</i> (The Living God)
				<i>Mungu wa miungu</i> (God of Gods)
				<i>Rafiki Yangu</i> (My friend)
				<i>Yahweh/Yahwe</i> (Jahve/Jehovah)
<i>Total:</i>	3	4	1	9

We may note two things in Table 12: (1) again, the focus on the Second Person in the Trinity is striking; and (2) the totality of divine names and titles indicates a richness and depth in the image of God—or, at least, a rich and manifold image of Jesus. He is the Carpenter, the Solid Rock, the Lily of the Valley, the Giver of Salvation, the Coming Messiah, the Lion of Judah, and the Son of Mary, to mention just a few examples. There seems to be no end to the poetry and imagery present in the songs.

However, despite the variety and impressive list of names and titles, there are very few original expressions.¹⁴¹ Instead, almost all are familiar to those who read their Bible, and have an acquaintance with Protestant church tradition, especially of a revivalist type. This can be seen from two angles: either as an indication of the lack of poetic creativity and freedom within these churches or as one of their close connection with the Church universal. My guess is that it is probably both. Song writers are somewhat limited by the liturgical function and congregational context for which they write, which may restrict their creative innovativeness and courage, while worship leaders seek to pick songs that congregants know and where the doctrinal content (including ways to address and depict God) is in line with the general theological orientation of the church and the wider ecclesial community. We may compare this with Maurice Bloch's perspective on the syntax of ritual language, where ritual restricts the use of language in order to exercise authority. This stylization and formalization of ritual language leads to a certain kind of "poverty" of expression" in ritual, putting much emphasis on form, while at the same time makes content "predictable and redundant."¹⁴²

The close connection with a Western Protestant tradition is also seen in the dominance of English expressions. That there is a redundancy of expression in English is rather natural, given that the Anglo-Saxon Christian musical repertoire is much larger than the Swahili one and has lived a literate life for much longer. It is likely that a predominately literate tradition develops a more varied set of verbal expressions than a predominately oral one, where a greater variation in rhythms, tempos, and tonality is instead likely to occur.

In Table 12 above, I have not separated the corpora of Mavuno and Woodley, rather putting all the different expressions in the same list and dividing according to language, yet a comment on the differences between the two churches is

141 "My Superstar" from the song *Superstar* by Chris Adwar, may be the only real exception here. https://www.last.fm/music/Chris+Adwar/_/Superstar (accessed 2021-06-15). 'Carpenter' from the song *Fundi wa Mbao* is innovative as a title, but the imagery still builds on biblical sources.

142 Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 70.

still in place. About a third of the expressions were found in both corpora, and the approximate balance between expressions is the same in that group as in the titles only used in Mavuno.

One aspect that differs between the two corpora lies in designations of the Son. In Woodley, the go-to name is 'Jesus/Yesu' and different forms of 'Lord/Bwana'. The title 'Christ' is only used in three songs in Woodley, and 'Jesus Christ' is not used even once. In Mavuno however, different expressions that include 'Christ' are as common as expressions that include 'Lord' and more frequent than 'Jesus/Yesu'. Here I think we can see the evangelical vs. pentecostal question in a nutshell. If Woodley leans more toward the pentecostal tradition—wherein 'Christ' has long been perceived as too distant a name and associated with the historical churches—Mavuno leans more toward the evangelical tradition, wherein designating Jesus as Christ is more commonly accepted. I have tried to mirror this local usage by alternating between 'Jesus' and 'Christ' when referring to the Second Person of the Trinity in this chapter. Interestingly, Mavuno, which seeks to be innovative in terms of ritual forms and language, is still rather traditional when it comes to names and titles of God, and not as innovative as one might expect. Doctrinally speaking, they are 'obviously conservative' as Pastor Kamau pointed out above.

Another difference is the proportion of neutral or unspecified names and titles. Among names and titles only used in Woodley, there is a relatively larger proportion of expressions referencing God in a neutral manner, which is due to the relatively larger group of Swahili songs. As shown in Table 11, unspecified or general names and titles are more frequent in Swahili, possibly indicating a view of God that is more holistic or unified, in line with African Traditional Religion, yet this is hard to say with certainty, since the total number of songs and expressions in Swahili is so small.

Although the general picture of naming and addressing God is one of Christocentrism, this is nevertheless combined with a strong theism, as evidenced in the large proportion of neutral expressions in both corpora. The breadth and mixing of metaphors in worship, along with the large number of names and titles that address God in a general, unspecified, or neutral way, could be interpreted as an indication of mysticism. Margaret Poloma found a similar tendency in her study of the Toronto Blessing and explains it as a "unitive process", a "returning to the whole"¹⁴³ typical of mystical movements.

143 Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 54. Quote from Fernandez (1986).

The one God is a passionate lover, a father, a sweet wind, a bridegroom, a warrior—to name a few of the images woven together to express Christian myth. Unity, one of the traits of mysticism, is a theme that sometimes subtly and sometimes more directly permeates the renewal/revival movement. ... Unity within the triune Godhead, unity between God and humans, unity among disparate groups of people are all frequent themes that can be found in revival music.¹⁴⁴

I will return to the connection between charismatic worship and mysticism in Chapter 8, suffice it to say now that the naming practices point in such a direction.

2.2.2 The Son or the Spirit?

Taken together, Tables 11 and 12 show with indisputable clarity that Jesus is indeed the centre of it all, and that the whole sung corpus revolves around him. Thus, the overall pattern in terms of how God is addressed is strikingly Christ centred, leaving almost no room for adoration of God as Father, Spirit, or Triune. This does not imply that either Woodley or Mavuno endorse so-called “Oneness Pentecostalism”;¹⁴⁵ they are clearly Trinitarian in their preaching and statements of faith (as discussed in Chapter 4). Nevertheless, the emphasis of this Trinitarian theology seems to be rather on the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, than on the Third Person, the Spirit. Thinking of Pentecostalism and how it is usually described by Pentecostals (including some of my interviewees) and researchers alike, as defined by an emphasis on the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts,¹⁴⁶ it is quite astonishing. However, the results of my study point in the same direction as those of Michael A. Tapper and Mark Cartledge, recounted above. The general picture of the two corpora is one of Christ centredness, with the other divine persons playing smaller parts and the trinitarian structure weak or unclear.

Theologically, these results also conform with the findings of church historian Ulrik Josefsson. Placing the early Swedish Pentecostal movement typologically among pietistic forms of Christianity, he says that even though the

144 Poloma, 54.

145 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 45–51.

146 See Allan Anderson’s discussion of typological, phenomenological, theological and historical approaches to the definition of Pentecostalism (all in one way or the other relating to charismatic gifts/ Holy Spirit) in Anderson, ‘Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions’; see also discussion in Chapter 2.

doctrine of Spirit Baptism is one key to understanding Pentecostalism, its main content was nevertheless Jesus centred.¹⁴⁷ To me, this joint focus on the person of Jesus Christ across time and space indicates a close theological link between the two urban Kenyan churches under study and pentecostal-charismatic Christianity in the West, as well as with earlier revivalist movements such as Methodism and Baptism.¹⁴⁸ The link is primarily theological, although diachronic and synchronic links certainly exist as well (that is, historical as well as present connections with North American pentecostal-charismatic Christianity).

Partly it is a matter of perspective. If pentecostal faith is compared to other (revivalist) Protestant traditions, its pneumatology stands out as specific and defining, while if pentecostal faith is measured by what characterizes it—rather than by what distinguishes it—then Christology certainly qualifies as *the* defining feature, judging from my data. It may also be a matter of how to understand ‘Spirit Baptism’ or ‘life in the Spirit’ theologically. Often this is regarded as part of the pneumatology of pentecostal theology, that is, the doctrine of the Third Person, while it may just as well be understood as part of its soteriology, or even its Christology. What I mean is that pentecostal doctrines concerning Spirit Baptism and spiritual gifts have just as much to do with an understanding of what salvation is (life in the Spirit/life with Jesus) and who the Son is (Spirit-giver), as they have to do with how the Spirit *per se* is perceived. In fact, discussions of the nature of the Spirit (indeed, of the nature of God) are rather rare even in academic forms of pentecostal theology,¹⁴⁹ while discussions of Spirit Baptism and spiritual gifts abound.¹⁵⁰ The focus is often

147 “Även om en av nycklarna till att förstå pentekostalismen ligger i läran om andedopet, är det bärande innehållet Jesuscentrerat. Det är en kristendomstyp som är tydligt präglad av den pietistiska fokuseringen på Jesus.” Josefsson, *Liv och Över Nog: Den Tidiga Pingströrelsens Spiritualitet. Abundant Life: The Spirituality of the Early Pentecostal Movement in Sweden*, 51, see also page 67–96.

148 The link between classical Pentecostalism and 18th-century revivalism has been noted by several scholars, for example Bundy, *Visions of Apostolic Mission: Scandinavian Pentecostal Mission to 1935*; Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*; Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*.

149 But see Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*.

150 For example, James D.G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-Examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London: SCM Press, 2010); Frank D. Macchia, *The Spirit-Baptized Church: A Dogmatic Inquiry* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020); Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Zondervan Academic, 2009); Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts: Then and Now* (Paternoster Press, 1996).

on the workings of the Spirit in healing, miracles, and deliverance, particularly in depictions of African Pentecostalism.¹⁵¹

Theologically speaking, one might argue that the role of the Spirit is always to point beyond himself and give glory to the Father and Son. While shunning personal attention, he points in the direction of the other two persons of the Trinity. For as much as Christ mediates the Holy Spirit as a gift from the Father, the Holy Spirit also mediates Christ to the church, and the worship of the church to the Son/Father.¹⁵² The Spirit is the one mediating between Son and humanity, at the same time evoking a response of adoration and gratitude. The Holy Spirit “brings Christ to us and us to Christ.”¹⁵³ This mediation has eschatological implications, for the Holy Spirit is “intrinsic” to the “in-breaking of the rule and reign of God,” since the “very presence of the Spirit signals a new age, and this new age has a christological focus.”¹⁵⁴ In a sense, it is only natural that a Holy Spirit movement should thus become a Jesus movement.

We may conclude that songs in Mavuno and Woodley worship Jesus with vivid imaginary and a rich set of expressions. There is a high degree of uniformity in terms of Christ centeredness in the total corpora, underlining the role played by Christology in pentecostal theology. In the sung theology of the case churches, Christ is indeed the ‘centre of it all’—the ‘hub’ of pentecostal theology and spirituality. That the Holy Spirit is almost entirely absent from the lyrics is interesting and shows that we must look beyond a narrow understanding of pentecostal theology as defined by pneumatology. This result can be seen as a direct outcome of using an ethnographic method in theological research, as most literature on Pentecostalism would lead us in a different direction. It is also a direct result of looking at the sung, rather than the spoken theology. Although I have not examined this aspect of my data in any detail, a quick overview of divine naming practice in prayers and sermons shows that while

151 Fischer, “The Spirit Helps Us in Our Weakness”: Charimatization of Worldwide Christianity and the Quest for an Appropriate Pneumatology with Focus on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania; Gifford, ‘The Primal Pentecostal Imagination’; Päivi Hasu, ‘Rescuing Zombies from the Hands of Witches: Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and Spiritual Warfare in the Plural Religious Setting of Coastal Tanzania’, *Svensk Missionstidskrift* 97, no. 3 (2009): 417–40; Jörg Haustein, ‘Embodying the Spirit(s): Pentecostal Demonology and Deliverance Discourse in Ethiopia’, *Ethnos* 76, no. 4 (2011): 534–52; Kavulla, “Our Enemies Are God’s Enemies”: The Religion and Politics of Bishop Margaret Wanjiru, MP.

152 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 72–73, 110–12.

153 Cartledge, 82, see also pages 60–119.

154 Cartledge, 72.

there is a preponderance of references to the Son and related if unspecified designations, there is still a much higher number of references to the Father and the Holy Spirit, as well as overt Trinitarian formulations, than found in songs. This underlines the importance of assessing theology within its liturgical context, and taking sung theology seriously in order to form a nuanced understanding of pentecostal theology.

In the next section, I take a closer look at the sung Christology of Mavuno and Woodley, circling around two central themes: Jesus as Saviour and Jesus as King.

2.3 *Christ as (Newborn, Crucified, and Triumphant) Saviour and King*

As we saw above, Kenneth Archer has suggested that the Five-Fold Gospel could work as a structure for understanding pentecostal theology as centred around Christology. In early classic Pentecostalism, the Five-Fold Gospel was a major organizing principle when faith was considered, and one that also gave rise to a split between different kinds of Pentecostals: those who favoured a four-fold schema against those who favoured a five-fold. Donald Dayton has described this at some length,¹⁵⁵ but the debate between the two is not relevant to my discussion. What I find relevant, however, is the way the five Christological themes are carried over into current liturgical and theological practice among Pentecostals.

While working on the songs in Woodley and Mavuno, I was struck by the salience of two of these themes: Jesus as Saviour and as King.¹⁵⁶ This is especially so when the themes are understood broadly and 'King' is taken to include depictions of Christ as Lord (which I think is fair given how these expressions are used in the corpus), and when Saviour is regarded as a theme that includes incarnation and crucifixion, in addition to regeneration and life with Jesus

155 Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*; see also: Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, and Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*.

156 Note that 'King' is one of the classic 'offices of Christ', the other being 'Priest' and 'Prophet'. For a discussion on African Christology and Christ as Ancestor in relation to the classic offices, see Nyamiti, *Christ as Our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective*. On African Christology, see also: Bediako, *Jesus and the Gospel in Africa: History and Experience*; Clarke, *African Christology: Jesus in Post-Missionary African Christianity*; Clifton R. Clarke, 'Jesus in the Theology and Experience of African Pentecostals', in *Pentecostal Theology in Africa*, ed. Clifton R. Clarke (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014); and Mugambi and Magea, *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*.

here and now. Often, the two themes (identities of Christ) were combined in one and the same song, and Jesus was presented at the same time as both King and Saviour. The other three themes in the Five-Fold Gospel were not as common, although not entirely absent either. I have already discussed issues relating to Jesus as Spirit-giver above, and I say something of Jesus as Healer and Sanctifier in Chapter 8.

Below, I have organized the description of Jesus as King and as Saviour around three main motifs; the Newborn, the Crucified, and the Triumphant, illustrating with songs that picture Christ accordingly. The motifs are not easily separated since songs often have a narrative outline—telling the story of Jesus from birth, via the cross and resurrection, to triumph, with the last two images in particular often melting together into one—yet, for analytic clarity, I have nevertheless tried. In each section I illustrate how worship songs simultaneously teach both theology and ritual, demonstrating their integration into pentecostal spirituality. Towards the end, I discuss songs that combine the motifs and relate the sung Christology to speech act theory and performative language.

2.3.1 The Newborn

Since many songs in my collected corpora are Christmas hymns, it is natural that the Newborn Jesus attracts a certain attention in the total picture. One could claim with some validity that this attention is not present at other seasons of the year, and so the collection is biased in this regard; however, one could just as well argue that the fact that both Mavuno and Woodley have specific Christmas services, and include Christmas hymns in their repertoire to such an extent during this season, points to the importance of this part of their year-round theology. It is as if there is a latent belief in Jesus as the Newborn Saviour King that surfaces through song each Christmas and so is maintained in local theology via liturgy. While brief in duration, the regularity and intensity of its inclusion in the ritual life of the two congregations speaks of the endurance and sustainability of this Christological motif. It may well be that the belief is more central to their theology than it seems at other times of the year, underpinning more overt doctrines such as incarnation, redemption, salvation, and eschatology. In my view, the fact that I had the opportunity to visit them during the Christmas period actually gave me a chance to deepen my interpretation of their theology rather than the reverse.

How is the Newborn Jesus depicted in songs? Let us listen to examples from *Away in a manger*, *Silent night*, and *What child is this?* All three songs were sung

in Mavuno as part of the Alternative Christmas service, while the first two were sung in Woodley on different occasions.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;
the stars in the heavens looked down where He lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.¹⁵⁷

In this song, Jesus is first described as ‘the little Lord Jesus’ and his humble start in life is indicated by reference to the manger and hay that formed his first bed. The little Lord Jesus is asleep and when he awakens, he does not even cry, underlining just how sweet and mild he is. The baby is watched over by the stars in heaven and the cattle on earth, hinting at his importance and true identity as the Lord of heaven and earth. This identity is revealed in the latter part of the second verse, where the focus shifts from ‘the little Lord’ in the manger to ‘Lord Jesus’ looking down from the sky. Here, Jesus is no more ‘the Baby’, but suddenly the risen and ascended Christ. He is the one to whom the worshipper turns in love and longing, present simultaneously both in heaven and by the (bed)side of the singer.

We may compare with the depiction of Jesus in *Silent night*, where the first verse describes him as a sleeping baby:

Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
‘round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.¹⁵⁸

157 Attributed to Martin Luther. Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/away_in_a_manger_no_crib_for_a_bed (accessed 2004-06).

158 By Joseph Mohr, Freeman Young. Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/silent_night_holy_night_all_is_calm_all (accessed 2020-01-14).

In this verse Jesus is a ‘Holy infant’, tender and mild. Everything around him and his young virgin mother is calm, even silent. It is indeed a holy night. The hymn has a distinct air of solemnity, as if the entire world has stopped in adoration. But the silence is soon replaced by songs of Hallelujah, from angels and humans alike, when the identity of the newborn infant is revealed. In the verses that follow, he is presented as “Christ, the Savior,” “Jesus, Lord,” and “our King.”¹⁵⁹ There is no question that this newborn is also seen as the risen and triumphant King and Saviour. And, conversely, that the King is a tiny baby: holy, yes, but still tender and mild. The next hymn espouses a similar combination of elements.

What Child is this who, laid to rest,
on Mary’s lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring Him laud,
the Babe, the Son of Mary.

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, peasant, king, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone Him.

Raise, raise the song on high.
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the Babe, the Son of Mary!¹⁶⁰

Again, Jesus is described as a small child, sleeping on the Virgin Mary’s lap, guarded by shepherds and adored by angels. The hymn explicitly asks about the baby’s identity, ‘What child is this?’—answering immediately, ‘This is Christ the King, the Babe, the Son of Mary’. If the first two songs postpone

159 By Joseph Mohr, Freeman Young. Public domain.

160 By William Chatterton Dix. Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/what_child_is_this_who_laid_to_rest/fulltexts (accessed 2020-01-14).

revealing the complete identity of the child, and carefully depict him as small and vulnerable, this song emphatically proclaims his reign. He is the Christ, the King of kings, the one that brings salvation. To such a child, adoration is due. Mary is depicted as singing a lullaby for her little one and angels greet him with anthems. Worshipers are repeatedly asked to partake in the adoration with sound, sight, and senses: to 'bring Him laud', 'raise the song on high', 'bring incense, gold, and myrrh', and 'let loving hearts enthrone Him'.

To sum up, the above songs underline the identity of the Newborn Jesus as King and Saviour, meanwhile confirming the virgin birth and the incarnation, and put the sung Christology of Woodley and Mavuno firmly in line with Christian theology as expressed in the Nicene Creed. In addition, the songs motivate and instruct worship. Despite the language being partly archaic, the hymns are still picked up and utilized in contemporary worship, even in a hip, urban church like Mavuno. I think that at least part of the reason for this is that they seem to validate charismatic worship practices; they picture an ideal of being loud and joyful, singing and proclaiming Christ's rule and engaging emotionally and kinetically in worship. The songs thus perform a dual function, teaching both theology (who is Christ?) and ritual (how is he supposed to be worshipped?).

2.3.2 The Crucified

The death and resurrection of Christ is indeed a central theme in most Christian theology, and the sung theology of Mavuno and Woodley is no exception. Many songs in the corpora of both churches mention the cross, the grave, the blood, or in other ways refer to this central theme. The songs often link Jesus' role as Saviour to the human condition of sin and a personal experience of salvation, thereby putting the worshipper into this story, linking the events in Jesus' life to the events of those singing or listening. In the final chapter I return to this theme, examining the transformative side of it. Here, I focus on how the songs picture Christ. The first example is *How deep the Father's love for us*, by Stuart Townend, from the Mavuno corpus. The first two verses say,

How deep the Father's love for us,
 How vast beyond all measure,
 That He should give His only Son
 To make a wretch His treasure.
 How great the pain of searing loss—
 The Father turns His face away,
 As wounds which mar the Chosen One
 Bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross,
 My sin upon His shoulders;
 Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
 Call out among the scoffers.
 It was my sin that held Him there
 Until it was accomplished;
 His dying breath has brought me life—
 I know that it is finished.¹⁶¹

The format of the song is that of a testimony, personally retelling the Calvary events and how they have had an effect on the life of the singer. The singer's voice is speaking as a representative of those who belong to Christ, possibly of the whole of humankind. He witnesses that Jesus Christ has taken 'my sin upon His shoulder', died 'upon a cross', and 'brought me life' through 'his dying breath'. This mystery—that the Father gave his Son, that Christ took on the sin of the world, and that his death and resurrection bring life—is unfathomable to the singer. In the third verse he asks, "Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer," and yet "His wounds have paid my ransom."¹⁶² When sung in a congregational setting, the contemporary worshippers become witnesses to the same mystery. Jesus is the Saviour on a cosmic and personal scale at once.

Both corpora picture Christ as the crucified Saviour, the one giving his life on a cross for the redemption of humankind. Again, their Christology is in line with the Nicene creed, confirming incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and the second coming of Christ. The sacrificial theme is especially strong: Christ bearing the sins of the world, taking them on himself and offering his blood as a sacrifice, a ransom for many. In addition to professing fundamental Christian doctrines, the songs foster an attitude of gratitude and trust, and serve as reminders of what Christ has done. Functioning as personal and collective testimony, they indirectly motivate that very practice within the pentecostal tradition. Thus, they teach theology (who Christ is), as well as ritual (in this case, testimony).

2.3.3 The Triumphant

If there is anything that characterizes pentecostal Christology, it is its triumphalist tone. Christ is indeed what the Swedish theologian Gustaf Aulén has

161 By Stuart Townend. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1558110/how-deep-the-fathers-love-for-us> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Mavuno 2013-12-22.

162 By Stuart Townend.

referred to as the *Christus Victor*, the one who won an eternal victory on the cross, thereby overcoming Sin, Satan, and Death:¹⁶³ the triumphant King, the victorious one, not just in the future but already, because of the cross. The sung theology that is espoused in the corpora of Woodley and Mavuno is no different in this regard. There are many songs that claim and proclaim Christ's victory and his Kingdom. *Victory Chant*, by Joseph Vogels, is an obvious example:

Hail, hail Lion of Judah!
 How wonderful You are!
 Hail, hail Lion of Judah!
 How powerful You are!

Hail Jesus! You're my King!
 Your life frees me to sing.
 I will praise You all my days,
 You're perfect in all Your ways.

Glory, glory to the Lamb!
 You will take us into the land,
 We will conquer in Your name,
 And proclaim that "Jesus reigns!"¹⁶⁴

The tone in this song is very different from the Christmas hymns with which I started my exploration in this section. Here, Jesus is no longer a tiny, sleeping baby on his mother's lap, but a powerful ruler leading his forces to conquer the land. He is the Davidic King, the 'Lion of Judah', celebrated with the military sounding 'Hail!' The song's title, *Victory chant*, says a lot about its format. This

163 Aulén has described this as the classic Christian view of atonement. The sung corpora differs from Aulén's *Christus Victor* model, however, in that they say nothing of Christ paying a 'ransom' to the Devil, and neither have I ever heard anyone in pentecostal circles say anything that points in that direction. I find it much more likely that the background of this expression is the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, and the interpretation of Christ in Hebrews, chapters 5–10, than the Roman slave system that Aulén draws on when explaining Christ as 'the ransom'. Gustaf Aulén, *Den Kristna Försoningstanken* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1930); Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*. Transl. by A.G. Herbert (London, 1931). For a discussion on Christ as Victor in relation to pentecostal eschatology, see Frank D. Macchia, 'Jesus Is Victor: The Eschatology of the Blumhardts with Implications for Pentecostal Eschatologies', in *Perspectives in Pentecostal Eschatologies: World without End*, ed. Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010).

164 By Joseph Vogels. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/23873/victory-chant> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Woodley 2014-02-02.

is a song proclaiming and declaring the victory of a King; it is a song sung in triumph. We may recall the discussion above on typology, where proclamation is a dominant format in pentecostal worship. We may also recall discussions on the Book of Revelation, since this song draws heavily on the Christology found there. In addition to referring to Jesus as King, Lamb, and Lion of Judah, the song uses the expressions “the root and the Offspring of David,” and the “Bright and Morning Star.”¹⁶⁵ These all clearly reference the Book of Revelation,¹⁶⁶ as well as the Messianic promises of the Old Testament.¹⁶⁷ The song connects Jesus to the line of Israelite kings: he is the Messiah, the one who fulfils the promise of the Davidic Kingdom.

Instead of focusing on the messianic aspects of Christ’s Kingship, some songs assume a cosmic scale, like the globally well-known worship song *Above all*, which says in the first verse, “Above all powers, above all kings, above all nature and all created things ... You were here before the world began.”¹⁶⁸ That the song in fact refers to Christ and not to the Father, or to God in an unspecified manner, can be seen from the bridge where the one addressed is described as “crucified” and “laid behind a stone.”¹⁶⁹ Christ is the one above all other; he is the eternal Lord. Another example is the way Mavuno takes a pop song, *The best*, and transforms it into a worship song by replacing ‘baby’ with ‘Lord Jesus’ in the refrain. The line, “You’re simply the best, better than all the rest,”¹⁷⁰ gets a rather different interpretation when sung in a charismatic setting instead of as an ordinary love song. Yet another example can be found in *Awesome*, by Charles Jenkins. The verse says, “My God is awesome, Savior of the whole world. Giver of salvation, by His stripes I am healed,” while the bridge calls him “mighty,” “holy,” and “great.”¹⁷¹ Note how Christ is referred to as God and Saviour of the whole world, and how he is worshipped with words that resemble the worship at the throne in heaven as described by the Book of Revelation and discussed above.

A typical aspect of songs focusing on the victory of Christ is not just how they picture Jesus as Triumphant, but also how they include the worshipper

165 By Joseph Vogels.

166 Rev. 5:1–14, 19:11–16, 22:16.

167 Isa. 9:6–7, 11:1–16, and many others.

168 By Lenny LeBlanc. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2672885/above-all> (accessed 2008-25).

169 By Lenny LeBlanc.

170 By Mike Chapman and Holly Knight (1988), performed by Bonnie Tyler and Tina Turner, adapted by Mavuno. <https://genius.com/Tina-turner-the-best-lyrics> (accessed 2023-10-17). Sung in Mavuno 2013-12-29.

171 By Charles Jenkins. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6302694/awesome> (accessed 2008-25). Sung in Mavuno 2013-12-29 and 2014-02-02.

in his victory. If the earlier songs included the singer in the worship of the Newborn, and testify to the sacrifice of the Crucified, these songs include the singer in the reign of the Triumphant. It is not ‘merely’ a matter of Christ’s victory, but of the singers’ victory too. By declaring his victory, they are also declaring their own. Often songs end on a pompous and triumphalist tone both musically and in terms of lyrics, so that music and words reinforce and underline each other.¹⁷² The last verse of *In Christ alone*, drawing on Romans 8:38–39, says, “No power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from His hand: ‘til He returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I’ll stand”;¹⁷³ while the last verse of *Victory chant* announces, “The Lion of Judah, shall break every chain and give to us, the victory again and again.”¹⁷⁴

This language of the victory of the redeemed is related to the pentecostal view of Evil. According to many Pentecostals, there is a war going on in the spiritual realm between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Darkness. Although the victory has already been won at Calvary, it is not yet fully in effect on earth. Until Christ returns for the ultimate victory, his followers are under attack from the Devil. The good news is that they can take part in this spiritual battle by means of their declarative prayers, changing spiritual realities for themselves as well as for their cities and nations, thus enlarging the Kingdom.¹⁷⁵ Proclaiming Christ’s victory and declaring his Kingdom, they can stand tall and be victorious. Ritually speaking, prayers that have this declarative function often go under the label of spiritual warfare, and frequently songs put the worshipper in a similar position. Again, the song has a dual function, teaching theology (who Christ is) and teaching ritual (this time, spiritual warfare).

2.3.4 Connecting the Three Motifs and Two Identities of Christ

The motifs or images of Christ as Newborn, Crucified, and Triumphant are often combined in different ways in songs to accentuate the connection between the cross and resurrection of Christ, personal salvation and his second coming. In Table 13 I compare three songs, since they all build on the same

172 Compare what Mark Evans refers to as “the Hillsong sound” communicating a “bright, contemporary, victorious Christianity.” Evans, ‘Hillsong Abroad: Tracing the Songlines of Contemporary Pentecostal Music’, 182–83.

173 By Keith Getty and Stuart Townend. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3350395/in-christ-alone> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Woodley 2014-01-12.

174 By Joseph Vogels. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/23873/victory-chant> (accessed 2020-07-14).

175 Compare discussion on the role of spiritual warfare among Pentecostals in Zanzibar, Hans Olsson, *Jesus for Zanzibar: Narratives of Pentecostal (Non-)Belonging, Islam, and Nation* (Brill, 2019).

TABLE 13 Comparison of *The Solid Rock*, *Cornerstone*, and *Cha Kutumaini Sina/I Have Nothing to Hope For*

The Solid Rock ^a	Cornerstone ^b	I Have Nothing to Hope For (translation) ^c	Cha Kutumaini Sina (original)
<p>My hope is built on nothing less, Than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.</p>	<p>My hope is built on nothing less, Than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly trust in Jesus' name. Christ alone; cornerstone, Weak made strong in the Savior's love. Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all.</p>	<p>I have nothing to hope for, But only the blood of the Lord. I don't have enough goodness, to wash away my sins. For/On Jesus I stand, He is the rock, I am safe. He is the rock, I am safe. He is the rock, I am safe. He is the rock, I am safe. Let (even if) my way be long, He gives me salvation. If waves beat me, (His) strengths are an anchor.</p>	<p><i>Cha kutumaini sina,</i> <i>Ila damu yake Bwana.</i> <i>Sina wema wa kutosha,</i> <i>Dhambi zangu kuziosha (huziosha).</i> <i>Kwake Yesu nasimama,</i> <i>Ndiye mwamba ni salama.</i> <i>Ndiye mwamba ni salama.</i> <i>Ndiye mwamba ni salama.</i> <i>Ndiye mwamba ni salama.</i> <i>Njia yangu iwe ndefu,</i> <i>Ye hunipa wokovu.</i> <i>Mawimbi yakinipiga,</i> <i>Nguvu ndizo nanga.</i></p>
<p>When He Shall Come With Trumpet Sound,</p>	<p>When He shall come with trumpet sound,</p>	<p>If I am called for judgement,</p>	<p><i>Nikiitwa hukumuni,</i></p>

a By Edward Mote and William Bradbury. Public domain. https://hymnary.org/text/my_hope_is_built_on_nothing_less (accessed 2020-03-10).

b By Edward Mote, Eric Liljero, Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan, William Batchelder Bradbury. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6158927/cornerstone> (accessed 2020-07-14).

c Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam and Mika Vähäkangas.

TABLE 13 Comparison of *The Solid Rock*, *Cornerstone*, and *Cha Kutumaini Sina ...* (cont.)

The Solid Rock	Cornerstone	I Have Nothing to Hope For (translation)	Cha Kutumaini Sina (original)
Oh, May I Then in Him Be Found. Dressed in His Righteousness Alone,	Oh, may I then in Him be found. Dressed in His righteousness alone,	In my soul I have peace. When I am clothed with his righteousness,	<i>Rohoni nina amani.</i> <i>Nikivikwa haki yake,</i>
Faultless to Stand Before the Throne.	Faultless stand before the throne.	I have no fear in front of him. Your blood and promise, I depend on always. All that is below even if they end, The redeemer is enough for me.	<i>Sina hofu mbele zake.</i> <i>Damu yako na ahadi,</i> <i>Nategemea daima.</i> <i>Yote chini yakiisha,</i> <i>Mwokozi atanitosh.</i>

hymn and share many similarities. Woodley sang the original hymn *My hope is built on nothing less/The solid rock*, while Mavuno chose the Hillsong contemporary adaptation *Cornerstone*, and both churches incorporated the Swahili version, *Cha kutumaini sina*, into their repertoire. In the songs, we may note the recurrence of several Christological themes, not least Jesus Christ as the 'Saviour' and 'Lord'.

In this song, Christ is depicted as a solid rock or cornerstone on which the singer builds his or her life. In him, there is hope, grace, protection, strength, righteousness, and peace. Before him there is no fear and, whatever happens, the singer can be safe, trusting Jesus in everything. The blood of Jesus (and the name of Jesus) is depicted as the basis for salvation, both now ('even if waves beat me') and at the end of times ('when He shall come with trumpet sound'), thus connecting present realities with past and future. The songs contain references to God's throne ('faultless to stand before the throne') and to the tabernacle ('my anchor holds within the veil'). Again, a number of biblical passages linger in the background, such as Matthew 21:42 and Ephesians 2:20 that refer to Christ as the 'Cornerstone', Psalm 18 that says, "The Lord is my rock, my

fortress and my deliverer,”¹⁷⁶ and Hebrews 6:19 where hope is depicted as an “anchor for the soul, firm and secure” that enters “the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.”¹⁷⁷

By placing the songs side by side, and examining the biblical background, it becomes apparent that the local theology (along with the pentecostal tradition in general), makes a very strong connection between the Old Testament depiction of the Lord and the New Testament depiction of Christ. Christ is the Rock, the Lord of the Old Testament, and at the same time the Cornerstone, the founder of a new covenant.

Other songs connect the motifs by virtue of a narrative outline, telling the story of Christ from birth, via the cross, to the resurrection and triumphant return. Examples include the contemporary worship classics, *Lord I lift your name on high*,¹⁷⁸ and *In Christ alone*. The latter captures many of the themes that we have discussed so far and has a narrative structure:

In Christ alone, my hope is found,
 He is my light, my strength, my song;
 This Cornerstone, this solid Ground
 Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
 What heights of love, what depths of peace,
 When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
 My Comforter, my All in All,
 Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone!—who took on flesh
 Fullness of God in helpless Babe.
 This gift of love and righteousness
 Scorned by the ones He came to save:
 Til on that cross as Jesus died,
 The wrath of God was satisfied—
 For every sin on Him was laid;
 Here in the death of Christ I live.

176 Ps. 18:2, NIV.

177 Heb. 6:19. Other relevant texts include; Ps. 18, 19, 27, 28, 40; 1 Sam. 2:2, 2 Sam. 22:2–3, 32, 47; Mk. 6; Lk. 6:47–49; Rom. 9:32–33; 1 Cor. 10:4, 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; Rev. 7.

178 By Rick Founds. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/117947/lord-i-lift-your-name-on-high> (accessed 2008-26). Sung in Woodley on 2014-02-02.

There in the ground His body lay
 Light of the world by darkness slain:
 Then bursting forth in glorious day
 Up from the grave He rose again!
 And as He stands in victory,
 Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
 For I am His and He is mine
 Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
 This is the power of Christ in me
 From life's first cry to final breath,
 Jesus commands my destiny.
 No power of hell, no scheme of man,
 Can ever pluck me from His hand:
 Til He returns or calls me home,
 Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.¹⁷⁹

This song can be said to summarize the local Christology as I have described it here, depicting Christ as the Newborn, Crucified, and Triumphant Saviour and King. The first verse speaks of Christ as the 'Cornerstone', and expresses the hope and trust that the worshipper has in him. The second verse describes the incarnation ('fullness of God in helpless babe') and crucifixion ('scorned by the ones he came to save', 'the cross'), while the third verse celebrates the resurrection ('glorious day', 'up from the grave He rose again', 'victory'). The last verse focuses on the security of salvation ('no guilt in life, no fear in death', 'no power of hell, no scheme of man') and the second coming of Christ ('til He returns').

Interestingly, two different views of the atonement operate side by side in this song. First the view that Gustaf Aulén called the Latin view, commonly referred to as the objective view of atonement ('The wrath of God was satisfied'), and then the *Christus Victor* view, where the cross is a matter of winning the battle over evil and paying 'a ransom' for sin ('as He stands in victory, Sin's curse has lost its grip on me').¹⁸⁰ As I read the text, the latter view dominates in

179 By Keith Getty and Stuart Townend. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3350395/in-christ-alone> (accessed 2020-07-14).

180 Aulén, *Den Kristna Försoningstanken*; Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*. Author. Transl. by A.G. Herbert. See also fn. 163, above.

this song. Note the continuous references to ‘power’ as well as to how redemption is explained as a matter of being ‘bought with the precious blood’ of Jesus. At the cross, ‘every sin’ was laid on him, and so the worshipper can now live ‘in the death of Christ’. Jesus has given his life as a perfect sacrifice, once and for all, and by doing so redeemed mankind and brought life and eternal security to those who belong to him.

2.3.5 Declaring Christ as Saviour and King: Performativity in Worship

Above, I have showed how songs teach both theology (most notably Christology) and ritual (worship, testimony, spiritual warfare). Sometimes it is the format of the song that indirectly instructs worshippers’ ritual behaviour, sometimes it is the content.

Yet it is not enough to say that the songs teach (a certain kind of) ritual performance; we must also underline that the songs are performative in and of themselves. This is to say that the songs in themselves constitute worship/testimony/proclamation; they do not merely teach ways to worship/testify/declare. One way to understand this is through the theory of ‘performative utterances’ or ‘speech acts’, formulated by Austin and Searle¹⁸¹ and picked up by Gifford in relation to pentecostal preaching.¹⁸² According to this theory, words can have an instrumental or performative dimension. For example, as noted above, when a couple are getting married, the words declaring them husband and wife actually render them so. “These words do not *describe* the deed; they *are* the deed,”¹⁸³ ritual theorist Catherine Bell explains. She says that “the simple insight” of this theory is that “some words do things.”¹⁸⁴ Words can thus be performative, and rituals themselves can also be performative in this sense, accomplishing change in the real world by virtue of their own power, exemplified by a coronation rite that declares a person King or Queen. Drawing on Geertz’s study of rituals in Bali, Bell says that “the vast ceremonial displays of kingly ritual themselves constitute kingly power, just as performative utterances *do* things, not simply communicate things”; thus, “ritual creates the authority of the monarch, it does not simply display it.”¹⁸⁵

181 See discussion in Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 68–70. On the role of language in ritual, see also Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 274–79.

182 Gifford, ‘The Ritual Use of the Bible in African Pentecostalism’. James K.A. Smith has instead applied speech act theory to glossolalia, Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, 139–50.

183 Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 68. Emphasis in original.

184 Bell, 69. Emphasis in original.

185 Bell, 86.

What does this have to do with pentecostal singing? A lot, I think. When pentecostal worshippers declare Jesus is King, they make him so: proclaiming his Kingdom victorious, renders it so. These are not merely words; those words accomplish something.¹⁸⁶ From an anthropological perspective, they accomplish something within the social group because of social conventions,¹⁸⁷ while in the pentecostal view, they accomplish something at a cosmic level because of spiritual principles and the prophetic power of the Word of God. Either way, the words do things. In a sense, the songs and rituals constitute Christ's kingly power, they create his authority. Theologically speaking, Jesus is already Saviour and King, and ritually speaking, he becomes Saviour and King.

3 Conclusion: Theologizing through Worship

The central quest of this chapter has been to trace the theologizing practices of local pentecostal worship in Woodley and Mavuno, and I have done so following two parallel tracks: the doctrinal content of the sung corpus, and the processes and underlying theological convictions that play out in the total picture. My aim has been to point out how much theologizing actually takes place in musicking, and to 'read' local theology from the sung corpus.

Theology does not happen in a vacuum; rather, it is affected by the spiritual, liturgical, and cultural landscape in which it takes place. Theologizing through music is a matter of constant interaction between text and context: between the call of the Bible and the response of the singing congregation. Therefore, it is important to study the doctrinal content of songs, not in isolation, but as part of the totality of a concrete worship practice that also involves ritualization and embodiment. In worship, congregants communally relate to God in deep and meaningful ways that involve body and senses, as we saw in the previous chapters, yet at the same time they also engage cognitively with Christian faith, learning to think theologically and biblically about God, as demonstrated in this chapter. The way songs depict and address God is not arbitrary; it is the outcome of a certain theology, and it also continuously shapes that same theology.

186 Compare discussion on the "power of proclamation" in Wen Reagan, 'Blessed to Be a Blessing: The Prosperity Gospel of Worship Music Superstar Israel Houghton', in *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 224.

187 Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 69.

The chapter began by highlighting the link between prayer and theological convictions, formulated in the classic *lex orandi, lex credendi* dictum, and specifically applied to sung prayer in the formula *lex canendi, lex credendi*. Theological analysis was then presented in two steps: showing the links between Scripture and the sung corpus and emphasizing the importance of Christology for theology proper. With the help of the theoretical frameworks of other pentecostal scholars—including C. Clarke, M. Cartledge, M. Tapper, and K. Archer—I concentrated on showing the links between the sung corpora of Mavuno and Woodley and pentecostal theology and spirituality. For while the two case churches are eclectic about their repertoire, using songs from many origins and many genres, they are nevertheless clear in their theological leanings.

One overarching principle is to be biblical—to sing the Word of God—which is why songs that re-oralize Scripture are chosen above others, whether they display a format similar to the Psalter, a biblicized style, or draw on specific passages from the Bible. To show that this is indeed the case, I presented a number of examples from their sung corpus. Another central principle is Christ centredness, in that the Second Person of the Trinity receives much more attention in lyrics than either the First or the Third, as evidenced by naming practices. This principle was discussed in relation to the Five-Fold Gospel as the hub of pentecostal theology, and examples were given of how Jesus is depicted as Saviour and as King, and their doctrinal and ritual implications were discussed. Throughout the chapter I have sought to alternate between the doctrinal content of songs, and the processes and convictions that they draw on and shape, in order to show how the theologizing practice of worship takes concrete form in local spirituality and ritual.

This study is drawing towards its end, and having discussed pentecostal worship from ritual-liturgical, somatic-emotional, as well as doctrinal-theological angles, it is time to wrap it up with a look at the total picture. For worship is not just *orthopraxis*, *orthopathos*, and *orthopistis*, it is also *orthodoxa*. To this we now turn in a concluding chapter.

***Orthodoxa*: A Rhythm That Connects Our Hearts with God**

The time has come for the last twist in my investigation of worship in Mavuno and Woodley. In my analysis so far, I have moved from ritualization and liturgy (*orthopraxis*), via embodiment and affection (*orthopathos*), to theologizing and doctrine (*orthopistis*), showing how each one is a lens through which to view worship. For analytic purposes I have kept the different dimensions apart, chiselling out the distinctive character of each as it is played out in context. Now it is time to tie it all together and look at worship as a unified whole, as *orthodoxa*. For as much as worship can indeed be seen as a specific rite within pentecostal liturgy; a holistic practice that involves body, heart, and mind; or as a carrier of, and creative force in pentecostal theology, it is nevertheless always more than that. In real life, the different aspects of worship intersect and integrate in myriad ways, reinforcing and deepening the experience for participants. Worship is all of them at the same time, and the whole is greater than its parts.

As will be clear from this chapter, for Pentecostals, worship is much more than musicking. It involves every aspect of life and travels far beyond the church walls. To worship is to live a life of love—loving God and neighbour—a life wholly surrendered to Jesus, walking daily in his presence, doing all for his glory, serving the community, and bringing about God’s kingdom on earth while longing for a better world to come. This life of love is the ultimate goal of human existence. Yet the ritual practice of worship is a facilitator, a fast-track to the transformational God-encounters that are at the very heart of pentecostal spirituality. Through worship, Pentecostals believe, communities are changed to change the world. It is this connection between a certain type of ritual action and the existential whole that make the practice of worship so central to Pentecostalism.

This chapter functions both as a conclusion, where themes from earlier chapters are integrated and given a theoretical and theological framework as part of a greater whole, and as an elaboration in its own right, adding new knowledge and new perspectives to the total picture. It begins with a few concluding theoretical remarks on the study’s contribution to the knowledge of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology, before continuing with a discussion of the link between soteriology, transformation, and song, especially in terms of how

the sacramental God-encounter in worship is seen as a transformational *unio mystica* with a missional goal of changing society. Towards the end, I discuss local conceptualizations of the word ‘worship’ and widen the perspective to see how the ritual practice of worship relates to worship as a way of life, as *orthodoxa*.¹

1 Pentecostal Spirituality-as-Theology Revisited

1.1 *Theoretical Remarks on This Study’s Contribution to Knowledge*

Framing this study’s theoretical approach in Chapter 2, I proposed that given the holistic character of pentecostal faith and the close connection between spirituality and theology in this tradition, it makes sense to see Pentecostalism as “a form of life,”² and worship (in the sense of congregational musicking) as a microcosm of pentecostal spirituality. The ritual practice of worship mirrors the dimensions played out in pentecostal spirituality and solidifies them by repeated practice. At the heart of Pentecostalism is its spirituality, which finds one of its major expressions in worship; thus, worship may serve as a window into the very heart of Pentecostalism.

As the book draws to a close, I return to this idea of worship as a microcosm of Pentecostalism, a multidimensional concentration of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology. The idea can be illustrated using the following model, one I have also used to organize my thoughts throughout the book (Figure 8; same as Figure 1).

The *Orthodoxa*-model has grown out of an iterative-inductive process whereby empirical data and theoretical frameworks have been put in creative dialogue. It works in two directions. On the one hand, it proposes that the pentecostal practice of worship (in the sense of congregational musicking, specifically the rite of worship and praise) can be theoretically understood and scientifically studied in a fruitful way using the three dimensions of ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing, underlining that these dimensions must be understood as intersected and integrated in actual congregational practice. On the other hand, it proposes that worship (as a holistic practice and

1 Parts of this chapter have previously been published as Martina Prosén, ‘Songs That Carry Transformation: Pentecostal Praise and Worship Rituals in Nairobi, Kenya’, *Mission Studies: Journal of the International Association for Mission Studies* 35, no. 2 (1 January 2018): 265–85. Published with kind permission from Brill.

2 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, xx. Quote from Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1958).

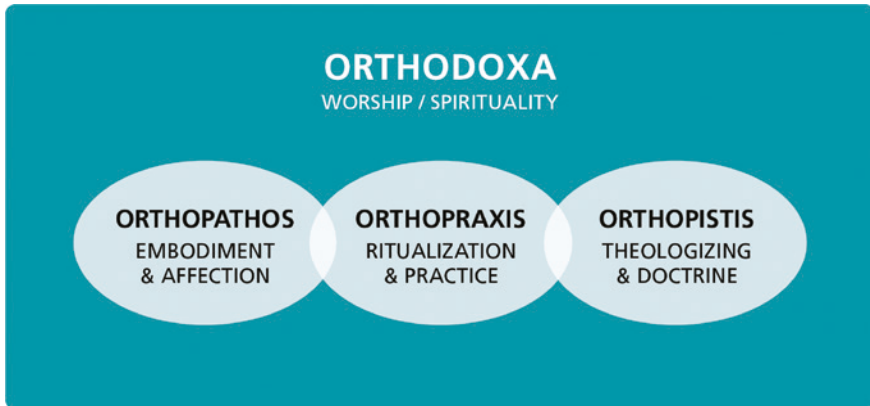


FIGURE 8 The *orthodoxa* model

core concept, a 'way of life') can be theologically understood as the essence of pentecostal spirituality, ultimately defined as 'living a life of love'. It is only by linking these two related but distinct levels of worship that we may begin to understand what worship entails from a pentecostal perspective.

In this study, I have both confirmed earlier theories of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology, and taken steps to develop them. Most importantly, the study confirms and exemplifies in concrete terms: (1) the viability of a spirituality perspective on Pentecostalism; (2) the close connection between spirituality and theology in the pentecostal tradition; (3) the holistic and integrative character of pentecostal spirituality; (4) the centrality of worship both as ritual practice and as a core concept in pentecostal spirituality-as-theology; and lastly, 5) the viability of a ritual perspective on worship.

The study also develops earlier theories. The first development is to start with practice, and to do so using an empirical research method. Throughout my work I have kept coming back to detailed descriptions of what people do in church, and how they themselves understand what they do. Thus, in line with ritual theory and practice theory, the 'how' of worship has been the main point of departure. It is ritual practice that links doctrinal and affective aspects, through embodiment and action, not affection that links doctrine to practice, as earlier theories have stated.³ It is through

3 This discussion is summarized by Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 11–13; see also Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 75–91.

action that bodies learn to feel, and brains learn to think in pentecostal ways.⁴

Another important development has been a revision of terms, meaning that *orthopraxis* in my work refers not to action in general or to social action (although in principle it could have), but specifically to ritualization, while *orthopathos* does not refer to affective dimensions alone, but is linked to embodiment, since bodies and emotions cannot be separated. And lastly, *orthopistis* is used to describe doctrinal aspects and theologizing, while *orthodoxa* is reserved for the totality of worship as holistic practice and holistic spirituality.⁵ From a pentecostal perspective, orthodoxy has more to do with right worship than right dogma, more with praise and prayer than arguments and academia. Theology starts with relating to God and fellow human beings, before reflecting on that relationship in light of text and context in a dialectic fashion. To be fair, Pentecostals have not always come to this second stage of theologizing, and this book seeks to demonstrate how such a theological dialectic may work in practice.

The study set out to answer two questions:

- How and why do pentecostal churches practice worship as part of their spirituality?
- Based on data from two concrete cases, how can worship be theologized from a pentecostal perspective?

The first question has been answered at length in previous chapters. Readers have been presented with two concrete cases of pentecostal congregational worship via detailed descriptions of observed services, extensive quotes from interviews, excerpts from songs, and results from research surveys. The account has depicted worship as a ritualized practice, an embodied practice, and a theologizing practice. The answer to the second question is built into the structure of the book via the theoretical framework of pentecostal spirituality as *orthodoxa*, and elaborated further in this chapter.

In this chapter, I move repeatedly between different dimensions and levels of worship and spirituality with the ambition of painting a total picture. I continuously pick up themes that have been discussed earlier in the book and seek to connect them with each other in novel ways. Throughout the chapter, I keep

4 See discussion in Chapter 2 and Csordas, 'Somatic Modes of Attention'; Luhmann, 'How Do You Learn to Know That It Is God Who Speaks?'; Luhmann, 'Metakinesis: How God Becomes Intimate in Contemporary U.S. Christianity'; Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*.

5 The last revision is based on Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 11, 46.

track of the main themes of *orthopraxis*, *orthopathos*, *orthopistis*, and *orthodoxa* to show how they all come together in different ways. To aid understanding, I use the concepts of transformation and integration; worship is a practice that is intended to bring about change, and it integrates multiple dimensions and levels of meaning. It is integrated, transformative spirituality.

However, painting a total picture is not easily done due to the way dimensions and levels consistently intersect and penetrate each other both concretely and conceptually, which is why the best understanding is probably received via a different route: by simply diving into a worship service and going with the flow, allowing oneself to be transformed through communal musicking as participants themselves prefer to do it.

2 Worship as *Unio Mystica*

From its inception, pentecostal spirituality has been perceived as a journey, a *via salutis*. At the core of that spirituality is a search for a transformational God-encounter, and not just as a one-time event but as a life totally immersed in God. The question, then, is where the journey begins, how it is completed, and the nature of the road in between. Commenting on early classical Pentecostals in the U.S., Steven Land reports, “The journey toward God was a journey with God in God. It was walking toward the Father with Jesus in the Spirit. But this journey was also fundamentally a journey into God: a kind of mystical, ascetical journey which was ingredient in knowing God and going further, deeper, and higher. To know God was to be directed by God’s will, motivated by God’s love, and strengthened by God’s power.”⁶

Thus, the journey has mystical dimensions, and can be perceived as a transformational *unio mystica* with the Divine. Using classic theological concepts, we could say that Pentecostals strive for *participatio Christi*, rather than *imitatio Christi*,⁷ for union with Christ rather than ‘merely’ following his example, although both participation and imitation are important. The order of things is key: first knowing God, journeying into his presence, then becoming directed by his will, motivated by his love, and strengthened by his power.

Worship (in the sense of congregational musicking) has a key role in that journey, ideally providing participants with an intense experience of God’s

⁶ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 69.

⁷ *Imitatio Christi* is a theological expression that originates with Thomas à Kempis, while *Participatio Christi* originates with John Calvin. See also discussion in Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 54–56.

presence, love, and power, or at any rate offering a space where such an encounter may take place. “Praise and worship” is thought to be “the medium through which the presence of God is made manifest”⁸ and thus facilitates “a kind of communal mysticism”⁹ in pentecostal-charismatic contexts.

In what follows, I discuss the mystical function of worship and relate that to soteriology and transformation as understood in the pentecostal tradition, showing how the rite of worship and praise is instrumental in embarking on the mystical journey into God. From the data available, I suggest that ritualized forms of worship serve as the prime location of union with God in the spirituality of Mavuno and Woodley. For local Pentecostals, the journey into God is experienced in a very real and tangible way through this ritual, an experience that is purposefully and carefully planned by the ritual specialists, the worship leaders and pastors, by virtue of a deliberate sequencing of songs and music. Communally and individually, worship becomes a rhythm that connects the human heart with the heart of God. And when so connected, his love and power start to flow through participants, transforming them into agents of change in society.

2.1 *Transformation as a Key Concept in Pentecostal Spirituality*

In the study of global Pentecostalism, transformation often surfaces as an explicit or implicit goal for the churches or people described. In fact, transformation has been at the core of the pentecostal tradition ever since its multi-local beginnings,¹⁰ although the term is not always used; renewal, re-birth, salvation, sanctification, new life, growth, and healing also serve to describe the many experiences of change that Pentecostals witness to having had as a result of encountering God.¹¹ Christians who belong to congregations of the pentecostal-charismatic type are indeed often referred to as “Renewalists,”¹²

8 Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 41.

9 Poloma, 43; see also Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 238–40.

10 Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*, 60.

11 Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 25–38. As a curiosity one may note that there is no specific entry in the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* for the words “renewal,” “revival,” or “transformation,” although all three of them are frequently used in other entries, Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. Van der Maas, *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements / Stanley M. Burgess, Editor; Eduard M. van Der Maas, Associate Editor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

12 David B. Barrett, ‘The Worldwide Holy Spirit Renewal’, in *The Century of the Holy Spirit. 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal. How God Used a Handful of Christians*

highlighting the central place that ‘change for the better’ (transformation) has in pentecostal spirituality. Depending on their specific orientation, pentecostal-charismatic groups have been found to seek—and offer—transformation on spiritual, moral, physical, personal, communal, and material levels, as well as in social and political contexts.¹³

When church historian Douglas Jacobsen contrasts the self-understanding of Pentecostals with how sociologists have often described them in the past, he writes, “Rather than seeing themselves as the passive poor who need God’s help merely to survive, Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians see themselves as agents of God who are charged with transforming the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴ As will be apparent from the discussion below, both Mavuno and Woodley come across as typical pentecostal churches in this regard, with transformation the core issue of their spirituality and mission as highlighted in their respective mission statements: *transforming God’s people to transform the world* (CITAM) and *turning ordinary people into fearless influencers of society* (Mavuno).

According to pentecostal theologian Steven Land, “Pentecostal spirituality as theology”¹⁵ centres on the redemption narrative, and invites human beings to take part in this story by following Jesus and becoming his witnesses. Salvation is understood as a journey more than anything else. It is a *via salutis*¹⁶ rather than an *ordo salutis*.¹⁷ The Christian life is a walk, a way, a movement

to Spark a Worldwide Movement., ed. Vinson Synan (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2001), 381–414; Yong, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity*, 1–27. See also the Pew Forum, for example: “Spirit and Power—A 10-country Survey of Pentecostals.” <http://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/spirit-and-power> (accessed 2017-04-07).

- 13 Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 28–34, 99–128; see also Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*; Prosen, ‘Songs That Carry Transformation: Pentecostal Praise and Worship Rituals in Nairobi, Kenya’; Prosen, ‘Abundant Life—Holistic Soteriology as Motivation for Socio-Political Engagement: A Pentecostal and Missional Perspective’.
- 14 Jacobsen, *The World’s Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*, 51.
- 15 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 3–48.
- 16 *Via salutis* is originally a Methodist theological term, coined by founder John Wesley, meaning “the way of salvation” Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley’s Theology* (Abingdon Press, 1997). The Methodist roots of classical Pentecostalism have been observed by many scholars, perhaps most notably by Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*.
- 17 *Ordo salutis* is a theological term meaning ‘order of salvation’. This refers to different ways of understanding salvation (and more specifically how the individual may receive it) in Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches, Walter E. Elwell, ed., ‘Ordo Salutis’, in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984).

from one place to another and, as such, it is in constant flux and yet purposeful. For early classical Pentecostals this journey of faith was an experience that was tangible and attainable by anyone who received Jesus as their Saviour. It involved emotions, bodies, and minds, as well as life decisions, ethical considerations, and communal relationships, all integrated into one way of life. Being saved in a pentecostal sense meant stepping into the biblical narrative and becoming part of it.¹⁸

However, Land points out that the journey was not understood merely as a journey with God or toward God, but “fundamentally a journey into God,”¹⁹ in order to know him in a deeper way and experience his immediate presence. Thus, pentecostal spirituality can be seen as a form of *unio mystica*²⁰ with the Divine, an all-consuming and intimate metaphysical union with the triune God. And at the same time, that other-worldly mystical experience has a goal that is both historical and concrete: to mobilize the church for mission.²¹ The divine encounter is not an aim in itself but rather serves to transmute the individual and the community into agents of change in society.²²

Where does this transformational encounter with God take place? Where does the journey begin? Among the early Pentecostals that Land studied, the primary place of encountering God and experiencing transformation—although by no means the only one—was considered to be corporate worship in different forms, such as prayer meetings, singing, witnessing, preaching, baptismal services, the Lord’s supper, and altar calls.²³ I suggest that a similar pattern occurs in Mavuno and Woodley when people gather for services expecting to meet Jesus and be changed by his presence. The ritual acts that

18 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 63–74. See also Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness*, 43–82; Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 141–63.

19 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 69.

20 *Unio mystica* (mystical union) is a theological term used primarily in mystical theologies, referring to a “direct union or communion with God that is quite different from the general union in Christ that is the privilege of all believers.” D.D. Martin, ‘Unio Mystica’, in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter E. Ellwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984). Here I use the expression to underline the intensity and depth that marks pentecostal spirituality. However, Land does not use this expression, but speaks of a “fusion or union with Christ” that joins the believer to the Father and Spirit and results in transformation, Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 97. See further discussion below.

21 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 68.

22 See also discussion in Hegertun, *The Spirit Driven Church: Signs of God’s Graceful Presence*; Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, and Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism*.

23 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 67.

people perform together serve to facilitate what they perceive as an experience of divine encounter and carry the narrative of salvific change both in words and in acts.

Other pentecostal scholars have pointed in similar directions, highlighting the importance of both transformation and integration. Philosopher James K.A. Smith identifies five “prephilosophical commitments”²⁴ that are latent or implicit in the pentecostal worldview: (1) a “position of radical openness to God, and in particular, God doing something *differently* or *new*”; (2) an “‘enchanted’ theology of creation and culture”; (3) a “nondualistic affirmation of embodiment and materiality”; (4) an “affective, narrative epistemology”; and lastly, (5) an “eschatological orientation to mission and justice.”²⁵ Together they point to an integrated view of the cosmos, humanity, and knowledge, and an openness to and expectation of transformation that has eschatological dimensions.

Old Testament exegete and pentecostal theologian Lee Roy Martin highlights similarities between the Psalter’s view of worship and that of the pentecostal tradition in his interpretation of the Book of Psalms. The two worship theologies share many traits: from stressing the importance of worship, affectivity, embodiment, and music, to integrating doxology, theology, and ethics, and, not least, emphasizing the role of worship for spiritual formation, even transformation, in a communal setting. Quoting Marva Dawn, he says:

Worship’s “character-forming potential is so subtle and barely noticed, and yet worship creates a great impact on the hearts and minds and lives of a congregation’s members.” It follows, therefore, that the worship of Pentecostals ‘forms’ who they are becoming. We might infer, therefore, that the ultimate purpose and goal of worship is to transform the worshiper into the image of God. The more we worship God, the more we become like God.²⁶

Lastly, practical theologian Mark Cartledge uses the formula “search-encounter-transformation”²⁷ to highlight the central process of charismatic spirituality. The cornerstone of the charismatic tradition, Cartledge argues, is “the ‘encounter with the Spirit’ both corporately within the worshipping life of

24 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, 11. Emphasis in original.

25 Smith, 12. Emphasis in original.

26 Martin, ‘The Book of Psalms and Pentecostal Worship’, 64–65.

27 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 25.

the Church and individually through personal devotion and ongoing work and witness in the world.”²⁸ This encounter is “free, spontaneous, dynamic, transformative”²⁹ and takes place continually in life and worship. The process is also evident in the structures of the liturgy.

In a typical charismatic worship service, participants are taken through a search-encounter-transformation cycle. This begins with praise, moves to prayer and the ministry of reading and hearing the Scriptures preached, followed by prayer over and for people via ‘altar calls’ or ministry times. The outcome of such encounters with the Spirit is transformation of the person in some way (edification, healing, cleansing, empowerment). Of course, these phases overlap and blur into each other, but the basic pattern is clear enough.³⁰

In what follows, I demonstrate how this expected and sought-after transformation is connected to the rite of worship and praise and the songs that go with it; indeed, these rituals provide the vehicle for transformation.³¹ This is linked to the pentecostal understanding of worship, where the concept simultaneously refers to a concrete ritual practice and to the totality of life lived before God. It is also related to the integrative character of worship, where ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing together contribute to an experience that engages the whole human being.

2.2 *Songs That Carry Salvific Transformation*

Soteriology is a key aspect when considering transformation and integration in pentecostal spirituality. Mark Cartledge describes the nature of salvation from a pentecostal perspective as “holistic” and “multidimensional” since it “includes all aspects of life: spiritual, psychological, physical, material, social, occupational, global and cosmic.”³² A central metaphor is that of healing, where “to be saved is to be healed”—from sin, sickness and death—by “the

28 Cartledge, 16.

29 Cartledge, 25.

30 Cartledge, 26.

31 The connection between ritual and transformation is well established in ritual theory, see for example Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 210–52; Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 312–17; Barry Stephenson, *Ritual: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 54–69.

32 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 159; on soteriology, see pages 141–163.

doctor in the house,”³³ Jesus Christ (the ‘Healer’ in the Five-Fold schema). Healing is connected with the *via salutis* and has eschatological dimensions, since it is “interpreted in terms of the in-breaking of the kingdom of God” and so has “both present and future”³⁴ horizons. This holistic understanding of salvation is connected to the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, and linked to both the incarnation and the cross, in that “Christ, through the incarnation, made possible the union of humanity with God and the healing of human nature in its entirety as part of the overarching gift of *shalom*.”³⁵ In this account, the atonement “extends to freedom from any burden in life that brings ‘dis-ease’ with oneself, one’s neighbour, and God.”³⁶

In an African context, the holistic view of salvation is especially salient because of its resemblance to the traditional framework of ‘abundant life’. However, socio-political aspects are not always thought to be part of what salvation entails, and so there is a risk of lop-sidedness or blindness in pentecostal theology that makes it *de facto* less than holistic. I have elsewhere argued that African Pentecostals would do well to learn from Liberation theology by including a systemic and structural perspective on sin—and so to understand salvation as truly holistic within an ‘abundant life’ framework—since this has great potential for creating a solid theological basis for sound pentecostal socio-political engagement.³⁷ In the context of this chapter, I am especially interested in the connection between soteriology, singing, and transformation. How do participants see this relation, and how do songs depict change: what kind of change, and for whom? Later in the chapter I also discuss the connection between singing, transformation, and socio-political engagement in Mavuno and Woodley.

2.2.1 Transformation as a Theme of Worship Songs

It should be clear by now that transformation is a positive word in pentecostal thought; change is perceived as something good and the direction taken by a described change is always for the better. This is in line with the lexical

33 Cartledge, 150.

34 Cartledge, 150.

35 Cartledge, 149.

36 Cartledge, 148.

37 Prosén, ‘Abundant Life—Holistic Soteriology as Motivation for Socio-Political Engagement: A Pentecostal and Missional Perspective’. Originally published in Swedish as: Martina Prosén, ‘Överflödande Liv—Holistisk Soteriologi som Motivation för Socio-Politiskt Engagemang’, in *Teologi för Hela Skapelsen. En Studie om Teologiska Grunder för Engagemang i Miljö och Samhälle*, ed. Ulrik Josefsson and Magnus Wahlsröm (Alvik: Institutet för Pentekostala Studier, 2017).

meaning of “transformation” which, according to dictionary definition, is “a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved.”³⁸ “Transformation” means “a marked change in form, nature or appearance,”³⁹ a definition that does not involve the idea of improvement but concentrates on what has been changed, that is, form, nature, and appearance. Applied to the pentecostal theological discourse found in worship songs, this could refer, for example, to a marked change in social forms (from enmity to community), human nature (from sinful to pure, from sick to healed), or life itself (from sinking in the ditch to standing on solid rock), as exemplified below.

From my analysis of almost ninety songs sung in Woodley and Mavuno during my time in the field,⁴⁰ transformation stands out as one of the main theological themes. Lyrics are dense with metaphorical language referring to personal change, communal change, societal change, physical change, and, not least, spiritual change. In fact, one of the lasting impressions of these songs is that they build on a before-and-after motif: ‘It used to be like this—but now it has changed, and not only changed, but improved’. For example, the believer testifies to having been sinful or sick before meeting with Jesus, but now he/she is purified or healed. In the following I discuss some songs that revolve thematically around transformation, understood in a rather loose way as relating to change, improvement, metamorphosis, and before/after encountering Jesus, and including such themes as salvation, redemption, healing, forgiveness, and the like.

Given the centrality of Jesus Christ in pentecostal theology, as discussed in Chapter 7, it is not surprising that many songs focus on transformation through his death and resurrection. Several songs speak about the blood or wounds of Jesus, such as the old revivalist hymn *Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power?* and *There is a fountain*, as well as the contemporary Hillsong classic, *Worthy is the Lamb* and the Afro-American gospel, *His blood still works*, all part of the Woodley corpus. We could say that the focus in these particular songs is on *why* transformation works (because of the cross of Christ), and *what* it entails (cleansing from sin, forgiveness, removal of guilt, liberty, life). It is the atonement that guarantees or makes efficacious the change experienced by

38 ‘Transformation’, Cambridge Dictionary, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/transformation> (accessed 2016-12-15).

39 ‘Transformation’, Oxford Dictionaries, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/transformation> (accessed 2016-12-15).

40 See Appendix 7 for a complete list of songs and Chapter 3 for a description of methods used.

the individual believer. Human nature is transformed. A few lines from the last title serve to exemplify the language and ideas permeating these songs:

Oh, His blood redeems me from the stain of sin,
 And His blood cleanses me deep down within.
 So, if you ask me how I made it and how I've overcome,
 I can tell you it's because of the blood.⁴¹

From the Mavuno corpus a few songs can also be mentioned: the contemporary classics, *How deep the Father's love for us* and *Cornerstone/Cha kutumaini sina*, as well as the Christmas hymns, *The first noel* and *What child is this?* In the Afro-American Gospels, *Good* and *My God is awesome*, the cross and its consequences have a central place. The latter says in the second verse:

My God is awesome, Savior of the whole world,
 Giver of salvation, by His stripes I am healed.
 My God is awesome, today I am forgiven,
 His grace is why I'm living, praise His holy name.⁴²

In light of the earlier discussion about naming practices and the Trinity, we may note in this song how 'God' is used as a designation for Christ. He is called Saviour/giver of salvation, and it is said that healing comes 'by His stripes'. We may also note how closely salvation is connected to healing, as discussed above.

Furthermore, some songs in the corpora do not focus specifically on the cross or the need for redemption but speak holistically of life being transformed by God through salvation. We could say that they focus on what transformation means to the human life *as a whole*. This is often depicted vividly, and is common in contemporary worship songs such as *When I think about the Lord*:

When I think about the Lord,
 How He saved me, how He raised me,
 How He filled me with the Holy Ghost,
 How He healed me, to the uttermost.

41 By VaShawn Mitchell. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7031270/his-blood-still-works> (accessed 2020-07-14). Sung in Woodley 2014-02-02.

42 By Charles Jenkins. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6302694/awesome> (accessed 2020-08-25). Sung in Mavuno 2013-12-29 and 2014-02-02.

When I think about the Lord,
 How He picked me up and turned me around,
 How He placed my feet on solid ground.

It makes me wanna shout, Hallelujah, Thank you JESUS!
 LORD, you're worthy, of all the glory, and all the honour, and all the
 praise.⁴³

Salvation is here understood in the revivalist sense as a complete change of life, a radical experience for the individual and fundamentally a work of Christ. The worshipper testifies to how Jesus has turned him/her around, how he/she has been picked up, placed on solid ground, healed, and filled with the Holy Spirit. The status of the believer is changed in a way that makes life appear in a completely new light. The result is thanksgiving and praise on the part of the saved person.

A similar example can be found in *Turn it around*:

You have turned my mourning to dancing,
 You've turned my sorrow to joy,
 You have turned my whole life around,
 Thank you, thank you Lord.⁴⁴

Building on a verse from Psalm 30:11,⁴⁵ and appropriating a Ron Kenoly Gospel classic (*Mourning into dancing*),⁴⁶ this song pictures salvation as a moving from a life of sadness to a life of joy and gladness. A radical 'turn' has taken place; life has been transformed. The embodied character of pentecostal worship and the role of dance and movement are once again evident, as discussed in Chapter 6. The next song, *Moving forward*, also has a similar air of optimism and forward-looking, as well as vivid kinetic-affective imagery.

Not going back, I'm moving ahead.
 I'm here to declare to you my past is over, I'm in You.

43 By James Huey. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2834496/when-i-think-about-the-lord> (accessed 2020-07-27). Sung in Woodley 2014-03-16.

44 By Aaron Lindsey and Israel Houghton. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4654258/turn-it-around> (accessed 2020-08-25). Sung in Mavuno 2014-02-02.

45 Cf. Isa. 61:3, Jer. 31:13.

46 By Tommy Walker, performed by Gospel singer Ron Kenoly. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/836046/mourning-into-dancing> (accessed 2021-06-25).

All things are made new, surrendered my life to Christ.
I'm moving, moving forward.

What a moment You have brought me to,
Such a freedom I have found in You.
You're the Healer who makes all things new,
Yeah, yeah, yeah.⁴⁷

Being saved is to be on the move, to be walking forward together with Christ on the *via salutis*. He is the 'Healer', the 'Lord', and the 'Saviour', and he 'makes all things new' for those who surrender their lives to him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17, Rev. 21:5). We may recall how congregants in Mavuno were encouraged to visualize and embody this life transformation within the liturgy via a set of dance movements. The new life in Christ is taught via embodied, ritual action. By dancing the steps of faith, congregants together learn to walk with Christ on a daily basis. At the same time, they learn who he is, and effectively internalize biblical material. And so, *orthopraxis*, *orthopathos*, and *orthopistis* converge to form a life of worship, *orthodoxa*.

This relates to another, smaller theme in the sung corpora, which is transformation through the act of worship. In these songs, musicking becomes the vehicle or the tool that brings about transformation; we could say that that it is *how* transformation happens. *Sing for joy*, from the Woodley corpus, perhaps provides the clearest example but *Arise* and *I give myself away* also point to the transformation that takes place in and through the act of (sung) worship. The first song says:

Sing for joy to God our strength,
Sing for joy to God our strength,
Our strength.

Draw near to Him, for
he is here with us.
Give Him your love,
He's in love with us.
He will heal our hearts,
He will cleanse our hands,

47 By Israel Houghton and Ricardo Sanchez. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4992525/moving-forward> (accessed 2020-08-25). Sung in Mavuno 2013-12-22 and 2014-01-05.

If we rend our hearts,
He will heal our land.⁴⁸

The implicit logic in this song is that when the worshippers sing, they draw near to God and so enable him to heal and cleanse: 'if' the worshippers rend their hearts, he will 'heal our land'. There is, thus, cooperation taking place between God and the church in bringing about transformation. Further, it is important to note in this song that transformation is understood on a communal rather than an individual level as in the songs above. God will heal not only 'our hearts' but also 'our land'. I interpret this to mean that the act of worshipping (specifically singing) is in itself transformative as it connects the church community with God's acts of healing and restoration in creation at large. Transformation is communal and not only individual; it is for the land and not only for the church, and singing is a vehicle for that process. I return to this idea again later in the chapter.

2.2.2 Expectations for Transformation in Worship

In local understanding, one important function of congregational musicking is to mediate different forms of transformation. The rite of worship and praise is a place of conversion and regeneration, as well as healing and deliverance. One of the vocalists in the Woodley congregation explains her decision to be involved in the music team in this way:

But I'm grateful to God because this is where I can serve him and continue bringing so many souls to Christ, even through our worship, because most of our songs they come, you see most of them they are from the Word of God. And through that, through our worship, so many people they give their lives to Christ, and also the healing, deliverance; so that is [why] I'm so grateful to be in the music ministry.⁴⁹

Correlating with the theme of redemption and salvation in the worship songs, the singer says that in worship many people 'give their lives to Christ'. The place and time for divine encounter and miracles in charismatic liturgy is thus not restricted to the preaching or the altar call but anticipated just as much in praise and worship; not only are people converted or born again during worship but, she says, it is actually the singing that 'brings them to Christ'. Singing

48 By Lamont Hiebert. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1861357/sing-for-joy> (accessed 2020-07-27). Sung in Woodley 2013-12-29.

49 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

functions as an instrument, a vehicle for divine intervention. And why is that? It is because the songs are taken ‘from the Word of God’, that is, the Bible. Here an accepted theological theme among Evangelicals and Pentecostals alike—that faith in Christ comes from hearing the Gospel preached⁵⁰—is applied to songs and music and gives rise to the expectations that surround the worship rituals. As discussed in Chapter 7, songs used for worship are dense with biblical language and biblical imagery and some songs contain or consist of direct quotes. For participants, the transformative power of songs ultimately rests on the transformative power of Scripture and, by extension, on the power of the Holy Spirit.

This transformative power has an effect on bodies and emotions as well. A young adult in Woodley told me that she had been in the praise and worship ministry for several years in her former church and had sometimes struggled to find motivation, but she had also experienced how worship energized her in a special way, refreshing body and soul:

You won't go there and come out the way you were, you will come out from that place transformed and having something. ... For me I would, at times, [come home] from work, [I] am tired, I was even like, “I won't go at the pulpit, I won't serve God,” coz really I'm down ... frustrated in a way or something, but when I come out from that factor I come out with a lot of answers; [pause] I'm shaped in a way, even my physical body when it is so tired, I would come out really refreshed in a way, not the same way I was. You know you can go, at times you are like, “I'm not going to go for *keshas*, I'm so tired,” and you really sleep at home, and when you wake up early in the morning you are like the same way you slept really, but when you go for that *kesha*, you find you have really [pause] energized your body. You are not the same way you are. ... Because when you go and do it, and do that which you have always been desiring to do, you will find fulfilment at the end of the day. You are not the same the way you were.⁵¹

Despite being tired, frustrated or down, and not wanting to go and serve ‘at the pulpit’, she still went to the overnight prayers, *keshas*, to lead worship. Walking out of there, she found herself to be different from before, ‘transformed’ and ‘not the way you were’. Leading worship is more refreshing than sleep, she says, and physically energizes the body. Referring to one of the other girls in

50 Cf. Rom. 10:9–17, and Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 66.

51 Interview Focus Group Woodley 2014-03-16.

the group, she says that she has seen how fulfilling the worship ministry has been for her as well. For a person who does what God has called them to do, ‘that which you have always been desiring to do’ will bring ‘fulfilment at the end of the day’. Prayer and singing shapes the participant, even cognitively, so that she experiences coming out of worship with ‘a lot of answers’. To her, worship brings about a change in emotional states, mental states, and physical states, and leads to deep fulfilment. This account can be compared to that of Pastor Josh (see Chapter 6), who said that he found leading worship made him anxious and was tiring, even exhausting, and yet fulfilling and pleasurable—physically, mentally, and spiritually revitalizing—at the same time.

Yet another aspect of transformation has to do with the supernatural, or miraculous. It is a common understanding among local Pentecostals that healing and deliverance can take place during worship, although no specific accounts were given in interviews.⁵² This is connected with the holistic view of salvation, as well as with a view of God as immediately present and personally engaged in the wellbeing of human beings. Jesus is the Healer, not merely in a metaphorical sense but also in a very concrete sense. As Pastor Nyaga reported:

We’ve had testimonies where people have been healed as they were singing praises and thanksgiving—sometimes when the preacher is not even aware of that! Yeah, not during the altar call when we pray for people, there’s another part of, you know, worship, but that moment when people are releasing themselves before God and acknowledging God’s presence. Amazing things do happen when people are worshipping God through music. Yeah.⁵³

The expected place for miraculous healings in a pentecostal service would be at the end of the liturgy, when people are invited to the altar for prayers, but Pastor Nyaga says that they have had testimonies that healing has happened during the rite of worship and praise as well. This power is miraculous, and extends beyond what a pastor can plan for or oversee. The most ‘amazing things’ happen when people worship God through music, he says with a smile, “I’ve seen drunkards singing some Christian music [laughs]. It looks harmless but is powerful.”⁵⁴

This transformative power of music has to do with people ‘releasing themselves’ before God. There is an element here of losing control: for the pastor

52 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

53 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

54 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

(who is not aware of what is happening), for the community (allowing them to let go of themselves and be immersed in God's presence), and for the individual (who cannot control the miracle but must receive it as a gift). Yet there is also an element of control, when the expectations of the kind of God-encounter that will happen at each sequence within the ritual structure become evident. Miracles do happen during worship, he seems to say, but it is not the normal state of affairs. Again, there is a convergence between ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing, and yet also a tension: for when is the time to lose control, and when is the time to keep it? How does a pastor balance spontaneity and radical openness to God with structures and sound doctrine? Can the power be contained in ritual form, and should it be?

Not all of my Kenyan interlocutors speak about worship as a place for miracles. There are also those who downplay the miraculous in favour of the relational or communicative aspect (in pentecostal idiom often referred to as 'prophetic'). One person in the music team says about his experiences as a congregant: "And every time there was, people would worship, I would feel God talk to me, [pause] I'd feel like I get ideas; [pause] I just know God has told me to do this about this situation. Some people say, 'Oh people get healed during worship, people get all these things during worship'. I haven't experienced that, but I've experienced just God talking to me."⁵⁵

For this Pentecostal, worship is not so much about the miracles that one may receive but more about being close to God, communicating with him through songs and prayers and listening to his intimate voice within. Here possibly a negotiation is taking place between the classical pentecostal roots of CITAM and its current neo-pentecostal influences. I take this as their desire to distance themselves from a Christianity that is perceived to be far too concentrated on the supernatural *effects* of the divine encounter, rather than on *the encounter itself*. Below, similar sentiments are shared by Pastor Josh in Mavuno, who underlines that a worship leader must seek to take the congregation from a focus on God's hand (his workings) to a focus on God himself (his person). In passing we may note how natural he perceives this communication: 'just God talking', as if the most natural thing, nothing special.

We may also note the cognitive aspect of the above quote. The speaker says that during worship God talks to him and helps him to solve problem situations in his life. At the same time, these experiences happen in a liturgical setting and come to him through feeling: he 'feels' that God gives him 'ideas'. Thus, the practice of worship (*orthopraxis*) provides him with a space where he can connect with God in an embodied and affective manner (*orthopathos*) and get

55 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

to know God and his will (*orthopistis*) so that he may live his life accordingly (*orthodoxa*).

To sum up this section: transformation, soteriology, and singing are intertwined in several different ways in local pentecostal practice. The theme surfaces in lyrics, as well as in interviews. It integrates ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing, and yet supersedes them by pointing towards life as a whole. The examples show how communal-ritual aspects interplay with affective-embodied and doctrinal-theological aspects, to create an understanding of worship as transformational and all-encompassing. Salvation involves more than the 'soul'; it includes all of a human being, her body, mind, and emotion, as well as her relationship with God and fellow humans. Congregational musicking is an instrument that helps participants move ahead on the path of salvation. In the next section, I zoom in even further, and discuss concrete ways in which ritualized forms of music seek to facilitate recurrent transformational divine-human encounters in pentecostal spirituality.

2.3 *Sung Worship as a Mediator of the Divine–Human Relationship*

Much as the historic churches understand God to give himself to the church through bread and wine in the eucharist, Pentecostals think of music as a space where God grants his presence and endows his grace in a special way. There is "an implicit sacramentality"⁵⁶ in pentecostal worship, in the sense that music and singing mediate divine presence through ritual and affective means, while becoming visible and audible signs of grace. "This relational aspect of sung worship illustrates the way in which pentecostal worship enables a different way into the traditional Christian experience and understanding of 'union with God'.⁵⁷ For while worship and music are "not identical"⁵⁸ in pentecostal understanding, music is nevertheless considered a core conduit of God's presence and a prime facilitator of the transformative and intimate relationship with the triune God that is at the heart of pentecostal spirituality. We may say that musicking has a "*mystical function*":⁵⁹ it serves as a vehicle, a facilitator of recurrent divine encounters.⁶⁰

In interviews, research participants kept coming back to the role of worship music in deepening the relationship with God. In community and in privacy,

56 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 69.

57 Lord, 'A Theology of Sung Worship', 90.

58 Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 43.

59 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, 78, fn. 72. Emphasis in original.

60 See further Albrecht, *Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality*, 141–49, 237–40; Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical*

singing is a place where God and human beings can interact, and where God gives himself to his people. Below, I exemplify how participants see this happen as part of communal worship—especially through the rhythm of ritual sequencing—as well as in the solitude of personal devotion.

2.3.1 The Mystical Function and Communal Musicking

One of the worship leaders in Woodley explained the function of music in the church service in the following manner:

Actually, the song works for us, it makes us to connect to God, it creates an atmosphere for us now to, our hearts to be ready for him. They actually sharpen our emotional aspect. ... So, I believe a song, there's a way that that song can prepare your heart now to connect, to be able to listen from God and even to, like, worship him. So, what I came to the conclusion is that it is about us, it's like a vehicle for us as human beings, a vehicle to carry, to connect to his Spirit because God cannot be a God who'll enjoy all this.⁶¹

To him, music creates an atmosphere that readies hearts for an encounter with God. This has an emotional side, songs 'sharpen our emotional aspect', he says, so the worshipper can 'connect to his Spirit'. It also has a doctrinal side, in that God is understood as someone who is present and ready to speak to his people, merely waiting for them to open up and receive him. The songs 'work for us', he says. They are vehicles for the worshipper, elements that God uses to reach into their hearts. They 'carry' divine presence.

However, the songs are not for the sake of God, 'because God cannot be a God who'll enjoy all this'. We may compare this with the discussion in Chapter 6 on the role of emotion in worship, where Pastor Josh said that worship is "pleasurable" to the worshipper and also brings "pleasure"⁶² to God and fellow worshippers. Here, their views of God seem to differ: either God is someone who enjoys and takes pleasure in music, or someone who does not. Is God a passionate and personally engaged figure that rejoices in the relationship, even in music itself, or one that is above and beyond such emotion? Is he pleased with the offerings people bring, the songs they sing, or are songs rather 'for us' so that he mediates himself through songs, but takes no further delight in the process?

Theology, 64–79; Ruth and Lim, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, 121–43; Vondey, 'Pentecostal Sacramentality and the Theology of the Altar'.

61 Interview Woodley Music Team 2014-02-08.

62 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

The discussion is as old as the Bible, and continued into church history; is God the “unmoved mover,”⁶³ an impassionate and unchanging Supreme Being, or is he rather passionate and compassionate in his very nature, capable of both suffering and love?⁶⁴ Can he take pleasure in the offerings of his people?⁶⁵

Pastor Nyaga in Woodley, is sure of the answer. He says:

And God loves music. He does. He has a, he has a band in heaven, all these angels are saying, “Holy, holy is the Lord God almighty,” [Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8] you know, *that’s* the music. And Lucifer was a great angel in heaven. And so, this really is the centre of God’s heart, you know [laughs]. Music, we’ll hear it in heaven, I think. What we do here on earth is a shadow of what happens in heaven. We may not get to that level of heaven but it’s really a shadow of what we’ll be doing in heaven. Yeah.⁶⁶

To him, there is no doubt that human worship through music pleases God. Musical forms of worship are at ‘the centre of God’s heart’ since ‘God loves music’ and enjoys it perpetually where he sits on his throne. Why else would he ‘have a band in heaven’ with all the angels saying ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’? Yet what happens on earth is just a shadow of what happens in heaven when it comes to worship and music; it can never reach the same level.⁶⁷ The rite of worship and praise is thought to replicate heavenly worship and, by doing so, it becomes a mediator for God’s presence on earth. It is as if the intense, divine presence in the heavenly realms can be transposed down to earth via music, creating an intensified sacramental presence.⁶⁸ However, he warns that Lucifer used to be ‘a great angel in heaven’, alluding to the traditional view of Satan as a fallen angel that was once in charge of heavenly worship (cf. Isa. 14:12).

Explaining the function of music in the church service, Pastor Nyaga continues:

I think the music, music, uh, brings God’s presence down. In a way it lifts people’s hearts. And this is very biblical, I think. When people begin to

63 A term built on Aristotle’s ontology and later picked up in Christian theology. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aristotle/The-unmoved-mover> (accessed 2021-06-05).

64 McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 248–56. See also Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 3–19.

65 Cf. 1 Sam. 15:22, Isa. 62:5, Amos 5:21–24, Mal. 3:3–4.

66 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

67 Cf. Heb. 7–10.

68 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 78–79; on the throne motif, see also Grey, ‘The Book of Isaiah and Pentecostal Worship’.

praise God, they become more aware of God's presence and I believe God ministers to people as we sing in praise and in worship. It's like we are giving him praise and thanks and then that opens heavens for us [chuckles] together and God ministers to people.⁶⁹

We may note how he connects several different doctrinal themes to explain the centrality of music: cosmology (earth, heaven, people, God, Lucifer); a view of God (passionate, especially about music, Holy, Almighty, seated on the throne yet ministering to people, transcendent yet immanent); evil (he warns that Lucifer used to be a great angel); revelation (Bible quote, music is biblical); church (communal singing replicates heaven and opens heaven); and eschatology (praising both now and in the future). Music is thus placed in a theological nexus that involves key aspects of Christian faith.

According to Pastor Nyaga, music integrates several seemingly contradictory dimensions of pentecostal spirituality. It has an emotional dimension in that it lifts people's hearts, and a cognitive one, making them more aware. It has a good dimension, since God loves music, and an evil one, since Satan himself used to be a great angel. It has a human dimension, people singing, and a divine one, God ministering. It has an earthly dimension—musicking is in itself a rather mundane activity—and at the same time it brings heaven down to earth and so is an otherworldly, mystical experience. It has a contemporary dimension, praising the here and now, and a future dimension, praising when reaching heaven. Lastly, it is both sacrificial, as people 'give him praise and thanks', and sacramental, in that 'God ministers to people' via music. Hence, music mediates the relationship between the congregation and God in an integrated and interactive manner. To Pastor Nyaga this is a biblical pattern, one that replicates heavenly worship as well as descriptions of worship from the Old and New Testament, specifically Isaiah Chapter 6 and Revelations Chapter 4–5.

This mystical function of communal musicking is facilitated via ritualization, especially via a rhythmic sequencing modelled on a specific interpretation of the Old Testament tabernacle. To this we now turn.

2.3.2 The Mystical Function and Ritual Sequencing

When discussing ritualization of worship in Woodley and Mavuno in Chapter 5, I described ritual sequencing in the liturgy generally, and in the rite of worship and praise specifically, as well as the dynamic pattern of ritual sound that goes with it. I also showed how research participants draw on the Old Testament for

69 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

their understanding of ritual space and ritual roles. In Chapter 6, I discussed holiness as relating to an idea of worship leaders being similar to the Levites, while in Chapter 7 the biblical motifs of temple and throne were highlighted, showing how key biblical texts are re-oralized in lyrics. I will not reiterate those discussions here, rather reapproaching these ideas from a new angle.

As previous discussion has shown, contemporary pentecostal-charismatic worship practice frequently utilizes a liturgical structure that combines musical, sonic, lyrical, and kinetic aspects, and this structure is often theologized as building on the structures—architectural and ritual—of the Old Testament tabernacle/temple. The liturgical structure is thus combined with what Monique Ingalls has called a “philosophy of worship,”⁷⁰ namely, that worship can be likened to proceeding towards the inner sanctum, the Holy of Holies.⁷¹

When Pastor Rose, the worship pastor in Woodley, describes praise and worship, she too uses Old Testament imagery, explaining the role of worship as leading people step by step into God’s presence, as if they were entering the tabernacle. The music team, like the Levites, must learn how to facilitate the process.

When I teach the students, I say it’s like going into the tabernacle, with the outer court, inner court, and the Holy of Holies. So, I say the coming in is, is your call to worship, so the outer court you’re celebrating: “Come into his presence with thanksgiving in your heart” [cf. Ps. 100:4] or choruses or songs that are just thanking God and celebrating what he’s done. As you go into the inner court your songs get more reflective. They get more deep, more like, “Lord I’m a sinner, please forgive me.” And so sometimes a tempo may go down. It doesn’t have to, though. And then when you think that you’ve approached the Holy of Holies then you’ve done all the dancing and jiggling out here so you sort of tone down and, and it’s, you have a different outlook to whom God is and you’re taking it easy and you’re just honouring him and thanking him for receiving you as you are.⁷²

Metaphorically speaking, the progression of worship is likened to proceeding gradually through the different parts of the tabernacle towards the Holy of Holies. Musically speaking, the different courts correlate with different types

70 Ingalls, ‘Introduction’, 6.

71 Ingalls, 6–7. For an overview of the historical development of the tabernacle-model in contemporary worship, see Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*, 32–36, 112–14, 124–31.

72 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

of music, so that the outer court is characterized by rhythmic ‘dancing and jig-gling’, while in the inner court the tempo goes down and songs ‘get more deep’ and then, at the very last stage, upon reaching the Holy of Holies, the music ‘tones down’ and worshippers are received into God’s ultimate presence.

Ritually speaking, three distinct phases of the worship period are identified by Pastor Rose: first celebration, then reflection, and lastly reception. Each has its own character and its own function: the first expresses joy and celebration before God, the second reflection and penitence, while the final one, closeness, affection, and gratitude. Together they aim to achieve a deep spiritual experience, even transformation. This three-phase structure can be compared to the two-phase structure of charismatic worship described by Monique Ingalls, where ‘praise’ is the first phase, characterized by up-beat tempos, lively rhythms, and communally oriented lyrics, while ‘worship’ is the second phase, featuring slower tempos and intimate lyrics.⁷³ Both these models build on the same idea of a goal-oriented, ritual progression inspired by the Old Testament tabernacle/temple structure and resulting in an ever deeper experience of God’s presence.

Pastor Josh, the worship pastor in Mavuno, similarly describes the worship section as taking people on a journey from “a place of dependence on self” to “a place where they are able to take that focus and dependence and put it on God.”⁷⁴ He says that this is “a very spiritual experience” and a “very uplifting experience from start to end.”⁷⁵ However, the journey needs to happen gradually, so the music team uses different types of music in order to connect with people and bring them along.

Even in the worship of God, if you go even back to the temple, there was the outer court and then there was the inner court, and then there was the Holy of Holies. ... I believe that God designed it that way because even that spiritual, that spiritual encounter is a journey. So, you don’t want to, you don’t want to walk somebody all the way from outside into inside; it’s a journey so you want it to be done gradually so they can, they can grasp the meaning of the journey but also so that they can actually connect, because we want the worship to be out of a place of conviction and not persuasion. So, you, I mean we start with upbeat songs to get people

73 Ingalls, ‘Introduction’, 6–7. Compare Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism*, 37–58; and recurrent discussion in Ruth and Lim, *Lovin’ on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*.

74 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

75 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

engaged with what's happening and just to get them excited about God's presence and then we eventually slow it down to more, to songs that are probably slower, more meditative, more reflective. So, we come from a place of just thanksgiving and gratitude to a place of just actual, just worship ... just calling on God and just, I mean, just focussing not on the goodness of God, and not just on the hand of God, but actually, the actual person who owns the hand, who owns all the goodness, who owns all the prosperity, who owns all the mercy and favour that we've experienced in our lives. So, it's a gradual process all the way from outer to inner, from praise and thanksgiving to a place of just, of just focussing totally on the very essence and being of God. So, from the hand to the person.⁷⁶

Again, the tabernacle/temple design is used metaphorically to describe a spiritual movement from distance to closeness, from self-reliance to faith. An encounter with God is not a static point but a journey, and the temple models that. It is not possible to walk somebody straight from the outside to the inside, he says; rather, it is a gradual process that helps people 'to connect' and to 'grasp the meaning of the journey' so as to be convinced.

Like Pastor Rose, he relates the spiritual process and the tabernacle/temple design to music. They start with up-beat songs and eventually slow down. The first set of songs are there to 'get people excited about God's presence' and to remind them of his goodness. This awakens their thanksgiving and gratitude, and shifts attention from self to God. Yet these songs are not the endpoint, since they risk putting too much emphasis on God's workings, instead of on God himself. The last set of songs are more reflective and meditative, and bring people to a place of 'actual worship'. Rather than thanking God for all his great gifts, they are now able to focus on the 'person who owns the hand', the one who has brought them prosperity, goodness, favour, and mercy, and everything else they have experienced in life. A transformational encounter can take place.

This sought-after transformational encounter has a theological aspect to it that must not be overlooked. Pastor Josh wants his congregation to know 'the actual person', from whom all good gifts have come, and Pastor Rose points out that when the congregation reaches the last phase of worship the 'outlook to whom God is' has changed. Just as for the early Pentecostals in the U.S. described by Steven Land, theology is intimately connected to spirituality in that (a truer or deeper) knowledge of God is thought to spring out of a

76 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

personal and communal experience of God. Without meeting God in worship, you may not know him. The *via salutis* is a journey not just toward God, with God, or in God, but *into* God.⁷⁷

Partaking in that journey of salvation is partaking in the biblical drama, stepping into God's own story.

Thus, the point of Pentecostal spirituality was not to have an experience or several experiences, though they spoke of discrete experiences. The point was to experience life as part of a biblical drama of participation in God's history. The church was a movement from the outer court to the inner court to the holy of holies, from Egypt through the desert across the Jordan into Canaan, from Jerusalem to Judaea, Samaria and the end of the age (and the uttermost parts of the earth), from justification to sanctification to Spirit baptism and then, in justification, sanctification, and Spirit baptism into the harvest.⁷⁸

My impression is that in Mavuno and Woodley one of the primary means available for church leaders to facilitate the *via salutis* is going through the steps of the praise and worship ritual: leading the congregation from the outer court to the inner court to the Holy of Holies. By repeating the process over and over, a cumulative effect is attained. The combination of ritual sequencing and repetition becomes a rhythm that, according to pentecostal understandings, takes the community closer and closer to God. Ritually speaking, we could say that participants 'add up' ritual time, and the more regularly this is done, the larger the effect.⁷⁹ As observed in earlier chapters, anthropologist Joel Robbins has pointed out that vast amounts of "emotional energy" are generated in pentecostal churches because of their ritualization, and people come back for more. Through an efficient adoption of "chains of interaction rituals," the church can become a "ritual hotspot."⁸⁰

Hence, the mystical journey into God directly corresponds with the embodied ritual sequences of praise and worship, together forming a holistic mind-body experience of encountering God and being transformed. This combination of a liturgical structure, a biblical model, an emotional experience, a

77 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 67–68.

78 Land, 67.

79 Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, 169–87. See further discussion in Chapter 5.

80 Robbins, 'The Obvious Aspects of Pentecostalism: Ritual and Pentecostal Globalization', 61.

spiritual movement, and a theological interpretation form a powerful whole. The worshippers are taken on a journey closer and closer to God, one stretch at a time, until they finally reach the goal. It is as if the spiritual steps of salvation inhere in the ritual steps of praise and worship. Communal musicking becomes a key vehicle for mediating the divine-human relationship.

2.3.3 The Mystical Function and Personal Devotion

The mystical function of worship and its sacramental character are maybe most obvious in the communal setting, but are nevertheless also present in participants' personal walk with God. Pastor Josh in Mavuno expresses it this way:

Josh: Um, worship for me is a—people express themselves differently—but as Josh the person, I find that, I find that music for me, music and words and lyrics are a very strong form of expression for me. So, as I, as I engage in worship, I find that it's easy for me to, to tell God how I feel and it's easy for me to hear what God is saying through other people's songs, as well.

I: So, it becomes both like a prayer, like how to express yourself in front of God, but also a prophetic message back?

J: Yes, it's a two-way street. I find that many times in the, at the place of deep worship that there's a bursting of prayer, there's a bursting of prophecy, there's even a connection with God's Word, just being able to come to a space where I'm reminded of what God says in his Word. So, for me I find the worship experience very holistic.⁸¹

Deep worship, he says, is a holistic experience where there is a 'bursting' of prayer and prophecy as well as 'a connection with God's Word'. Through worship, he can express himself before God, telling him how he feels, and he can hear God speak back to him on several different levels. The musical format suits him, since he is a person who expresses himself via music. He explains that this communication can happen through other people's songs or his own compositions. By composing songs, he is able to put words to that relationship with God, and God uses those songs to speak to others as well. Similar to what we saw above, worship has a prophetic dimension; it becomes 'a two-way street' where he and God communicate with each other, and also a place where God communicates to the congregation through him.

81 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

Later in the interview Pastor Josh exemplifies his point with a song called *Baba* (Father) through which he was able to come to God in a way he had never been able to approach his earthly father:

As I sing that song it just brings me to a place where I'm totally submitted, totally vulnerable before, before my Heavenly Father, you know, which is a place where I wouldn't say I was very, I wasn't able to be that vulnerable in front of my earthly father. It would just be a place of just recognizing, okay, look, even if my earthly father doesn't understand this, but I do have a Heavenly Father who knows my name, who's okay with me being vulnerable, who's okay with my weaknesses and my faults and all my mess-ups, is just able to just embrace that.⁸²

Despite his experiences with broken human relationships, and a father who did not accept his 'weaknesses and faults and mess-ups', music enabled him to approach God in a different way. Through that song, he was brought to a place where he could be 'totally vulnerable' and understand God's love for him: that he has a Heavenly Father who knows his name and 'is okay' with him being vulnerable. Thus, music facilitates a deep experience of being loved and accepted and received by God as a full person, faults and all. Music becomes not just a key expression, but a key enabler for the divine-human relationship: a mediator as it were.

Given the discussion on the Trinity and divine naming practices in Chapter 7, we may note how Pastor Josh approaches God as Father, or maybe God the Father, through worship. For although most worship songs are directed towards Christ, and pentecostal scholars tend to emphasize the mediation of the Spirit, local Pentecostals on the ground may still experience God as Father via worship. In fact, the surveys in Woodley and Mavuno reveal that many do. For while the survey results are flawed by methodological challenges,⁸³ they still give an indication of the way participants experience God during worship.

When asked "who do you feel closest to during the worship time?" (Table 14), more than forty per cent in each church said that they felt closer to God, the Father, while less than thirty per cent said the same about Jesus. People in Woodley were more prone to experiencing the Holy Spirit than the Father, but

82 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

83 See Chapter 3 for a discussion on methods.

TABLE 14 Experience of closeness to God, self, and others in worship

Who do you feel closest to during the worship time? <i>(multiple answers allowed)</i>	Woodley	Mavuno
God, the Father	45.8%	43.3%
Jesus	23.6%	29%
Holy Spirit	49.1%	38.3%
The congregation	0.9%	3.7%
Yourself	1.5%	4.7%

even in Mavuno more people indicated that they were closer to the Spirit than to the Son. Despite the christocentrism of lyrics, and their vagueness in terms of trinitarian theology, as discussed in Chapter 7, the way congregants experience God is much more balanced. While lyrics make almost no mention of the Spirit, and only limited mention of the Father, congregants still experience the presence of the triune God via music.

Ideally, the survey question should have had separate tick-boxes for God and Father, but neither I nor the local pastors with whom I checked the questionnaire observed this flaw. Collecting the results, I was aghast to discover I had made such a mistake. Yet between five and ten per cent of respondents ticked Father, Son, Spirit, and some people, especially in Woodley, wrote the word ‘Trinity’ in the margin. The congregants proved to be more theologically aware than the researcher. I take this to indicate at least two things (apart from the difficulties in conducting research): on the one hand, there is a tendency towards unitarian thinking with regard to God and a weak understanding of trinitarian grammar, even among theologically educated Pentecostals, while on the other hand, this does not mean that there is a general lack of trinitarian theology on the ground. It may well be that for Pentecostals, the Trinity is an experienced reality more than a cognitive structure. It is part of spirituality as much as theology.

Interestingly, in Mavuno quite a few (almost nine per cent in total) said they felt closer either to themselves or the congregation than to God, indicating that worship sometimes has a different role than that intended by the ritual specialists. For while worship ideally facilitates an intimate and transforming God-encounter, this is not always the case in practice. Further studies might reveal how common this experience is and whether participants deem worship

non-functioning if lacking in divine intimacy, or rather appreciate worship to have a broader function, unifying participants not just with God but also with themselves and each other.

Although Pastor Josh indicated that his musical talent and preference for musical expression was a factor in the centrality of music to his spiritual life, other interviewees seem to have a different view. Pastor Nyaga in Woodley, not himself a musician, still describes the function of worship for his personal walk with God as critical.

Worship music [pause] for me is a rhythm that connects my heart with God. I may not be a gifted musician but I know how to make joyful noise [laughs]. And for me music is amazing. There are times you wake up in the morning and there's a song, it's a melody in your heart. And sometimes God has spoken to me through music. I wake up in the morning preparing to go to work, but there's this song that is, you know, resonating in my heart. And when I sing that song probably God is maybe speaking to me through music. ... And when I'm busy working I like music at the background because then my heart is in tune with God in the midst of the business of life. And that takes a lot of pressure from me because it calms my spirit, it calms my thoughts [chuckles]. I may have a lot of things to do, but my heart is in communion with God through music. I think we commune with God through music and also on an individual basis, then that is so critical in my personal devotional life, yes, yeah.⁸⁴

Despite his reported lack of musical talent, Pastor Nyaga experiences music as 'a rhythm that connects my heart with God'. Worship becomes the mediator of the divine-human relationship, even to a point where he experiences that relationship as having a flow or a rhythm. Although he is 'not a gifted musician' he still knows 'how to make joyful noise' and that is all that matters. Music is 'so critical' in his own personal devotional life. He describes how God speaks to him through music: waking up with a song or a melody in his heart and hearing God's voice through that.

During the day he likes to have worship music in the background, since it calms him both mentally and spiritually. Functioning as a meditative practice comparable to contemplation or yoga, it reduces stress and keeps him focused on the right things. Listening to worship music reminds him of God's presence in his life and the world at large, putting his life in perspective. Music becomes

84 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

a way to ‘commune with God’ and to stay ‘in tune’ with God in his heart, while still going about his daily affairs. It is as if the ritual practice is carried over into daily life via sound, connecting the two together, forming life into a whole.

Just as the rite of worship and praise has a certain kind of rhythm—a ritual sequencing designed to lead to the Holy of Holies—the relationship with God may itself be perceived as having a rhythm, a flow that is facilitated via the rhythms of music. Pentecostal music becomes a “portable practice”⁸⁵ that connects ritualized (*orthopraxis*) and embodied (*orthopathos*) forms of worship with worship as life lived before God (*orthodoxa*). As it unites human hearts with the heart of God, it also has potential to unite ecclesial life with life in society.

2.4 *Becoming Fearless Influencers: The Missional Goal for Worship*

So, what is the goal of the ritual and spiritual journey? If Steven Land is right, the goal of pentecostal spirituality is not the experience itself; rather, it is to become part of the “biblical drama” of “God’s history.”⁸⁶ The *via salutis* is a journey into God, to be absorbed in his presence and changed by it, but the journey does not stop there; it goes all the way into “the harvest.”⁸⁷ For while “the earliest Pentecostals certainly understood the meaning of imputation and justification,” their ultimate concern was “the transformation of lives and the empowered mobilization of the church.”⁸⁸ Pentecostal faith is an other-worldly *unio mystica* with a historical and concrete goal: to transform the community into a missional agent for God’s kingdom on earth.

Mark Cartledge argues in a similar vein, saying that at the heart of the search-encounter-transformation process that is so central to pentecostal spirituality “is worship as an experience of intimacy with God such that individuals are transformed and empowered in their Christian discipleship.”⁸⁹ He continues:

This “pull” into an intense and often dramatic set of experiences is followed by a “push” outward in missionary love and service. The dynamic

85 Csordas, ‘Introduction: Modalities of Transnational Transcendence’, 261, see also Lindhardt, ‘Introduction’, 26–27.

86 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 67.

87 Land, 67.

88 Land, 68.

89 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 115. The phrase ‘love energy’ was originally coined by Pitirim A. Sorokin (1954). See further discussion in Poloma and Green, *The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism*; and Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*.

experience of being loved by God and loving God in return produces what is often called “love energy,” which leads to a propulsion out into loving service toward the wider community and society. Empowered individuals explore how to love one’s neighbour as oneself, and this can be expressed in sacrificial acts of service for the sake of others.⁹⁰

However, Andy Lord notes that while this link between spiritual encounters and social action, between worship and mission, was strong in the early pentecostal movement, it has not always been the case in later Pentecostalism, at least not in the West. Referring to Matthew 28:16–20, he says that worship was “the context for Jesus commissioning his disciples to make disciples of all the nations,” and so is about “world transformation and not simply personal encouragement.”⁹¹

Yet pentecostals have lost something of this link between worship and world mission, becoming more content often with the joys of singing together than pushing on into service and sacrifice. Sung worship should be the place of hearing the call of Jesus to share good news in word and deed, in evangelism and social action. ... Such a holistic concern for the liberation of humanity has always been part of the worldview of pentecostals outside of the Western world and this is being increasingly recognized in understanding worship and theology today.⁹²

In their global study of socially engaged Christian groups, Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori found the so-called Progressive Pentecostals to be particularly active in society. Explaining the root of this pentecostal social engagement, they single out “collective worship”⁹³ as a key factor. For while the energy released during collective rituals “can be used in the service of great evil,” it is also “a resource that can be channeled for good.” Hence, “worship may also be generative—creating the wellsprings out of which energized commitment to social service flows.”⁹⁴

90 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 115.

91 Lord, ‘A Theology of Sung Worship’, 91.

92 Lord, 91.

93 Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, 132.

94 Miller and Yamamori, 142.

For research participants in this study, the link is obvious and undisputed. Sung worship facilitates transformational God-encounters, encounters that ultimately lead to world transformation and the holistic liberation of humanity.

2.4.1 A Spiritual Journey Aiming at Societal Change

In the Kenyan context, missiologist and Mavuno pastor, Kyama Mugambi, has described how Progressive Pentecostals strive for a Christian faith that integrates love for God with love for community and society. Discipleship programs, such as the CITAM *Safari* (Journey) and the Mavuno *Mizizi* (Roots) and T-Loop (Transformational Loop), play a central role in the process. These programs take a holistic approach to spirituality, addressing a whole range of contextually relevant issues—social justice, corruption, environmental care, marriage, and child rearing—along with more traditional subjects in the Christian catechism, such as tenets of faith or devotional practices. Participants are encouraged to engage actively with the material and start to practice the principles in their own lives. The idea is that in the long run, this transformation of individuals and groups within the church will lead to societal change.⁹⁵

It is not part of this study to evaluate whether such change indeed takes place,⁹⁶ but given the testimonies presented in churches during my fieldwork, it indeed does. This can be exemplified by a gentleman who told the congregation that his family had a long-term vision for their household staff whereby ambitious girls from poor families were employed as housekeepers while being provided with paid education to improve their future possibilities. After a few years, the girl could move on to a better position and they would hire someone else and take them through a similar process. Over the course of a few years, this family had helped more than ten girls to a better life.

The mission statement of CITAM—*Transforming God's people to transform the world*—carries this idea: when the church is transformed, so too is the world. In Mavuno, the mission statement is formulated differently, but with a similar idea of being changed in order to change the world. As noted in earlier chapters, theirs is an adaptation of the Great Commission in Matthew

95 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 161–94. The T-Loop was initially known as the Mavuno Marathon, see also Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*, 66–88.

96 But see discussions in Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*; Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*; Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*.

28:18–20 and says: *Turning ordinary people into fearless influencers of society.* Pastor Kamau elaborates:

It's just that instead of, instead of using the term 'disciples' we're using the term 'fearless influences of society' which is what real disciples are. And 'turning ordinary people'—basically if you were to use the metaphor of 'fishers of men' [Matt 4:19]: people, normal people with normal, in normal circumstances—um, in picking, taking those people and bringing them to a place of being disciples who will go out and influence their world in the different sectors of society ... And so that, that is what the mission means. And that guides a lot of our, what we do, what we choose to do. There are many good things a church can do and, but, um, in order to focus ourselves we are very, we are very intentional about the discipleship of the individual that comes to the church because at the end of the day they need to be someone who will go out and fearlessly influence society, where 'fearless influence' means that they go in and, and apply godly values to, to the space where they are. So, so that's, that's what this means. Now, um, the process of 'turning' is a process of making disciples and that, that turning is done through the discipleship, the intentional discipleship process ... Discipleship just doesn't happen, you don't just come here and you expect that somehow by hearing the sermon or being in a Life group something's gonna happen.⁹⁷

From their perspective, real disciples are those who are fearless and who influence society with godly values. To come to such a point, a change must happen in which ordinary people in ordinary circumstances become disciples of Christ. Mavuno is very intentional about the discipleship process, and very critical of other churches who seem to believe that the transformation will happen by itself. Instead, everyone who visits a service is invited to participate in the T-Loop (known as the Mavuno Marathon during my time in the field), and all who are in leadership positions at any level are expected to go through that process.

The program involves several different steps (courses), and builds on what Kenyan missiologist Kyama Mugambi has labelled "a cyclical approach to discipleship" whereby "a person came out of society, entered the gathered church, engaged with a microcommunity, and reentered society to influence those around them."⁹⁸ The impact is thought to happen in "concentric levels

97 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

98 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 182.

of influence, from the individual to their family to their workplace and into society as a whole.”⁹⁹

When I asked whether the aim of the church and of Christian life, in their opinion, was to transform society rather than take people to heaven, Pastor Kamau laughed and said:

No, no, no. Going to heaven is good but between now [laughs] and that time, the time Jesus comes back (and he's coming back soon), between now and the time Jesus comes back or when he takes you, there's life to be lived. And so, our theology's very, um, to use a term that has often been used, we acknowledge and live in the tension of, of the now is the Kingdom ... and the Kingdom is not yet ... We believe that, that when Jesus said that the Kingdom is coming ... and when he taught about, you know, 'He goes to prepare a place for us' [Jn. 14:1–4], all of that is in a continuum; it is not, we are not just, you know, marking time over here [laughs]. Uh, so, um, a life that is, is transformed by Christ is a life that first of all lives out a Christ-like lifestyle here, but a life that would also be acceptable when, when Jesus comes to take us, comes to take us home. So, on the one hand we are not a humungous NGO that is calling itself a church (to use the Pope's terms) ... Um, neither are we, you know, some sort of an incubator or a time capsule where you come in and you sit and you wait for when Jesus will come back and then you go. So, we believe that we are called to be hands-on Christians who will have an impact now and even in the future, yeah.¹⁰⁰

They find that the eschatological tension of living in the Kingdom of God, which is already here but not yet in completion, motivates them to be 'hands-on Christians' with an authentic impact on society in contemporary times. However, they do not want to be 'a humungous NGO' under the guise of being a church, neither do they want to be 'some sort of incubator or time capsule', hiding away while waiting for Jesus. They are trying to walk a middle road where they live a transformed, influential, Christ-like life here and now, while never losing sight of Christ's imminent return and, thus, preparing for the future to come. They think of time as a continuum; therefore, there must also be continuity in life.

99 Mugambi, 182; compare Acts 1:8. See also Martina Björkander, 'God's People: a Missionary Community', in *Called to the Nations: Swedish Pentecostal Mission*, ed. Andreas Svedman and Gunnar Swahn (Örebro: Libris Förlag, 2023).

100 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

Where does worship fit into this system? Pastor Kamau explains that they “try to create as much continuity in our Sunday gathering as we can with the life that people are living.”¹⁰¹ Utilizing music that young people recognize from their everyday life is part of that attempt. “Now music will also create lines of continuity” where they “find songs that have been used in a secular way,”¹⁰² adapt them, and sing them as part of the music set. This way, church and everyday life become part of the same eschatological continuum; integrated into the same process of transformation, they become part of the same lifestyle of worship (*orthodoxa*).

Pastor Josh points out that music, together with everything else in the service, the community, and the sermon, are tools for achieving the lifestyle of worship that discipleship is all about.

So, worship is just, I think it's just giving the glory back to who God is and that could be translated into everything and anything that we do. So, like I said, a lot of these things that we do, the music and the community and, and even the sermon, are, are tools to be able to achieve discipleship, tools to be able to like reconcile people back to God. So, it's a means to an end, it is not the end to the means.¹⁰³

Through music, human beings encounter God, and in that encounter and the reconciled relationship that follows they are transformed in order to transform society. In that sense, the rite of worship and praise is not an end in itself but ‘a means to an end’. It glorifies God in the moment, but must also translate into everyday life or else it has not achieved its goal. “Everything that we do as a church is an expression of our worship. Definitely. It's a vertical relationship with God translating into a horizontal relationship with human beings.”¹⁰⁴ Unless musical forms of worship, mediating the relationship with God, lead to love and service in the wider community, then they are fruitless and pointless.

2.4.2 Addressing Societal Issues through Song

It is in this context that the contemporary African gospel songs, *I know who I am*, and *Africa yote*—part of the Mavuno and Woodley corpus, respectively, and also discussed in Chapters Six and Seven—should be understood. In different ways, both address issues in the African context that are of relevance

101 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

102 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

103 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

104 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

to congregants and wider society. The first answers to the situation of many young people in Africa who long for a better future somewhere abroad, seeing no future in their own country and devastated by the prevalence of corruption and poverty, and the lack of employment, social services, and democracy. The result is often a feeling of hopelessness and pessimism.¹⁰⁵ In that context, the song instead sparks optimism and fosters a feeling of purpose and identity.

We are a chosen generation,
 We've been called forth to show His excellence.
 All I require for life God has given me
 And I know who I am.

Take a look at me, I'm a wonder.
 It doesn't matter what you see now,
 Can you see His glory?
 For I know who I am.¹⁰⁶

Despite the circumstances, and despite what is apparent to the eye, the song declares that worshippers are 'a chosen generation'. Life is no longer an existence of misery and scarcity (as it is all too often experienced on the continent); instead, they have been given all that they need. They have purpose and direction, and they are marked by his glory and excellence to the point where they become 'wonders'. By participating in singing and dancing in church, congregants acquire a new mindset; they start to see themselves in a new light. They learn who they are in Christ. With this transformed self-image and a sense of belonging to a chosen people, they also find the strength to change society.

This interpretation of the song is strengthened by the context of communal musicking in which it is performed, and also by taking a look at the original music video by Sinach. For, while the wording of the song is mostly in the singular, and even says in the bridge, "I am holy, and I am righteous, oh-oooh, I am so rich, and I am beautiful"¹⁰⁷—which may sound discordant if taken

105 Compare discussions in Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*; and Gitau, *Megachurch Christianity Reconsidered: Millennials and Social Change in African Perspective*.

106 By Sinach <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7115745/i-know-who-i-am> (accessed 2020-07-14).

107 By Sinach <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7115745/i-know-who-i-am> (accessed 2020-07-14). The influence from the prosperity gospel is obvious here, as well as in other parts of the text speaking of life in Christ as "living a life of favour" and "working miracles".

too literally—the music video shows groups of African people, of all ages and walks of life, worshipping together and declaring that they know who they are because of encountering Jesus. It also features a small narrative of a family facing unemployment, bullying, and mental illness but finding solace through prayer and community.¹⁰⁸

The neo-pentecostal, prosperity gospel vibes in this song must be understood within the context of Africa and the total liturgical-theological setting. Here, the desired ‘prosperity’ has less to do with absolute wealth and more to do with *shalom*, experiencing the wholeness of life, a salvation that touches spiritual, physical, emotional, relational, existential, material, and social needs alike.¹⁰⁹ The social context in which most Pentecostals live, globally speaking, means that even in economic terms, ‘prosperity’ has very little to do with “two BMWs in the garage and a mink coat in the closet.”¹¹⁰ Rather, to most Pentecostals, prosperity means having food on the table, an income to support one’s family, access to decent schools, and reliable health care: things that most people in the rich world take for granted. As missiologist Douglas Jacobsen has so aptly pointed out:

When the prosperity gospel is transplanted to a wealthy culture it can appear to be nothing more than religiously sanctioned greed, but that is not the case globally. Most Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians understand how easily prosperity preaching can go awry, but they also genuinely believe that God wants people to prosper. To squelch the preaching of prosperity would thus be to deny part of the fullness of salvation, and no Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian would want to do that.¹¹¹

Hence, this is a case where the lyrics with their obvious doctrines, the *orthopistis*, must be balanced against the embodied knowledge and social context that is conveyed via non-literal means, the *orthopathos*. And so, the *orthopraxis* offers an interpretative framework for the desired transformation.

The next song, *Africa yote*, addresses a different issue in the African context, namely, that of ethnic division and hatred. In Kenya, violence and division along ethnic lines have been huge problems in society, especially following the

108 <https://sinach.org/videos/> (accessed 2019-07-17).

109 Prosén, ‘Abundant Life—Holistic Soteriology as Motivation for Socio-Political Engagement: A Pentecostal and Missional Perspective’.

110 Jacobsen, *The World’s Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There*, 56.

111 Jacobsen, 56.

presidential elections in 2007–2008. My time in the field was not too distant from these upheavals, and the song, although not directly addressing the violence, could still be interpreted as a comment on the situation.

<i>Afrika, ni wakati wako!</i>	Africa, it is your time!
<i>Afrika yote yakusifu,</i>	All Africa praises you,
<i>Afrika yote yakusifu.</i>	All Africa praises you.
<i>Wakikuyu, na Wakamba,</i>	The Kikuyus, and the Kambas,
<i>Wajaluo, na Waluhya</i>	The Luos, and the Luhyas,
<i>Hapa Kenya, Yesu, twakusifu.</i>	Here in Kenya, Jesus, we praise you.
<i>Hapa Kenya, Yesu, twakusifu.</i>	Here in Kenya, Jesus, we praise you.
<i>Wamasai, Wameru,</i>	The Maasais, The Merus,
<i>Wapokomo, Mijikenda,</i>	The Pokomos, The Mijikenda,
<i>Hapa Kenya, Yesu, twakusifu</i>	Here in Kenya, Jesus, we praise you
<i>Hapa Kenya, Yesu, twakusifu</i>	Here in Kenya, Jesus, we praise you
<i>Kikuyu, Kikamba,</i>	In Kikuyu, in Kamba,
<i>Kijaluo, Kimasai.^a</i>	In Luo, in Masai. ^b

a By Pastor Pat and Rev. Kathy Kiuna. <http://sifalyrics.com/lyrics/pst-pat-jane-afrika-yote-yakusifu-afrika-praises-god-lyrics>, <https://www.djomslyrics.iko.co.ke/afrika-rev-kathy-kiuna-ft-pastor-pat-and-jane/> (accessed 2020-07-14).

b Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam and Mika Vähäkangas.

By naming several of the largest ethnic groups in Kenya, along with a whole range of African nationalities,¹¹² calling on them to take part in the praising of Jesus in their own language—yet together—the song indirectly urges the groups not to fight among each other but to cooperate. It reminds them that this is Africa's time to worship and that worship is best done in unity. Through

112 The following groups are mentioned in the song: Somalis, Congolese, Rwandese, Ugandans, Nigerians, Zimbabweans, Liberians, Moroccans, Kikuyus, Kambas, Luos, Luhyas, Maasais, Merus, Pokomos, Mijikenda. Also mentioned are the following countries: Madagascar, South Africa, Senegal, Namibia, Tanzania, Burundi, Angola, Comoros; and languages: Kikuyu, Kamba, Luo, and Masai.

worship, a new identity can be formed, potentially bridging the ethnic divides and creating community based on a different kind of kinship.

Kyama Mugambi describes the role of Pentecostalism in urban Kenya in precisely this way, saying,

In these impersonal towns far away from their ancestral homelands, Pentecostals clustered together in new communities and formed a new sort of kinship. Their binding factor was the common testimony of salvation by Jesus Christ, the undisputed hero of their stories. Pentecostal churches and prayer meetings upset the order of ethnic kinship ties by making allegiance to Christ their primary bond.¹¹³

By partaking in the liturgy (*orthopraxis*)—praying and dancing and singing and story-telling together—new bonds of trust and loyalty (*orthopathos*) based on a particular understanding of salvation (*orthopistis*) were fostered within the community. Gradually, a life of worship, concretely manifesting love, unity, and peace, could begin to take form (*orthodoxa*).

“The key to this spirituality,” Mugambi states, “was a wider view of salvation and the work of the cross in the individual.” Salvation “was not an abstraction, but a tangible, concrete action of God in time and space.”¹¹⁴ Redemption had bearing on the here and now, not merely on the afterlife. Healing was for bodies, not merely for souls. And righteousness was about society, not merely about piety. Through a holistic soteriology, pentecostal churches “sought to come to terms with realities such as illness, pain, urban poverty, political dysfunction, and social upheaval.”¹¹⁵ The Progressive Pentecostals, among them Woodley and Mavuno, have been especially deliberate in their pursuit of bringing hope, continuously underlining the connection between practicing Christian faith and “broader social, economic, and political themes.”¹¹⁶

Again, we see how tightly linked soteriology is to ecclesiology and missiology in pentecostal thought, meaning that the salvation of the individual and the mission of the community cannot be separated from each other. Ultimately it is a vision of a changed world order, one in which Christ reigns and where both hearts and land have been cleansed and healed by his blood. But to reach into that world order, the church must play its part as a missional agent on

113 Mugambi, *A Spirit of Revitalization: Urban Pentecostalism in Kenya*, 292, see also pages 131–159, 287–296.

114 Mugambi, 290.

115 Mugambi, 290.

116 Mugambi, 290.

earth, and that is exactly where singing and music come in. Through a mystical encounter with the Divine, new knowledge is gained, self-images are revised, community is built, and lives are transformed (at least potentially). For inasmuch as it brings people to Christ and shapes them in love and unity, worship can change the world.

3 **BTW, What Is Worship?**

So far in this chapter, I have summarized the theoretical contribution of this study to the scholarly understanding of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology, as well as discussing the relationship between singing, salvation, and transformation, pointing out that pentecostal spirituality is transformational at its core: a journey with God and into God culminating in a mystical union that fuels missional agency. Pentecostal communal musicking, with its integrated character and processual structure, is aimed at facilitating this transformation.

In a last twist of the argument, I ask the most basic question of all: what is worship? For while earlier chapters have given partial answers, and I have utilized a working definition to focus my research project, emic conceptualizations of worship must still be explored. Here, I move away from a strict focus on the ritual practice of worship to the deeper layers of meaning attached to the concept by practitioners.

It might seem a bit odd to postpone the discussion of the most central concept of the book until the last part of the last chapter, but it is a deliberate take. I have wanted to show the richness of the worship practice in my two case churches—in matters of ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing—before discussing local conceptualizations, in order to add weight and depth to the discussion. When research participants speak of ‘worship’, the rich liturgical-communal-musical-experiential-doctrinal practice, with associated texts and narratives from the Bible, form a sound box to their explanations, becoming a well from which to draw water. At the same time, such practice also acts as an interference, meaning that they must position their understanding of worship (as a theological concept) vis-à-vis the ritual practice of worship (‘the rite of worship and praise’) as well as in relation to any number of potential usages the word has in the pentecostal idiom. Here, readers are reminded of the many layers of meaning attached to the word ‘worship’ among pentecostal-charismatic Christians, as presented in the Introduction and throughout the book.

Several times in the interviews, I was asked to specify what I meant when I asked about worship, whether it was the church service, music, or a more general question: for example, in the interview with Pastor Kamau I asked, “So,

if you were to look at worship as a theological concept first. What would you say worship means? Like, what does it mean to worship God and why is that important?" And Kamau answered, "Yeah. I think worship—and by worship you mean the Sunday experience? Or [interrogative pause]? [Both laugh.]"¹¹⁷ Sometimes confusion in an interview is the best way to lay bare conceptual complexity.

Below, I summarize emic conceptualizations of worship around three themes that were commonly brought up by my Kenyan interlocutors: worship is a lifestyle, worship is biblical, and music is critical for worship, before concluding both the chapter and the book by connecting worship and spirituality with love. First, however, readers should be aware that in this context, 'worship' is *not* a specific type of music. Although there is a musical genre often referred to as '(contemporary) worship' or 'praise and worship',¹¹⁸ this is not how my informants use the word, and nor how I utilize it in my study. The starting point of this critical case study is 'the rite of worship and praise', that is, the ritualized use of music and singing in a congregational context. Neither Mavuno nor Woodley uses a specific musical genre for this purpose; rather, they have an eclectic and pragmatic approach, combining music from different sources and genres and adapting them for their purposes, as described in previous chapters.

So, if worship is not a music genre, what is it?

3.1 *Worship Is a Lifestyle: It Encompasses Everything*

When I asked the research participants what they understood worship to be, most of them started by pointing out that worship includes all aspects of life, not just music. Singing is one possible expression of worship among many, but the most important form of worship is the personal life of the believer. What counts for these Christians is lived faith, that faith becomes tangible, personal, and all-encompassing. Worship cannot be separated from life in Christ: the *participatio Christi* and the *via salutis* are basically one and the same thing. As many of the interviewees phrased it: worship is a lifestyle.

However, when people in Woodley and Mavuno speak of worship as a lifestyle, I understand them to mean something rather different from how it is used among some Evangelicals in North America, where the same expression seems to funnel a consumerist approach to worship. Monique Ingalls describes how worship concerts invite Evangelicals "to enter into a 'worship lifestyle' through

117 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

118 Compare for example Ingalls, 'Introduction'; Ruth and Lim, *Lovin' on Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship*.

purchasing one or more of an array of worship-related commodities.¹¹⁹ Much like in any other context of popular music, the products help build a “fan culture” around “a trusted figure or organization,”¹²⁰ and become “resources for constructing and negotiating identity.”¹²¹ Thus, the transformation that (musical forms of) worship is thought to spur, is carried over into everyday life by (music-related) lifestyle products. “Personal transformation is, in part, an entry into this fan culture with a new identity formed through performative consumption of ‘lifestyle products’ authenticated through their association with trusted bands and figures.”¹²²

Worship leaders contribute to this consumerist approach by emphasizing “the importance of a lifestyle of worship from the stage through speech and song, and frame their products as resources for living this life.”¹²³ Ingalls does not explain the theological understanding of transformation in this context, nor does she relate worship to larger issues in theology, such as creation and redemption, which is why it is hard to assess whether her informants in fact do have a deeper understanding of ‘worship as a lifestyle’ than merely a consumerist one. Nevertheless, in her analysis, the expression has little to do with spirituality or theology, and much to do with consumer society and popular culture. My Kenyan interlocutors explain the matter differently.

3.1.1 The Very Essence of Life as a Born-Again Believer

Pastor Nyaga, in Woodley, narrated his testimony to me in the interview, saying that worship is linked to the born-again experience that he had on campus, where he walked into a Christian union meeting and heard a “powerful message” from a preacher. At that moment, “I gave my life to Christ and that was something that altered my perspective to life and to my purpose in life and so I began a new walk with Christ. I got born again.” Remembering the exact day and time, he says it was a “defining moment” when he “began a new journey in the faith.”¹²⁴ Previously, he had been “an Adventist boy,” following their traditions, being baptized, and going to church on Saturdays, but that “did not really change my life,” he says. “But this experience in campus transformed me. It’s like ‘Eureka! I think this is it!’”¹²⁵ His *via salutis* had begun.

119 Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community*, 64.

120 Ingalls, 64.

121 Ingalls, 64.

122 Ingalls, 67.

123 Ingalls, 67.

124 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

125 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

To him, being born again and living a life in “communion with the Father”¹²⁶ is essentially to live a life of worship. This has practical consequences, so that the way a born-again person handles his or her work, relationships, and community life can represent or misrepresent the Father. He explains it this way:

And I think for me that, that’s the experience of being born again and then of course now beginning a relationship with the Father and a communion with the Father. Yes. And that can happen anywhere and not just on Sunday. And this is what we challenge our members: your worship is a lifestyle. Ultimately this experience changes every facet of your life. How I treat people is worship. How I serve in the workplace, whatever I am in the marketplace is worship. If I’m contradicting everything I do on Sunday during the week days then I think I’m misrepresenting the Father because you see Jesus said as well, you know, how do I put it, you know, “Do good things so that those who do not even know the Father can praise your Father in heaven because of the good works you do” [Mt. 5:16]. In other words, your service, your act of service in the community must represent God. In another way, it should be worship to the Father. Yeah. And that’s the place where people can know God. And so, worship is not limited to prayer, you know, singing a wonderful song or being caught up in that holy moment, [laughs] it’s beyond. It defines what you do. It should be everything that we do as believers, yeah.¹²⁷

Pastor Nyaga says he challenges his congregation with this notion of ‘worship is a lifestyle’, wanting them to understand that worship is much more than singing. He is eager to underline that worship can happen anywhere, not just on a Sunday; it is beyond a holy moment or a wonderful song. Rather, the everyday life of a believer must be in line with Sunday worship so that both represent and honour God. Echoing the Sermon on the Mount, he makes the connection between ethics, worship, and witness. Via acts of service towards the community, the believer can become a witness to those around, so that they too will ‘praise the Father’ and get to know him. There is, thus, an ethical and moral obligation that comes with being born again, and an expected lifestyle that goes much deeper than merely buying the right commodities. When a believer fails to live a life that faithfully represents the Father—does not worship authentically—the witness also fails.

126 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

127 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

In passing we may note how he speaks of the initial born-again experience as ‘giving his life to Christ’, while of the continuing experience as ‘communion with the Father’. The *participatio Christi* becomes a *participatio Patris*. Below we will see how he refers this to the work of the Holy Spirit: it is also a *participatio Spiritus*. In the last part of the quote above, we see how he shifts back and forth between ‘Father’ and ‘God’, more or less equating them with each other. This practice is rather common in pentecostal circles, and should caution us about the divine naming practices in songs, as discussed in Chapter 7 and above. It is not necessarily the case that ‘God’ is intended as a vague or unclear name; in people’s minds it might well be referring to the triune God, to Christ, or to the Father, depending on the context.

Pastor Rose, the worship pastor in Woodley, struggles with keeping the balance between worship as music and worship as a lifestyle. Her colleagues seem to think she puts too much emphasis on music and singing, and keep reminding her to include daily life as well. Explaining what worship is, she says:

Again, I borrow heavily from my background of being in many churches but then, um, apart from the theoretical descriptions of worship being declaring the worthship of God and now going into my music area, even though theologically I know, I keep bumping into my colleagues who say, “You know Rose, it’s not just about singing.” I say, “Um, yeah, I know it’s not just about singing, it is our hearts, how are we before the Lord? What’s our life like?” Um, and then we talk about worship being a constant, it’s a lifestyle, it’s your daily life. So, it’s, it’s pretty much connected with my personal walk with the Lord. For me it’s my daily devotion, it’s my daily reading of the Word of God, it’s my interacting with my family and worshipping God, that’s how I interact with them, my lovely teenagers [chuckles]. You know, with my husband. With every situation and circumstance God brings my way, you know, am I giving, am I worshipping him? ... Am I honouring him in my life?¹²⁸

Theoretically, she says, worship is ‘declaring the worthship of God’, and for her as a music person, it is easily interpreted as singing. However, the correct interpretation, of which she constantly reminds herself, is that it should rather be theologized as a ‘constant’, a holistic way of life. This involves the ‘heart’, the inner being, as well as a very practical, down-to-earth ‘personal walk with the Lord’ of cultivating spiritual practices and moral virtues. Checking herself in

128 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

every life situation, she asks, ‘Am I worshipping him? Am I honouring him in my life?’

Again, we see how a believer is expected to live his or her life in a manner that brings glory to God, and how this is the essence of worship. Worship is walking together with Jesus, Father, and Spirit on the road of life, *pamoja na Wewe* as the hymn *Bwana u sehemu yangu* says, and doing so in a way that honours (the triune) God.

<i>Pamoja na Wewe, pamoja na Wewe,</i>	Together with You, together with You,
<i>Katika safari yangu nitatembea na Wewe.</i>	On my journey I will walk with You.
<i>Pamoja na Wewe, pamoja na Wewe,</i>	Together with You, together with You,
<i>Katika safari yangu nitatembea na Wewe.</i>	On my journey I will walk with You.
Leader: <i>Tembea, tembea,</i>	Leader: Walk, walk,
Response: <i>Tembea, tembea, tembea na Wewe.</i>	Response: Walk, walk, walk with You.
L: <i>Tembea na Yesu,</i>	L: Walk with Jesus,
R: <i>Tembea na Wewe.</i>	R: Walk with You.
L: <i>Tembea na Baba,</i>	L: Walk with the Father,
R: <i>Tembea na Wewe.</i>	R: Walk with You.
L: <i>Tembea na Roho,</i>	L: Walk with the Spirit,
R: <i>Tembea na Wewe.^a</i>	R: Walk with You. ^b

a By Elizabeth Nyambura. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4a-Ehd6HTWM> (accessed 2021-03-10). Original hymn *Lord you are my portion/Close to Thee* by Fanny Crosby: https://hymnary.org/text/thou_my_everlasting_portion (accessed 2021-03-10).

b Swahili translation courtesy of Sahaya G. Selvam.

The above examples come from Woodley, but leaders in Mavuno shared similar sentiments. Pastor Josh was quoted earlier in this chapter as saying that worship is “giving the glory back to who God is” and that this “could be translated into everything and anything that we do.”¹²⁹

3.1.2 The Ultimate Purpose of Human Existence

Drawing from his Anglican background, Pastor Kamau utilized the Westminster Confession to explain that human beings are “created or built to worship God” so that “our chief end” is to “live a life that is of pleasure to God.”¹³⁰ Bottom line, this is what constitutes worship. To him, this Christian “life of worship” includes “all our activities” (such as marriage, children, and work) as well as

129 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

130 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

“public gatherings.” Sunday worship is “not an end in itself” but is part of “the whole totality of what you’re living out.”¹³¹

Pastor Nelly also sees worship as ultimately the purpose of human existence, connecting it to daily life. She put it this way:

I think it’s been said before, I did not invent this statement, “Worship is a lifestyle,” but I agree with it completely. Because for me worship is the purpose of our existence and just being, living, existing in a love relationship with God and being where he is, living for him in every single thing, in every conversation I have ... the way that I dress, in the way that I speak, in the way that I work and what I decide to do with my time and how I relate with people and how I treat people, for me that’s worship. And what it means, how I translate it for myself is does my life at every moment rise up as sweet smelling incense to him? It doesn’t all the time because I’m a fallen human being, but for me worship is working towards that and living for that, so that everything I do is pleasing to him, you know—I think that’s worship, ja.¹³²

Pastor Nelly explains worship as a sacrifice to God, a gift given to him in every aspect of life. While she is aware that her life does not always honour God, she is still ‘working towards that’. Just like Pastor Rose above, she checks herself against the higher end, asking, ‘[D]oes my life at every moment rise up as sweet smelling incense to him?’ Her life is likened to the sweet incense that was offered by priests in the tabernacle/temple according to the Torah. However, for sacrifices to be accepted by God, they must also be accompanied by hands-on obedience to His word, walking in “the good way.”¹³³ Again we see a connection between pentecostal interpretations of worship and Old Testament rituals, as recorded in the biblical text. We also see a connection between worship and the *via salutis* as described above.

Thus, worship is connected to life as a whole: life in creation (‘purpose of our existence’, ‘created to worship’) and fall (‘a fallen human being’), as well as life in Christ (‘existing in a love relationship with God’, ‘being in communion with the Father’, ‘daily walk with the Lord’) and everyday life (conversations, work, dress, relationships, time, etc.). Creation, fall, and redemption are kept together in the theologizing of worship, and to these theological loci a moral

131 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

132 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

133 Jer. 6:16, NIV, cf. 6:16–20. Cf. Exod. 30:1–10, 32–38.

and ethical aspect is added that re-focuses worship on practice and community. In its ideal form, the lifestyle of worship is concrete, tangible, and all-encompassing. It is *orthodoxa*.

3.2 *Worship Is Biblical: It Is Modelled on Scripture*

To motivate their view of worship as essentially incorporating all of life lived before God, my Kenyan interlocutors repeatedly take their cues from the Bible. Some refer to specific texts, even quoting them verbatim like Pastor Nyaga above, while others paint a more general picture, referring loosely to a concept or motif. Many use a narrative format, retelling a story from the Bible and drawing on it for guidance in a similar manner as they would with a sermon. Sometimes the biblical narrative is connected back to their own life experience in some way or other: their story of being born again, or of coming to that specific church, or of growing in faith, and the like. The text or narrative from the Bible becomes a model for worship in their personal life as well as in church. We could say that the Bible is re-oralized, not just in lyrics (as was discussed in Chapter 7), but more broadly as a framework for interpreting life as a whole.

3.2.1 Bringing Sacrifices to the Altar

As we have seen in this book, a common way to explain the biblical view of worship from a pentecostal perspective is to connect it to the Hebrew temple/tabernacle. Another common way is to link it to the Old Testament system of building altars and giving sacrifices, as Pastor Nelly did above. Among research participants, both life in general and communal musicking were thought of as forms of sacrifice whereby human beings give God honour in tangible form. Pastor Rose said that although we do not “hear much of him singing, [Abraham] the father of faith,” is still one of her biblical influences when it comes to worship since “every time he had an altar for the Lord.”¹³⁴ Pastor Nyaga elaborated this further, giving more examples:

God created us to worship Him. And this is really a theme throughout the Scripture. Any time someone had an encounter with the Lord the natural response was worship. Talk about Moses and the burning bush; it was an awesome sight and then he sees this strange sight and he draws nigh and then God speaks to him, “This is a holy place,” [Exod. 3:5] you know. He had to kinda, you know, worship God in some sense through that encounter. Noah, Adam, Eve, the issue of sacrifice from the Old Testament, it’s

¹³⁴ Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

a type of worship really acknowledging that God is worthy of reverence and so that sacrifice was a way of worshipping God. And so, um, God created us that we may know him and worship him. And really worship means to give him, you know, reverence, to honour him. Sacrifice and giving is part of worship, praise and thanksgiving, singing is really part of [chuckles] really, worship, so it encompasses everything we are really in that broad sense. Worship ... describes our relationship with God which is just, uh, giving him honour and reverence that is due his name. Yeah.¹³⁵

The theme he sees in Scripture is one where worship is the most natural response to an encounter with God. The *unio mystica* evokes reverence and that reverence is expressed in sacrifice. He mentions Moses, Noah, Adam, and Eve as characters who responded in this way to God, building altars to sacrifice before the Lord. The reason it is such a natural response, he says, is that ‘God created us to worship’. It is in the very nature of human beings to give God honour. That is why worship ‘encompasses everything we are in a really broad sense’ and essentially ‘describes our relationship with God’. Sacrifice is interpreted metaphorically to mean acts of service, songs and words of praise, or any kind of gift (verbal or tangible) given to God in order to show gratitude, submission, and reverence. Again, we see how ideas of worship are intertwined with ideas about life in creation and redemption; the *via salutis* restores human beings to the right relationship with God so that in everything they can give him the reverence ‘that is due his name’. Worship becomes the essence of life as a created being and as a born-again believer.

Later in the interview, Pastor Nyaga read parts of Psalm 96 to me—“a powerful Scripture”—a song that summons the people of the earth to sing a new song to the Lord.

Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.

Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come into his courts.

135 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness;
Tremble before him, all the earth.
Say among the nations “The Lord reigns.”¹³⁶

Commenting on the text he says, “That’s really worship. ... I think from there, our attention [is] drawn to this great God who created the heavens and the earth, and that’s coming before him with offering, with thanksgiving, praises, clapping, singing, dancing—whatever [laughs] manner of expression to just acknowledge that we have a great king.”¹³⁷

We may note the connection he makes between worship as relating to God, and worship as various forms of kinetic, oral, and embodied expressions. The text itself does not say anything about either dancing or clapping, yet to him this is a natural way to interpret the meaning; also note the connection between worship, creation, salvation, and proclamation, as well as between different aspects of God’s nature, thus integrating them into the overarching concept of ‘worship’. God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, he brings salvation, and, he is a great King. Musicking is a way to acknowledge who he is and to make that known to others. It is a tangible way of doing what human beings were designed for in the first place: to live a life of worship. Both life and musicking become sacrifices to God that bring witness to who he is. The embodied (*orthopathos*) and ritualized (*orthopraxis*) practice of worship, is theologized (*orthopistis*) in a way that points towards *orthodoxa*.

The sacrificial theme is also common in songs, as in the up-beat and rhythmic *Good* from the Mavuno corpus.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, here we go.
I will build for you an altar,
I will bring my sacrifice, I’ll worship you ‘cause you’ve been so good.
(Ooh) I will give you all the praise,
I will bless your holy name,
I’ll worship you ‘cause you been so good (ooh).¹³⁸

This motif is also behind the serene and intimate *Withholding nothing*, a song sung in both churches during my time in the field, where the refrain repeats the same phrase over and over again:

136 Ps. 96:1–2, 7–10a, NKJV (the version Pastor Nyaga read).

137 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

138 By Tye Tribett. <https://genius.com/Tye-tribbett-good-lyrics> (accessed 2020-01-10).

I give you all of me.
 I give you all of me.
 I give you all of me.
 I give you all of me.

King Jesus,
 My Savior,
 Forever.¹³⁹

Life in the *via salutis* is a life of surrender, of giving oneself wholly and fully to Jesus as King and Saviour. It is a total sacrifice, encompassing everything. To live that life, a person may not withhold anything from him, but must give everything away. When encountering God and being transformed, all of life must be put on the altar. The *unio mystica* leads to *orthodoxa*, and songs are vehicles for that sacramental and sacrificial process.

3.2.2 Worship in Spirit and in Truth

Several of the interviewees connect the sacrificial theme to a narrative from John 4 where Jesus discusses worship with a Samaritan woman. Commenting on this story, Pastor Nyaga gave me a whole sermon, retelling the story as well as reading key verses. This narrative technique is typical of pentecostal preaching and theologizing, moving back and forth between the biblical text, a theological principle, and contemporary application. To get a sense of the way he re-oralizes Scripture, making the text come alive with a twinkle in his eye, I will relate his narration at some length.

In the New Testament what comes quickly to my mind is the book of John chapter 4, that experience at the well where Jesus meets the Samaritan woman and they have an encounter, she has an encounter with him.

Let me get the, um [pauses as he opens his Bible]. And Jesus comes and meets this woman there. She's a Samaritan woman, he's a Jew and he's asking her to give him water and she's like, "No, this is not how we do things. You're a Jew, I'm a Samaritan, there's no dealings between you and me." But he says, "No, woman, I wish you knew who it is who was talking to you, you would have given me water and then I would have given you

139 By William McDowell. <https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7037764/withholding-nothing> (accessed 2020-07-14).

living water and you're never thirsty again." And the story goes, "Oh, so who are you?" "Okay I've had so many husbands," and the long and the short of it.

Something that stood out, stands out here is where she says, um, let me read to us, um, where she says in verse 20: "Our father worshipped on this mountain and you Jews say that" (and she was theological here) [laughs]. "Our father worshipped on this mountain and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know. We know what we worship for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming." Verse 23 of Chapter 4 of the Gospel of St John says, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." God is spirit—in other words, not limited to geographical location—he's a spirit and 'those who worship him' must worship him 'in spirit and in truth'.

I think Jesus just opens this new realm about worship, from geographical location, from features, mountains, the sacrifices, things—Jesus is saying now things have changed from the Old Testament way [chuckles]. Now an hour has come when those who worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth. And that goes for our relationship with the Father and being born again; you're a child of God, you have the Spirit of God inside you. And now that Spirit of God inside you can worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. And this is not limited to a geographical location.

For me Jesus sums pretty well what worship is all about. It involves the Spirit[/spirit] ... for when the Spirit of God comes and indwells you, you're a child of God, your spirit that was dead is made alive in Christ. And that spirit now can commune [chuckles] with the Father through the Holy Spirit of God and is resident in your life.¹⁴⁰

Pastor Nyaga explains that while the Old Testament is an important model, worship in New Testament times—of which Pentecostals think they are part—is still not exactly the same. There has been a transformation of ritual forms,

140 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

with worship no longer being connected to geographical locations, mountains, and animal offerings, but rather having to do with the inner person and the totality of life. Again, worship is linked to being born again (becoming a child of God and alive in Christ), and the deep relationship with God made possible via the Holy Spirit that 'is resident in your life'.

Pastor Nyaga thinks Jesus sums worship up 'pretty well', saying that it involves the Spirit[/spirit]. When I asked him to specify what 'spirit' meant in this context, he said that it refers both to the Spirit of God and the spirit inside the human being. For when the Holy Spirit makes a person alive in Christ, then that spirit can start to live in close relationship with the Father and begin to worship 'in spirit/Spirit'. Here we may recall discussions in Chapter 6 about becoming spiritually alive through faith, and how dance teaches the body to know what the heart has already conceived. The rite facilitates the process that leads to true worship, *orthodoxa*.

In his explanation, different theological loci and different phases of the redemption history are intertwined. Worship is essentially about the relationship between human beings and God the Father (created order), and that relationship is made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (redemptive order), and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (pneumatological order) in the New Covenant (eschatological order). Hence, the whole Trinity is thought to be involved in transforming the person into a true worshipper. As for the Samaritan woman, the *unio mystica* includes an encounter with Jesus, as well as an experience of deep communion with the Father through the Spirit. The *unio mystica* is a *participatio Trinitatis*, a mystical union with the triune God, one facilitated by, and resulting in, worship.

For while we observed in Chapter 7 that lyrics are mostly Christocentric and focused on the Jesus story, this still has to be weighed against the total theological and liturgical context. Theologizing through song does not happen in a vacuum. It may well be that lyrics in and of themselves give a slightly different picture of local pentecostal theology than an integrated study would reveal. At the same time, pentecostal churches should still be wary of imbalance in their theology, which may not be as trinitarian as they hope and profess and, further, that may become less trinitarian over time due to the formative effect of worship songs on theology, as Michael Tapper has underlined.¹⁴¹

One clue to the Christ centredness of pentecostal worship lyrics is that the sacrifice of praise is connected to the sacrifice of Jesus. Using the very same

141 Tapper, *Canadian Pentecostals, the Trinity, and Contemporary Worship Music: The Things We Sing*.

story from John 4 (while not retelling it in any detail), Pastor Kamau in Mavuno explained how Jesus, through his own sacrifice on the cross, has granted freedom in worship. Worship is freed from traditions and places and becomes attached to the person of Jesus Christ.

And, um, you know, worship not being locked to a mountain. And worship being, being available or accessible, which is what I think Jesus was telling the woman at the well. I think worship is really, is really not locked up in some sort of liturgy somewhere or locked up in some tradition somewhere. Worship, worship really is where Jesus says ‘where I am’ (as he was telling the woman).¹⁴²

Worship is deeply connected to being in Christ, through the Spirit, and can happen only where he is. By singing and making music, Christ is invited into the space, meaning it becomes a worship space, regardless of what it was from the beginning.¹⁴³ As Christ gives his sacramental presence to the community, the community can give their songs as sacrifices back to him, based on his own sacrifice. The way they interpret the Bible, worship is at the same time both sacramental and sacrificial.

3.2.3 Praise the Way King David Did

When discussing the scriptural basis for worship theology, one additional biblical model stood out for my Kenyan interlocutors (apart from descriptions of Old Testament worship, and the text in John 4): King David. His story was given as an example of what it means to live a life of worship, as well as to explain the importance of singing and dancing.

Pastor Josh in Mavuno shared the following sentiments for David:

I think my number one praiser would probably be David, in the Bible. David was somebody who God promoted and just established but yet still even ... while he was a poor shepherd boy and even when he was lifted to the place of being King of Israel, he still never forgot the place of worship and never forgot that everything about him, whether it was the battles that were won, whether it was the buildings that he had built or the children that he had, everything about his life was about giving glory to God—just everything was a worship for him. So, the songs that

¹⁴² Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

¹⁴³ See also discussion in Chapter 5 on church as ritual space, Mavuno and Woodley thinks differently on this issue.

he wrote, everything that came out of his mouth, in spite of his situation that he had with Bathsheba, God still called David “a man after his heart” [Acts 13:22]. Why? Because in spite of his weaknesses, in spite of his faults, David always went back to God; David always made his whole life about God. So that would be a biblical model that I would follow.¹⁴⁴

In a very personal way, he calls David ‘my number one praiser’, almost as if he knew him. This is common when research participants speak of the biblical characters; they relate to them as friends and role models in life. David represents a person who ‘never forgot the place of worship’, which means that he never forgot that ‘everything about his life was about giving glory to God’. Regardless of human circumstances (poverty or affluence, lack of power or power), David chose to worship God and God rewarded him for it. Despite his moral shortcomings, God still called him ‘a man after his heart’. That, to Pastor Josh, has to do with worship, with making his ‘whole life about God’. Therefore, the songs David wrote were but one aspect of this life of praise.

Pastor Rose is also very fond of King David, and presents him as a personal role model for worship, vividly putting his life in relief:

King David is one of my key characters, I love him because of his joy in just loving God and dancing for Him and, and just being so real. He’s messed. He’s messed. “Lord help! I need to run away Lord, they’re after me.” And he runs, you know, hides in the caves of Adullam. And, um, the Lord still, um, delivers him from King Saul. And just that knowing that his literal life was a worship to God.¹⁴⁵

The narrative element is again there, where the story comes alive and David becomes a real person, almost a friend, someone to relate to and look up to. What she loves most about him is his ‘being real’, expressing his joy and love for God. Despite his many problems, he presented himself as an offering to God via dance. His way of praising motivates her too to sing and dance and express herself before God in embodied, unrestrained, and personal ways. Reflecting later on other characters and texts from the Bible, she nevertheless comes back to say, “Yeah, but David tops the chart for me.”¹⁴⁶ His authenticity in worship

144 Interview Pastor Josh 2014-02-12.

145 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31, referencing 1 Sam. 20–24, 2 Sam. 6, and the many instances in the Psalter where David cries for help in the face of his enemies.

146 Interview Pastor Rose 2014-01-31.

is unmatched by any other. He lived a real life, and that real life was ‘a worship to God’.

Again, we may note an oscillation between worship as embodied, ritualized, and theologizing practice (dance, songs, and sacrifices), and worship as the totality of life lived before God, as if there is no way to speak of one without the other. For research participants, worship is both at the same time. This is the way they understand it, and this is the way they read the Bible.

3.3 *Worship Is More Than Music, Yet Music Is Critical for Worship*

Above we saw how music facilitates the journey towards the Holy of Holies, becoming a rhythm that mystically unites worshippers with God, integrating their spirituality and transforming their lives. But—why music? If worship involves the entirety of life and can translate into ‘anything and everything’, then why are musical forms of worship such a big deal? Could the church do without them? When asked, my Kenyan interlocutors all answered unequivocally in the negative. Worship is a lifestyle, yet music is critical for worship. In a sense, this entire book is a way to explain why this is so. Among other things we have seen that: (1) music is a key form of pentecostal ritualization, it creates meaningful, structured, and multi-layered rituals that tie participants together; (2) music is a key form of pentecostal embodiment, creating a rhythmic synchronization of bodies that is essential for community and identity and engaging participants on a somatic, sensory, and affective range; (3) music is a key form of pentecostal theologizing, which expresses and shapes doctrine and re-oralizes Scripture in local settings; and (4) music is a key form of pentecostal spirituality, with a mystical function that unites participants with the Divine and carries salvific transformation. Together they point to the centrality of music for worship.

When prompted as to why music is such a critical form of expression (in comparison to other possible candidates in life), research participants especially referred to the emotional aspect, associating it with community, culture, and deep levels of human existence. Pastor Kamau in Mavuno answered me in the following manner:

I: And would you say that, that worship in the forms of songs and music is essential to the church?

Kamau: Oh yeah!

I: Or could you do without it?

K: No, we couldn’t do without it [both chuckle]. We couldn’t do without it. I think, I think of all cultural elements, um, music is one of the most readily, readily accessible. So, if you are looking ... to bring about

transformation of any kind—and in this conversation, transformation of a community—then music, music is very easily accessible.¹⁴⁷

We both laugh at my question, because the idea of worship without music is such an odd one, almost unthinkable for a pentecostal mind. Music, Pastor Kamau states, is readily accessible as a cultural element, and effective in bringing about transformation, which is exactly what the pentecostal liturgy aims to achieve. Therefore, music is essential for worship, and the church ‘couldn’t do without it’.

Pentecostal philosopher James K.A. Smith agrees with these sentiments, saying that the importance of music in pentecostal spirituality can be explained by its ability to connect with the “affective core”¹⁴⁸ of a human being. It is this affective core that must be reached in order to achieve durable change in a person’s way of life. Pentecostal worship is “primed to reach us on a different register”¹⁴⁹ and, therefore, is efficient in bringing about transformation.

Pastor Nelly, also in Mavuno, says that while all parts of life can, and should, be part of the lifestyle of worship, music is nevertheless “a very important expression of worship.”¹⁵⁰ When I ask her to elaborate on the role of music, she answers:

Wow, it’s huge. Um, first of all music generally in life is, is core. It’s um [pause]. There’s so many clichés of what music is. It’s the language of the soul, it’s, you know, the quickest way into the mind. And there’s so many things I can say about music. And so, then, hence, therefore [pause]. I don’t think it’s realistic to have a human experience—whatever kind it is, whether it’s an opening ceremony for blah blah blah or a birthday party for blah blah blah, or a church service—without having music as part of it. I think that is a, I think it’s an incomplete life experience when you have a life experience that excludes music. That’s part of it.¹⁵¹

Music, she says, is essential for life, and therefore essential for worship. Without music, life would be incomplete, since music relates to deep aspects of a human being. This is why each human experience of any value, be it an

147 Interview Pastor Kamau 2014-02-11.

148 Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*, 77.

149 Smith, 77.

150 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

151 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

opening ceremony, a birthday party or a church service, is incomplete without music. It is not ‘realistic’ to exclude music from any communal gathering, that is how central it is. We may note how she relates life and music to communal, ritual behaviour. Life is lived in community and music is of core value in that life. We may also note how she relates music to different aspects of the human being: cognition (‘the quickest way into the mind’) as well as emotion (‘language of the soul’).

Pastor Deborah in Mavuno argues in a similar vein, especially highlighting the role of music in an African context.

I think it’s a, it’s a translation of inner emotions or inner feelings or who God is in your life. And I think Africans, we are very musical. Um, we used to, in the olden days they used to use music to, um, translate emotions or how they feel. So, you’ll find a very sad song and once you hear it, you’ll know that someone has died in that family; or a very happy song, you know there that someone is getting married or a child, a child has been born. And coming from that context of the African culture, um, music translates to, um, expressing to God where you are at life, you know. I’m saying, “Thank you God for my life”; also, I’m saying, “Thank you God for everything around me.” But also, a place where I reverence just God for who he is, not just because of anything he has done in my life. I think even in African culture there has to be some things like that. And again, we borrow a lot of that.¹⁵²

Music, she says, is ‘a translation of inner emotions or feelings’ or ‘who God is in your life’. Theology—who God is—is intimately connected to spirituality—who he is for you—and music becomes a vehicle to express that connection. Ritualized forms of worshipping through music (*orthopraxis*), thus integrate emotion (*orthopathos*) with doctrine (*orthopistis*) into a larger whole, and mediate the divine-human relationship as a form of life (*orthodoxa*). To Pastor Deborah, this is connected to the African culture. Just like in African tradition, music still has a major role in contemporary African culture. Again, referring to the role of music in major life events—death, marriage, birth—she says that the church borrows that function, utilizing music to translate inner emotions and feelings. For her, music is an African way of expressing feelings, it is the culturally appropriate way to express to God ‘where you are at life’.

¹⁵² Interview Pastor Deborah 2014-03-21.

Pastor Nyaga in Woodley also thinks music is essential for worship because of its affective capacity. But he takes his cues not from African culture, but from Scripture and soccer.

I: And would you say that worship in the form of songs and music is essential to the church or could it be all the other things but not music?

Nyaga: Music is critical in terms of worship. If you look at it from the Bible, especially the psalmist, you know, ‘praise the Lord with all sorts of stringed instruments, with the lute, with the harp’, you know. ‘Dance before the Lord’ [Ps. 150]. I think worship and emotions cannot be separated [laughs]. As I said when people are so fanatical about soccer, or whatever it is, you know, in your culture that people like about games and someone scores and ‘Yay!’ I find myself sometimes, you know, [claps his hands]: ‘Yeah, that’s it!’, you know [laughs].¹⁵³

Music is an important way for human beings to express their emotion. He refers to oral and embodied ways of worshipping, and also connects that to the oral and embodied expressions of soccer: clapping his hands, laughing, and shouting ‘yay!’ to exemplify how emotions can be expressed. Just as people express their feelings vividly and loudly at a soccer game, they can also do so in a church context. Musical forms of worship have this same function of embodying and expressing emotion in a communal, ritualized setting.¹⁵⁴ This, he says, is a biblical pattern, where the Book of Psalms in particular encourages people to use ‘all sorts of instruments’ and ‘dance’ to worship God.¹⁵⁵ As we have seen throughout the study, ritualized and embodied forms of musicking are theologized by linking them to biblical texts. At the same time, he struggles with how to explain the role of music, saying:

Nyaga: And so, uh, music is so, I don’t know how I can put this, but music is that part of worship, it’s like, uh, can I call it worship—organized worship. And we are created musical beings. And there’s certain music, part of music that really connects our hearts with the heart of God—I have no words to explain that! [both laugh]

I: But [tails off]?

153 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

154 On the similarities between ritual and sport, see Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 213–16.

155 Compare discussion in Martin, ‘The Book of Psalms and Pentecostal Worship’.

N: But it strikes a chord. ... It strikes a chord in us and then you should see when people sing a song that connects with people's hearts, and it's so beautiful! And yeah, so it's a very essential part of worship and if you divorce that from worship then, there's that, you know, um, beauty, that aroma that is missed out if you miss music as part of worship, yeah. So, it will be in a way, limited without music, yeah.¹⁵⁶

It is almost like something dawned on him as we spoke, as if he had never really thought about the role of music, and yet felt its importance intensely. He has 'no words' (this is said by someone who is usually a master of words, which is why we both laugh), and then a second later, what comes to his mind is a very poetic expression: 'it strikes a chord'. As if the heart of the human being were an instrument, and the Holy Spirit connected with that instrument through music, striking the chords of the inner, stringed instrument at every beat of the drums. When that connection happens, it 'is so beautiful'. As quoted earlier, even in his daily life, music becomes a "rhythm that connects my heart with the heart of God."¹⁵⁷

At the end of the interview, he admitted that he had not properly realized the importance of music before, and that this should be taught to the congregation, so as to give them a more "enriching experience"¹⁵⁸ on a Sunday morning. They too need to understand that, without music, the 'beauty' and 'aroma' would be missing from worship.

Musical forms of worship seem to have the same function in both communal and individual forms of spirituality. They are a core way of connecting with God individually and corporately. In interviews, the two often flow into each other: worship and music as part of congregational, communal settings, and as integral to the personal experience of living in a relationship with God. Earlier in this chapter, Pastor Josh was quoted describing how music helps him to be emotionally vulnerable before God as his Heavenly Father. Other informants shared similar sentiments on the function of worship in their personal life.

One young adult in Woodley struggled to explain the role of worship, saying that she does not know why, but sometimes it just breaks out in a song: "I just sing. It's like I can't control it. ... it keeps me in touch with God in a way that, it's like, it's not exactly expressed in words, it's only expressed, flows through

156 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

157 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

158 Interview Pastor Nyaga 2014-03-21.

the music.”¹⁵⁹ There is a communication with God that goes beyond ordinary language, one which flows unrestricted through music. Another person said that “music is a spiritual thing because, for me even when I am singing inside, it’s the only language I understand. Even [if] I end up having tears in my eyes, I do sing a lot of songs: praising, praising, praising, always.”¹⁶⁰ For this young woman, music and spirituality are intimately connected and form the language of her relationship with God. The divine-human relationship is one that is personal, emotional, and embodied, and it is mediated in fundamental ways via music.

We may conclude that through practice, the different levels of worship are intertwined and reinforce each other: worship as musicking, and worship that encompasses all of life. There is a certain ambiguity (or richness, depending on how you choose to see it) in the understanding of worship from a pentecostal perspective. Worship is a lifestyle, it is beyond music, and yet music is crucial for worship. Worship is modelled on biblical material, yet it also connects with African culture and universal human experience. Worship brings sacrifices to God, yet it also brings God’s sacramental presence to earth. Worship is all about God, and yet it aims at transforming human beings. It is a concrete musical-ritual practice and holistic spirituality at one and the same time.

4 Living a Life of Love: Worship as *Orthodoxa*

In this chapter, I have explored the connection between the mystical function of worship, salvation, transformation, and singing, as well as that between ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing, from the vantage point of local voices in Mavuno and Woodley. Arguing with the help of pentecostal scholars, I have demonstrated that the rite of worship and praise is a prime location of union with God in pentecostal spirituality, ultimately aiming at profound personal, missional, and eschatological transformation. Towards the end of the chapter, I elaborated on local conceptualizations of worship, showing how the different semantic levels are intertwined, almost impossible to separate. In this last section, I return to the idea of worship and life being one and the same, and put that once again into the matrix of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology.

Evangelical theologian Dennis P. Hollinger has called for a Christian faith that integrates “thought, passion and action” into “a whole faith for the whole

159 Interview Focus Group Woodley 2014-03-16.

160 Interview Focus Group Woodley 2014-03-16.

person.”¹⁶¹ Using the metaphors of head, heart, and hand to speak of these different dimensions of faith, he argues that the Christian Church has often overemphasized either one of them at the expense of the other, and failed to allow them to nurture each other. Pentecostal Christians, he argues, have overemphasized the heart, the affective dimension of faith, at the expense of engaging with theology, society, and culture in any profound way.¹⁶² His vision is instead one where the different dimensions join together and reinforce each other. This, he says, has “implication for nearly every phase of life,”¹⁶³ including worship. “True worship of God should incorporate head, heart and hands”¹⁶⁴ and “has the potential to bring together into a single act the logician, the artist and the activist.”¹⁶⁵ Even though individual Christians may be more prone to take on a single one of these roles, these dimensions are all part of what it means to worship God. Corporate worship should therefore evoke and nurture those different gifts and bring them together. “It is why worship must be simultaneously rooted deeply in the Word and the reality of God, must be creative in using the full range of our emotional and aesthetic gifts and must be active, as it brings the whole self into an encounter with God that will be evident to the watching world.”¹⁶⁶ His vision of what a faith that integrates thought, passion, and action would look like is very similar to how research participants describe their vision of Christian life, corporately and individually lived. For Progressive Pentecostals in Nairobi, this is precisely what they want to achieve.

Throughout this study, I have demonstrated how the rite of worship and praise in Mavuno and Woodley incorporates dimensions of ritualization (*orthopraxis*) and embodiment (*orthopathos*), as well as theologizing (*orthopistis*). I have also showed how fluid the boundaries between them are. It is not self-evident that ritual practice has to do with the ‘hand’ (action); it is also a matter of the head and heart. Similarly, it is not self-evident that theologizing happens in the ‘head’ (thought); it is as much a matter of the heart and hand. And affection and emotion are not necessarily things of the ‘heart’ (passion); they are also matters of the head and hand. For in the end, the body/Body is one and the same, and head, heart, and hand belong to it. Therefore,

161 Dennis P. Hollinger, *Head, Heart & Hands: Bringing Together Christian Thought, Passion and Action* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 32.

162 Hollinger, 24–26, 98–104.

163 Hollinger, 176.

164 Hollinger, 177.

165 Hollinger, 180.

166 Hollinger, 180.

pentecostal worship practices seek to integrate thought, passion, and action through embodied ritual action in the *ecclesia*, the concrete Body of Christ.

However, it does not stop there; the body/Body is made for movement, and Pentecostals are on the move to change the world. Integration and transformation through worship has a concrete missional and eschatological goal. In this last chapter, I have therefore linked the ritual practice of worship to larger issues in pentecostal spirituality-as-theology, arguing that in the theology of my Kenyan interlocutors, worship defines the relationship with the triune God and translates into every facet of life, with the ultimate goal of transforming the world. Using Hollinger's vocabulary, I have described a spirituality that is 'deeply rooted in the Word and the reality of God', that creatively uses 'the full range of emotional and aesthetic gifts' and that 'brings the whole self into an encounter with God' in a way that spurs action and is 'evident to the watching world'. Worship becomes *orthodoxa*.

However, Hollinger is right that there is that risk of an overemphasis of emotion in the pentecostal tradition (a risk of which research participants were acutely aware), but to understand pentecostal spirituality as entirely focused on affection is an oversimplification. Their aspiration is clear: they do not want worship to be "a Sunday thing" but rather strive for "life and worship" to be "one thing."¹⁶⁷ They want a spirituality that is integrated and transformative, and they regard ritualized musicking as a vehicle for achieving that lifestyle of worship.

In the words of one of the pastors in Mavuno, this life of worship can be summarized as living a life of love. Upon being asked to provide a Scripture verse or story that captures the meaning of worship, Pastor Nelly refers to a verse that guides her life.

My life verse is Ephesians 5:2 and it says, "live a life of love." And that's, that's it for me. I think God's reason for doing everything is love. His motivation, his inspiration, his, who he is, is love. And love is awesome and it's a good enough reason to do anything and everything. Um, ja, it's for me, love inspired the cross, love inspired creation, love inspires eternity, so for me love inspires worship. Ja, love is worship, I think. When we're living in light, when we're living a life of love and we're loving, we're loving God and we're loving people and we're loving the world and the earth and the things around us, and we're loving the resources that are in our hands, I think we are living a life of worship, ja.¹⁶⁸

167 Interview Pastor Deborah 2014-03-21.

168 Interview Pastor Nelly 2014-02-11.

To her, love summarizes what worship is, because it summarizes who God is. Since God is love, and since love is the reason behind everything that he does—creation, cross and, eternity—love is also the most essential motivation for worship as a way of life (*orthodoxa*). It is a ‘good enough reason to do anything and everything’. Therefore, love is worship. Love is not to be understood as a mere feeling in this context. It is a hands-on, active kind of love, including an affective dimension, but not restricted to it. Loving God is one side of worship, but that translates into loving people and loving the world, even the earth and the things around us, Pastor Nelly argues. There is, thus, a mutual reinforcement between her understanding of who God is (his nature and his works), her way of relating to this God in a personal manner (loving him), and her understanding of what worship entails in terms of loving the social, material, and natural world around her in concrete ways. We could say that *orthopistis* (doctrine) interacts with *orthopathos* (affection) and *orthopraxis* (practice) to form a larger whole that includes and transcends them all: *orthodoxa*. To Pastor Nelly, and to many pentecostal-charismatic Christians with her, right worship is ultimately and essentially ‘living a life of love’.

This is in accordance with the way academic pentecostal theologians have described pentecostal spirituality. Steven Land has famously stated that the “heart of Pentecostal spirituality is love” since a “passion for the kingdom is a passion for the king,”¹⁶⁹ while Amos Yong has insisted that “the pentecostal baptism of the Spirit” is in effect “a baptism in divine love” with “affective, practical and theological consequences related to the Christian mission in the world.”¹⁷⁰

Yong builds his argument for “a trinitarian theology of grace”¹⁷¹ around this idea of the outpouring of the Spirit as an outpouring of divine love, and views it as the centre of pentecostal spirituality and Christian mission alike. Quoting Frank D. Macchia he states:

With the gift of the Spirit, then, comes not only God’s greatest gift but, in effect, the person and reality of God: “Love is God’s supreme gift, for it transcends all emotion, conceptuality, and action only to inspire all three. It gives us life and that more abundantly. Love is not only God’s supreme gift; it is at the very essence of God’s nature as well.” Thus, the reception of the Spirit is a reception of divine love that fulfills the life of

169 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, 175.

170 Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*, 91. Compare Lord, ‘A Theology of Sung Worship’; Smith, *Thinking in Tongues: Pentecostal Contributions to Christian Philosophy*.

171 Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace*.

faith and drives earnest and fervent hope in God's capacity to transform the world.¹⁷²

Love transcends emotional, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions of faith, yet inspires all of them. Through the gift of love—that is, the baptism in the Spirit—the church is filled with love for God and neighbour, and empowered to give that love to the world. It is the love of God that “motivates us,” Yong says, “to love one another, to love our enemies, to love the world that God has created and through all of this, to love the God who first loved us.”¹⁷³

Here, the rite of praise and worship functions as the response of a “desiring heart” “to the reception of divine love,”¹⁷⁴ a way to express and receive the gift of grace through communal-ritual means. This relates to the argument put forward by Mark Cartledge above, that the “pull’ [into worship] is followed by a ‘push’ outward in missionary love and service.”¹⁷⁵ The sacramental presence of the person and reality of God transforms God's people, and propels them out into “loving service toward the wider community and society.”¹⁷⁶ The *unio mystica* translates into a concrete and holistic *via salutis* marked by love.

Undoubtedly, in Kenyan pentecostal practice, the *via salutis* is best accompanied by rhythm. The sought-after mystical experience, and its desired result—life-change—are facilitated by the ritual progression of praise and worship. By dancing steps of faith, congregants learn to walk together with the Divine You (*pamoja na Wewe*, as the song says) on their journey of salvation. Singing and dancing and clapping and playing music are not optional or random activities, but constitute a core ritual practice providing congregants with a viable route to the central goal of pentecostal spirituality: transformation. It is exactly here, in corporate worship, through a deliberate sequencing of ritual acts and utterances, that the pentecostal journey into God takes place. And it is here that God's people are transformed into fearless influencers of society who are set to transform the world through love. Pentecostal worship practices function as a channel for God's transformative presence, with worship songs forming a bridge between the idea of change and the experience of change for the individual and the community. For the research participants, singing and making music is a powerful instrument to bring people to Christ, and through that, ultimately, to bring about a new world order.

172 Yong, 88. Quote from Frank D. Macchia (2006) page 259.

173 Yong, 160.

174 Yong, 53.

175 Cartledge, *Mediation of the Spirit: Interventions in Practical Theology*, 115.

176 Cartledge, 115.

The core of this study has been to investigate how the ritual practice of worship (i.e., musicking as part of communal liturgy), relates to the larger picture of worship, understood as a way of life, as *orthodoxa*. Exploring in turn ritualization, embodiment, and theologizing, I have illustrated the richness of the practice of worship in the local pentecostal-charismatic contexts of Mavuno and Woodley. My perhaps simple conclusion is that through worship as holistic, ritual practice, an integrated life of worship can begin.

It is precisely this connection between an embodied and ritualized form, and the essence of faith—a whole life lived in communion with the triune God—that makes worshipping through music so central to the pentecostal-charismatic tradition. The rite of worship and praise becomes a fast track to everything that salvation entails. And so, worship, understood at both levels, encapsulates the essence of pentecostal spirituality-as-theology.

Music becomes a rhythm that connects human hearts to the heart of God.

APPENDIX 1

Interview Guides and Examples

TABLE A1.1 Interview guide, part I

Name of interviewee:						
Role in church (if any):						
Do you want to remain anonymous in the report?						
Yes			No			
Gender:						
Male			Female			
Age:						
13–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
Marital status:						
Single	Engaged	Married	Divorced	Widowed		
What language do you consider your mother tongue?						
Kiswahili	English	Kikuyu	Kamba	Ekegussi	Kimiiru/Kiambu	
Dhouluo	Kalenjin	Maasai	Ololuyia	Samburu	Mijikenda	
Other language, please specify:						
In what province of Kenya where you brought up?						
Nairobi	Central	Eastern	North Eastern	Nyanza	Coast	Rift Valley Western
Other nation, please specify:						
Which of the following categories best describes the religious affiliation of the family you where brought up in:						
Pentecostal				African traditional		
Evangelical, non-Pentecostal				Muslim		
Lutheran				Hindu		
Anglican				No religion		
Catholic				Other, please specify:		
What is the highest level of school you have completed or highest degree you have received?						
Not completed primary school				College diploma		
Primary school				Bachelor degree		
Secondary school				Graduate degree		
College certificate				Doctorate degree		
For how long have you been affiliated with or worked in this church?						
Less than 1 year	1–3 years	3–5 years	5–10 years	More than 10 years		

TABLE A1.2 Interview guide, part II: Example, pastor in CITAM Woodley

Main questions	Probing questions (optional)
	<p><i>Let me tell you first that there are no right and wrong answers. This is not a test and I will not use the answers to evaluate your faith or your ministry. Rather I am most of all interested in your thoughts and experiences, so please feel free to share them simply and boldly.</i></p>
<p>1. Please tell me a bit about your PERSONAL BACKGROUND and your ROLE in CITAM Woodley.</p>	<p>family—upbringing spiritual journey education—professional career—passions current position and role</p>
<p>2. How would you describe the THEOLOGY of CITAM WOODLEY?</p>	<p>How would you position your church within the wider Christian theological landscape? How would you define Pentecostal theology? How would you describe your church's view of:—God—Christ—Holy Spirit—salvation—the role of the church in the world—baptism in the Spirit—baptism in water—Holy communion—(creation—the Bible—eschatology—evil)</p>
<p><i>I have understood that the word WORSHIP has several meanings, and I would like us to look at the concept from different angles.</i></p>	
<p>3. If you look at WORSHIP as a THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT, how would you explain it?</p>	<p>What different levels of meaning does the word 'worship' have? What does it mean to 'worship God' and why is that important? If you were to give me some Scripture verses or a Bible story that captures the meaning of 'worship' for you, what would that be? In your church I often hear people say things like: 'we worship/honour/ bless/ exalt/praise/thank you'. Is there a difference between these words or are they basically the same?</p>

TABLE A1.2 Interview guide, part II: Example, pastor in CITAM Woodley (cont.)

<p>4. If you instead look at WORSHIP as MUSIC, how would you describe it?</p>	<p>How would you describe the musical genre called 'praise & worship'? Is this genre more fitting for worshipping God than other genres? Why or why not?</p> <p>How would you describe the musical style of your church?</p> <p>How would you categorise the different types of songs used in your church? Are different types of songs used for different occasions?</p> <p>Is there a difference between 'praise-songs', 'worship-songs' and 'gospel songs'? If so, what is it?</p> <p>Who decides on what kind of music should be used, and on what basis is that decision made?</p> <p>What is the origin of the songs used in your church?</p> <p>How important is language and the level of language when you choose songs?</p> <p>What is most important when you pick a song—the content or the musical style?</p>
<p>5. What role would you say that WORSHIP plays as PART of the SUNDAY SERVICES in your church?</p>	<p>What is the function of worship (songs & music) within the church service? How does it affect the congregation spiritually or psychologically?</p> <p>Do you choose songs that will fit the theme of the sermon or are they chosen independently?</p> <p>How important is the actual performance of worship within the church service? For example, the musical quality, sound, clothing, dance etc?</p> <p>In your church I often hear the expressions 'sanctuary' and 'altar'. How important are the physical surroundings for worship? Does the hall itself have a certain meaning?</p> <p>Your Sunday program always has more or less the same structure. Is that structure the same for all CITAM churches? Do you see this structure as a pragmatic choice due to your spiritual heritage or a God-given liturgy? Could it be changed?</p> <p>How would you describe the relationship between structure and spontaneity in the Sunday services?</p> <p>Is there a tension between allowing God to move freely in the service and yet keeping to the time and program?</p>

TABLE A1.2 Interview guide, part II: Example, pastor in CITAM Woodley (cont.)

	<p>You always have three services each Sunday; is there any difference between them and how do you feel about doing the same program over and over again?</p> <p>If you look ten years ahead, what do you think the church services and worship music in your church will look like? Do you work strategically to develop services?</p>
<p>6. How do you see the relationship between WORSHIP MUSIC, CHURCH SERVICES and CULTURE?</p>	<p>How important is it for you as a church to relate to the surrounding culture in the way you structure your services and the kind of music you choose? Do you deliberately engage with culture in any way?</p> <p>What culture would you say is closest to you in your expressions as a church; Kenyan traditional culture—Kenyan popular/urban culture—Western culture—Protestant church culture—African church culture—African culture in general—or any other?</p> <p>What effect does popular music have on Christian music in Kenya and vice versa?</p>
<p><i>Now I would like to ask you a little bit more about your personal experiences of worship and serving as a worship pastor.</i></p>	
<p>7. You have served as a WORSHIP PASTOR for many years, how do you see YOUR ROLE in leading worship?</p>	<p>What is your most important task as a worship pastor?</p> <p>Have you experienced a calling to lead worship? How did that come about?</p> <p>What Scripture verses or Bible stories inspire you in your role as a worship pastor?</p> <p>What other sources of inspiration do you have: books, pastors, artists, churches?</p> <p>What are the major challenges that you face as a worship pastor in CITAM Woodley?</p>

TABLE A1.2 Interview guide, part II: Example, pastor in CITAM Woodley (cont.)

<p>8. As a worship pastor, I guess that WORSHIP also means a lot to you in your PERSONAL WALK WITH GOD?</p>	<p>What does worship mean to you spiritually, in your relationship with God? If you were to pick a certain song that has meant a lot in your spiritual journey, what would that be? Why? Can you describe how you feel when you go before God in worship?</p>
<p><i>Finally, I have a question that relates to the role of Worship in Pentecostal churches in general.</i></p>	
<p>9. Why do you think that WORSHIP in the form of MUSIC, plays such an important part within PENTECOSTAL or CHARISMATIC churches today?</p>	<p>Has songs and music always played an important part in Pentecostal/Charismatic spirituality? How has the function of music and the type of music used changed over the years? How do you think that worship music will sound and be performed in Pentecostal churches globally, 10 years from now?</p>

APPENDIX 2

Observation Guides

TABLE A2.1 Observation guide, part I

Church	Date & time	
Estimated number of congregants	Start: Announcements: Sermon:	
Estimated demographic profile in percentage	0–12: 13–20: 20–35: 35–55: 55+:	African: Asian: Western:
		Male: Female:
Scenography/decorations		
Host of service: gender & age, style		
Worship leader: gender & age, style		
Singers: number, gender & age, style		
Musicians: gender & age, style, instruments played		
Estimated number of songs sung	English: Kiswahili: Up-beat: Soft:	Before sermon: After sermon:
Typical expressions / catchwords		
Bible texts read/quoted	Before sermon: In sermon: After sermon:	
Preacher: gender & age, style		
Theme of sermon		
Number and type of altarcalls made		

TABLE A2.2 Observation guide, part II

Church:			Date & Time:
When?	Who?	What?	How?

Lyrical Content Analysis Guide

How can songs be categorized according to type? The categorization in Table A3.1 is inspired by a form-functional analysis of the Psalter, for example in Dillard Longman. The genre is sometimes implied although not spelled out. 'God' in the following explanations can refer to either the Godhead or any of the persons of the Trinity.

Song numbers and letters in the left column correlate to the songs in Tables A7.3 (Mavuno) and A7.4 (Woodley). For example, M₁ = the first song in the Mavuno corpus, Table A7.3 ('Angels we Have Heard on High').

One song can belong to several types. The mark x shows which type(s) each song aligns with. Songs that *encourage* the act rather than *express* the act are marked with *.

Table A3.1 shows a small sample of the categorization conducted, and is meant to serve as a guide for structured research.

TABLE A3.2 Example of lyrical content analysis, the names of God. What names and titles are used to address or designate God? Are these expressions used in the Old or New Testament? Are they common goods in Christian tradition? Is there a difference between names used in Swahili and English?

Name/ Title	Used in songs number	Used in total number of songs	Old/New Testament /church tradition reference	Language	Comment
'Baba'					
Etc.					

TABLE A3.3 Example of lyrical content analysis, person in Trinity. Which of the persons in the Trinity is addressed, directly or indirectly? 'Trinitarian theology specified' means that Father-Son-Spirit are mentioned together in the same song or that God is explicitly called 'triune'. Songs can fall into more than one category.

	Unspecified or general name/ title (‘You’/‘God’ /Lord/Jehova)	The triune God (Trinitarian theology specified)	The Father (or equivalent)	The Son (or equivalent)	The Spirit (or equivalent)	Comment
No. $M(n)/W(n)$						
M ₁	x			x		
M ₂				x		
M ₃	x			x		Son is implied, 'savior'
M ₄						
Etc.						

TABLE A3.4 Example of lyrical content analysis, use of Bible. What biblical texts are alluded to or quoted in songs? 'Direct references' means quotes or undisputable references, 'indirect references' are more vague but possible. General use of biblical language is not marked unless there is a specific text behind it.

	Direct reference	Indirect reference	Comment
No. M(n)/W(n)			
M1	Luke 2		
M2		Luke 2	
M3	1 Pet 2:21-25, Isaiah 53:5		
Etc.			

Research Surveys

TABLE A4.1 Survey (Mavuno Church)

We would be happy if you could take a minute to complete this form, although it is totally voluntary for you. This survey is part of a research project on worship within urban churches in Nairobi conducted by Martina Prosén, Lund University.

Kindly tick the box that most accurately describes your situation:

1. Age

Below 12	13–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+
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2. Gender

Male	Female
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3a. In what province of Kenya were you brought up?

Nairobi	Central	Eastern	North Eastern	Nyanza	Coast	Rift Valley	Western
---------	---------	---------	---------------	--------	-------	-------------	---------

3b. I was brought up outside Kenya:

Other nation, please specify:

4. What language do you consider your mother tongue?

Kiswahili	English	Kikuyu	Kamba	Ekegussi	Kimiiru/Kiambu
Dhouluo	Kalenjin	Maasai	Ololuyia	Samburu	Mijikenda

Other language, please specify:

5. Which of the following categories best describes the religious affiliation of the family you were brought up in?

Pentecostal	
Evangelical, non-Pentecostal	
Lutheran	
Anglican	

Catholic	
African traditional	
Muslim	
Hindu	

No religion	
Other, please specify:	

TABLE A4.1 Survey (Mavuno Church) (cont.)

6. What is the highest level of school you have completed or highest degree you have received?

Not completed primary school		College diploma	
Primary school		Bachelor degree	
Secondary school		Graduate degree	
College certificate		Doctorate degree	

7. Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status?

Employed within government sector		Self-employed, business owner	
Employed within business sector		Not employed, looking for work	
Employed within media sector		House wife	
Employed within education or health sector		Student/ In school	
Employed within church/Para-church/NGO		Other, please specify:	
Employed as driver, gardener, house help, etc.			

8. Which of the following categories best describes your affiliation with Mavuno Church?

Occasional visitor, member of other church:	
Occasional visitor, not member of other church:	
Regular visitor, member of other church:	
Regular visitor, not member of other church:	
Member of Mavuno life-group	
Mavuno associate	
Mavuno staff member	

9. For how long have you been affiliated with Mavuno church?

Less than 1 year	1–3 years	3–5 years	More than 5 years	Not affiliated
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10. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the church services in Mavuno:

Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
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11. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the worship music in Mavuno:

Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
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12. Who do you feel closest to during the worship time?

God, the Father	Jesus	The Holy Spirit	The congregation	Yourself
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13. What element in the church services in Mavuno do you appreciate most?

Praise & Worship	Prayer	Sermon	Fellowship	Other, please specify:
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TABLE A4.2 Survey (CITAM Woodley)

We would be happy if you could take a minute to complete this form, although it is totally voluntary for you. This survey is part of a research project on worship within urban churches in Nairobi.

Kindly tick the box that most accurately describes your situation:

1. Age

Below 12	13–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+	
----------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-----	--

2. Gender

Male	Female
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3a. In what province of Kenya were you brought up?

Nairobi	Central	Eastern	North Eastern	Nyanza	Coast	Rift Valley	Western
---------	---------	---------	---------------	--------	-------	-------------	---------

3b. I was brought up outside Kenya:

Other nation, please specify:

4. What language do you consider your mother tongue?

Kiswahili	English	Kikuyu	Kamba	Ekegussi	Kimiiru/Kiambu
Dhouluo	Kalenjin	Maasai	Ololuyia	Samburu	Mijikenda
Other language, please specify:					

5. Which of the following categories best describes the religious affiliation of the family you were brought up in:

Pentecostal		Catholic		No religion	
Evangelical, non-Pentecostal		African traditional		Other, please specify:	
Lutheran		Muslim			
Anglican		Hindu			

6. What is the highest level of school you have completed or highest degree you have received?

Not completed primary school		College diploma	
Primary school		Bachelor degree	
Secondary school		Graduate degree	
College certificate		Doctorate degree	

TABLE A4.2 Survey (CITAM Woodley) (cont.)

7. Which of the following categories best describes your current employment status?

Employed within government sector		Self-employed, business owner	
Employed within business sector		Not employed, looking for work	
Employed within media sector		House wife	
Employed within education or health sector		Student/ In school	
Employed within church/Para-church/NGO		Other, please specify:	
Employed as driver, gardener, house help, etc.			

8. Which of the following categories best describes your affiliation with CITAM Woodley?

Occasional visitor, member of other church:	
Occasional visitor, not member of other church:	
Regular visitor, member of other church:	
Regular visitor, not member of other church:	
Member of CITAM Woodley, involved in ministry	
Member of CITAM Woodley, not involved in ministry	

9. For how long have you been affiliated with CITAM Woodley?

Less than 1 year	1–3 years	3–5 years	More than 5 years	Not affiliated
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10. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the church service today:

Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
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11. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the worship music today:

Very dissatisfied	Not satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
-------------------	---------------	---------	-----------	----------------

12. Who did you feel closest to during the worship time?

God, the Father	Jesus	The Holy Spirit	The congregation	Yourself
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13. What element in the church services in CITAM Woodley do you appreciate most?

Praise & Worship	Prayer	Sermon	Fellowship	Other, please specify:
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Research Survey Results, Mavuno Church

TABLE A5.1 Age of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
below 12 years	5	1.7%
13–19 years	8	2.7%
20–29 years	156	52.0%
30–39 years	89	29.7%
40–49 years	33	11.0%
50–59 years	9	3.0%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.2 Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	118	39.3%
Female	182	60.7%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.3 Respondent's province of origin

	Frequency	Percentage
Nairobi	143	47.7%
Central	39	13.0%
Eastern	31	10.3%
North Eastern	2	0.7%
Nyanza	18	6.0%
Coast	15	5.0%
Rift Valley	31	10.3%
Western	16	5.3%
Outside Kenya	5	1.6%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.4 Respondents' mother tongue

	Frequency	Percentage
Kiswahili	28	9.3%
English	16	5.3%
Kikuyu	103	34.3%
Kamba	24	8.0%
Ekegusii	9	3.0%
Kimeru	17	5.7%
Dholuo	35	11.7%
Kalenjin	19	6.3%
Maasai	3	1.0%
Ololuyia	24	8.0%
Samburu	3	1.0%
Mijikenda	5	1.7%
Others	14	4.7%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.5 The respondent's family religious affiliations

	Frequency	Percentage
Pentecostal	94	31.3%
Anglican	63	21.0%
Hindu	1	0.3%
Evangelical and Non-Pentecostal	27	9.0%
Catholic	70	23.3%
Lutheran	7	2.3%
Muslim	3	1.0%
African traditional	9	3.0%
No religion	7	2.3%
Others	18	6.3%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.6 Respondents' academic qualifications

	Frequency	Percentage
Not completed primary school	2	0.7%
Primary school	3	1.0%
Secondary school	20	6.7%
College certificate	19	6.6%
College diploma	50	16.7%
Bachelor degree	134	44.7%
Graduate degree	65	21.7%
Doctorate degree	6	2.0%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.7 Respondents' employment status

	Frequency	Percentage
Employed within government sector	31	10.3%
Employed within business sector	97	32.3%
Employed within media sector	8	2.7%
Employed within education or health sector	12	4.0%
Employed within church/Para-church/NGO	20	6.7%
Employed as driver, gardener or house help	3	1.0%
Self employed/business owner	56	18.7%
Not employed-looking for work	34	11.3%
House wife	9	3.0%
Student-in school	27	9.0%
Others	3	1.0%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.8 Respondents' nature of affiliation with Mavuno

	Frequency	Percentage
Occasional visitor, member of other church	19	6.3%
Occasional visitor, not member of other church	20	6.7%
Regular visitor, member of other church	49	16.3%
Regular visitor, not member of other church	44	14.7%
Member of Mavuno life-group	86	28.7%
Mavuno associate	76	25.3%
Mavuno staff member	6	2.0%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.9 The respondents' duration of affiliation with Mavuno

	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	82	27.3%
1–3 years	96	32.0%
3–5 years	64	21.3%
More than 5 years	50	16.7%
Not affiliated	8	2.7%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.10 The respondents' levels of satisfaction with Mavuno church services

	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	1	0.3%
Not satisfied	6	2.0%
Neutral	18	6.0%
Satisfied	150	50.0%
Very satisfied	125	41.7%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.11 The respondents' levels of satisfaction with Mavuno worship music

	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	4	1.3%
Not satisfied	20	6.7%
Neutral	48	16.0%
Satisfied	121	40.3%
Very satisfied	107	35.7%
Total	300	100.0%

TABLE A5.12 Respondents' experience of intimacy with God, self and others (multiple choice)

	Frequency	Percentage
God the Father	130	43.3%
Jesus	87	29.0%
The Holy Spirit	115	38.3%
Congregation	11	3.7%
Self	14	4.7%

TABLE A5.13 Respondents' appreciation of service elements (multiple choice)

	Frequency	Percentage
Praise & Worship	79	26.3%
Prayer	31	10.3%
Sermon	203	67.7%
Fellowship	76	25.3%

Research Survey Results, CITAM Woodley

TABLE A6.1 Age of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Below 12 years	23	7.0%
13–19 years	117	35.5%
20–29 years	101	30.6%
30–39 years	59	17.9%
40–49 years	25	7.6%
50–59 years	5	1.5%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.2 Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	137	41.5%
Female	193	58.5%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.3 Respondents' province of origin

	Frequency	Percentage
Nairobi	82	24.8%
Central	35	10.6%
Eastern	39	11.8%
North Eastern	0	0%
Nyanza	63	19.1%
Coast	8	2.4%
Rift Valley	53	16.1%
Western	41	12.4%
Outside Kenya	9	2.7%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.4 Respondents' mother tongue

	Frequency	Percentage
Kiswahili	10	3.0%
English	10	3.0%
Kikuyu	52	15.8%
Kamba	29	8.8%
Ekegusii	29	8.8%
Kimeru	20	6.1%
Dhouluo	66	20.0%
Kalenjin	34	10.3%
Maasai	0	0%
Ololuyia	61	18.5%
Samburu	1	0.3%
Mijikenda	6	1.8%
Others	12	3.6%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.5 The respondents' family religious affiliations

	Frequency	Percentage
Pentecostal	137	41.5%
Anglican	65	19.7%
Hindu	0	0%
Evangelical and Non-Pentecostal	33	10.0%
Catholic	63	19.1%
Lutheran	5	1.5%
Muslim	1	0.3%
African traditional	1	0.3%
No religion	1	0.3%
Others	24	7.3%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.6 Respondents' academic qualifications

	Frequency	Percentage
Not completed primary school	3	0.9%
Primary school	13	3.9%
Secondary school	53	16.1%
College certificate	38	11.5%
College diploma	78	23.6%
Bachelor degree	90	27.3%
Graduate degree	50	15.2%
Doctorate degree	5	1.5%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.7 Respondents' employment status

	Frequency	Percentage
Employed within government sector	38	11.5%
Employed within business sector	64	19.4%
Employed within media sector	4	1.2%
Employed within education or health sector	27	8.2%
Employed within church/Para-church/NGO	30	9.1%
Employed as driver, gardener, house help, etc.	11	3.3%
Self employed/business owner	59	17.9%
Not employed, looking for work	46	13.9%
House wife	10	3.0%
Student/in school	32	9.7%
Others	8	2.4%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.8 Respondents' nature of affiliation with CITAM Woodley

	Frequency	Percentage
Occasional visitor, member of other church	32	9.7%
Occasional visitor, not member of other church	16	4.8%
Regular visitor, member of other church	44	13.3%
Regular visitor, not member of other church	71	21.5%
Member of CITAM Woodley, involved in ministry	68	20.6%
Member of CITAM Woodley, not involved in ministry	99	30.0%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.9 The respondents' duration of affiliation with CITAM Woodley

	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	62	18.8%
1–3 years	85	25.8%
3–5 years	46	13.9%
More than 5 years	122	37.0%
Not affiliated	15	4.5%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.10 The respondents' levels of satisfaction with CITAM Woodley's church service on Sunday 26th January 2014

	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	3	0.9%
Not satisfied	2	0.6%
Neutral	15	4.5%
Satisfied	180	54.5%
Very satisfied	130	39.4%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.11 The respondents' levels of satisfaction with CITAM Woodley worship music on Sunday 26th January 2014

	Frequency	percentage
Very dissatisfied	6	1.8%
Not satisfied	4	1.2%
Neutral	25	7.6%
Satisfied	152	46.1%
Very satisfied	143	43.3%
Total	330	100.0%

TABLE A6.12 Respondents' experience of intimacy with God, self and others (multiple choice)

	Frequency	Percentage
God the Father	151	45.8%
Jesus	78	23.6%
The Holy Spirit	162	49.1%
Congregation	3	0.9%
Self	5	1.5%

TABLE A6.13 Respondents' appreciation of service elements (multiple choice)

	Frequency	Percentage
Praise & Worship	189	57.3%
Prayer	50	15.2%
Sermon	150	45.5%
Fellowship	59	17.9%

Primary Sources

Interviews

TABLE A7.1 List of formal interviews with author, by affiliation and level of authority/position in church: top- or mid-level pastoral leadership, volunteer (congregant involved in ministry), and congregant (ordinary church-goer, not necessarily member). Names marked with a are Pseudonyms.

	Name/Pseudonym ^a	Position	Date
Mavuno	Pastor Munga ^a	Top-level	2013-01-24
	Pastor Kamau ^a	Top-level	2014-02-11
	Pastor Nelly ^a	Mid-level	2014-02-11
	Pastor Josh ^a	Mid-level	2014-02-12
	Pastor Deborah ^a	Mid-level	2014-03-21
	Mavuno Music Team (9)	Volunteer	2014-02-02
	Mavuno Focus group (6) (conducted by assistant)	Congregant	2014-03-25
CITAM	Pastor Nyaga ^a	Top-level	2014-03-21
	Pastor Rose ^a	Mid-level	2013-01-20
	Pastor Rose ^a	Top-level	2014-01-31
	Pastor Omondi ^a	Top-level	2013-01-14
	Pastor Kimeli ^a	Mid-level	2013-01-15
	Pastor Ruth ^a	Mid-level	2013-01-15
	Woodley Music Team (7)	Volunteer	2014-02-08
	Woodley Focus group (12)	Congregant	2014-03-16
Other churchleaders	Pastor Ezekiel, ^a Joe Kayo Ministries	Top-level	2013-01-16
	Pastor Matthew, ^a Free Pentecostal Fellowship of Kenya, FPFK	Top-level	2013-01-24
	Pastor Patrick, ^a International Christian Centre, ICC	Mid-level	2013-01-22
	Pastor Bernard, ^a Nairobi Chapel	Mid-level	2013-01-13

TABLE A7.1 List of formal interviews with author, by affiliation and level of authority/position in church (*cont.*)

	Name/Pseudonym ^a	Position	Date
Academics	Rev. Jeff Nelson, East Africa School of Theology, EAST		2013-01-21
	Rev. Bill Kurt, East Africa School of Theology		2013-01-21
	Rev. Gideon Achieng, Pan African Christian University, PACU		2014-03-14

Observations

TABLE A7.2 List of observed services and gatherings, by type

Type of service	Woodley	Mavuno	Other ecclesial settings
Sunday Service	2013-01-20 8am	2013-01-27 12pm	Nairobi Baptist Church
	2013-12-29 8am, 10am	2013-12-29 12pm	
	2014-01-12 12pm	2014-01-05 9am, 12pm	2013-01-13 8am
	2014-01-26 8am, 10am, 12pm	2014-01-12 9am	House of Grace
	2014-02-02 8am, 10am	2014-01-19 9am, 12pm	2013-01-13 9am
	2014-02-09 8am, 10am, 12pm	2014-02-02 12pm	Nairobi Chapel
	2014-03-16 10am		2013-01-13 11am
			Mamlaka Hill Chapel
			2013-01-20 10am
			CITAM Valley Road
Christmas theme/ Sunday		2013-12-22 12pm	2013-01-20 11:30am
			Jubilé Christian Church JCC
			2013-01-27 8am
			International Christian Church, ICC
			2013-01-27 10am

TABLE A7.2 List of observed services and gatherings, by type (*cont.*)

Type of service	Woodley	Mavuno	Other ecclesial settings
Christmas theme/ Friday	2013-12-20		
Youth Service/ Sunday	2014-03-16	20140323	
New Years Eve	2013-12-31		
Staff meeting		2014-01-08 2014-02-04 2014-02-12 2014-03-19 2014-03-26	
Power House (Wednesday Prayer meeting)	2014-03-12 2014-03-19		
Other gatherings	Women's meeting, 2014-03-15	Morning chapel Riara High School, 2014-03-09	Lunch Hour meeting, Joe Kayo Ministries ×2 Morning Chapel, EAST Morning Chapel, CITAM Kiserian Prayer day, CITAM Valley Road 2014-01-11

The Mavuno Sung Corpus

TABLE A7.3 Songs sung in observed services Mavuno, by name. Special songs marked with a. Unknown origin marked with *italics*. Swahili Songs in grey.

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
M1	Angels We Have Heard on High	2013-12-22	James Chadwick	https://hymnary.org/text/angels_we_have_heard_on_high (accessed 2020-04-06)
M2	Away in a Manger	2013-12-22	Martin Luther	https://hymnary.org/text/away_in_a_manger_no_crib_for_a_bed (accessed 2020-04-06)

TABLE A7.3 Songs sung in observed services Mavuno, by name. ... (cont.)

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
M3	Awesome	2013-12-29 2014-02-02	Charles Jenkins	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6302694/awesome (accessed 2020-08-25)
M4	Cha Kutumaini Sina	2014-01-12 2014-01-19	Translation of My Hope is Built on Nothing Less/The Solid Rock	https://www.facebook.com/pceaonline/posts/cha-kutumaini-sinaila-damu-yake-bwanasina-wema-wa-kutoshadhambi-zangu-kuziosh-akw/206372996188808 (accessed 2020-08-25) https://hymnary.org/hymn/NzIY2003/237B (accessed 2020-08-25) https://hymnary.org/text/my_hope_is_built_on_nothing_less (accessed 2020-03-10)
M5	<i>Christ The Lord</i>	2013-12-22	–	<i>Text and origin not found</i>
M6	Come and Let Us sing	2014-01-12	Israel & New Breed	https://genius.com/Israel-and-new-breed-come-and-let-us-sing-lyrics (accessed 2020-08-25)
M7	Cornerstone	2014-01-12 2014-01-19	Edward Mote Eric Liljero Jonas Myrin Reuben Morgan William B. Bradbury	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6158927/cornerstone (accessed 2020-07-14)
M8	Ebenezer	2014-01-05	Kanjii Mbugua	https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Kanjii-Mbugua/Ebenezer (accessed 2019-07-17)
M9	Every Praise	2013-12-29	Hezekiah Walker, John David Bratton	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6623483/every-praise (accessed 2020-07-14)
M10	Fundi wa Mbao	2013-12-22	Gospel Fathers	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXmLqoILbQ0 (accessed 2020-07-14)
M11	Glory ^a	2014-01-05	Mike Onen	https://soundcloud.com/kenyangospel/glory-mike-o-produced-by-geo (accessed 2020-01-10)
M12	Good	2014-01-19	Tye Tribbett	https://genius.com/Tye-tribbett-good-lyrics (accessed 2020-01-10)

TABLE A7.3 Songs sung in observed services Mavuno, by name ... (cont.)

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
M13	Hallelujah	2014-01-19	Cindy Cruse Ratcliff, Israel Houghton	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4194354/hallelujah (accessed 2020-07-14)
M14	<i>He is King</i>	2013-12-22		<i>Text and origin not found</i>
M15	How deep the Father's love to us	2013-12-22	Stuart Townend	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1558110/how-deep-the-fathers-love-for-us (accessed 2020-07-14)
M16	I belong to you	2014-01-05	Marvin Sapp	https://genius.com/Marvin-sapp-i-belong-to-you-lyrics (access 2018-08-22)
M17	I know who I am	2014-02-02	Sinach (Osinachi Kalu Okoro Egbu)	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7115745/i-know-who-i-am (accessed 2020-07-14)
M18	I will follow/ Swahili verse	2014-01-12	Chris Tomlin Jason Ingram Reuben Morgan /Gloria Muliro	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/5806878/i-will-follow (accessed 2020-08-25) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcN8y_dmHJI (accessed 2021-06-07)
M19	Jesus at the Center	2013-12-29	Israel Houghton, Adam Ranney, Micah Massey	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6115180/jesus-at-the-center (accessed 2020-07-14)
M20	Moving forward	2013-12-22 2014-01-05	Israel Houghton, Ricardo Sanchez	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4992525/moving-forward (accessed 2020-08-25)
M21	Nibebe	2014-01-19	Rose Muhando	https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/ROSE-MUHANDO/Nibebe (accessed 2020-01-10)
M22	Nishikilie Niongoze	2014-01-05	Kambua	https://sifalyrics.com/kambua-nishikilie-lyrics (accessed 2018-08-22)
M23	No weapon	2013-12-22	Alvin Moore, Fred Hammond	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1966420/no-weapon (accessed 2020-08-25)
M24	O come, all ye faithful	2013-12-22	John Francis Wade	https://hymnary.org/text/come_hither_ye_faithful_triumphantly_sin (accessed 2020-04-06)
M25	Oh, Holy Night	2013-12-22	Placide Cappeau, John S. Dwight	https://hymnary.org/text/o_holy_night_the_stars_are_brightly_shin (accessed 2020-01-14)

TABLE A7.3 Songs sung in observed services Mavuno, by name. ... (cont.)

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
M26	Our God	2014-01-19	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/5677416/our-god (accessed 2020-07-14)
M27	Silent night	2013-12-22	Joseph Mohr, Freeman Young	https://hymnary.org/text/silent_night_holy_night_all_is_calm_all (accessed 2020-01-14)
M28	Simply the best/ Takeback	2013-12-29	Tina Turner/ Mavuno adaptation	https://www.metrolyrics.com/simply-the-best-lyrics-tina-turner.html (accessed 2020-01-09)
M29	Sunny Day ^a	2014-01-19	Atemi Oyungu & Timothy Rimbui	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kzx9djyoaXI (accessed 2020-01-10)
M30	Superstar	2013-12-29	Chris Adwar	https://www.last.fm/music/Chris+Adwar/_/Superstar (accessed 2021-06-15), + email from Kyama Mugambi
M31	Take over	2014-01-12	Tye Tribbett	https://genius.com/Tye-tribbett-take-over-lyrics (accessed 2020-01-10)
M32	Thank you Lord	2013-12-29	Don Moen, Paul Baloche	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4220833/thank-you-lord (accessed 2020-07-14)
M33	The first noel, the angel did say	2013-12-22	Anonymous	https://hymnary.org/text/the_first_noel_the_angel_did_say/fulltexts (accessed 2020-01-14)
M34	Turn it around	2014-02-02	Aaron Lindsey, Israel Houghton	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4654258/turn-it-around (accessed 2020-08-25)
M35	What child is this?	2013-12-22	William Chatterton Dix	https://hymnary.org/text/what_child_is_this_who_laid_to_rest/fulltexts (accessed 2020-01-14)
M36	Withholding nothing	2014-02-02	William McDowell	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7037764/withholding-nothing (accessed 2020-07-14)

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TABLE A7.4 Songs sung in observed services in CITAM Woodley, by name. Special songs marked with a. Unknown origin marked with *italics*. Swahili Songs in grey.

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
W1	Above All	2014-01-12	Lenny LeBlanc, Paul Baloche	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2672885/above-all (accessed 2020-08-25)
W2	Africa Yote Yakusifu	2014-03-16	Pastor Pat, Kathy Kiuna	http://sifalyrics.com/lyrics/pst-pat-jane-afrika-yote-yakusifu-afrika-praises-god-lyrics (accessed 2020-07-14) https://www.djomslyrics.iko.co.ke/afrika-rev-kathy-kiuna-ft-pastor-pat-and-jane (accessed 2020-07-14)
W3	Alpha and Omega	2014-01-26	Erasmus Mutanbira	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4654148/alpha-and-omega (accessed 2020-08-26)
W4	Arise	2014-02-09	Don Moen, Paul Baloche	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4032337/arise (accessed 2020-07-27)
W5	<i>Asante Sana Yesu</i>	2013-12-29	Trad. chorus	<i>Text and origin not found</i>
W6	Away in a Manger ^a	2013-12-29	Martin Luther	https://hymnary.org/text/away_in_a_manger_no_crib_for_a_bed (accessed 2020-04-06)
W7	Baba Yetu	2014-01-12	Reuben Kigame	https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Reuben-Kigame/Baba-Yetu (accessed 2020-08-25)
W8	Bow Down and Worship Him	2014-03-19	Benjamin Dube	https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Benjamin-Dube/Bow-Down-and-Worship (accessed 2020-08-25)
W9	Bwana ni nguvu yangu/ Pazeni sauti	2013-12-29	Trad. Chorus/ AFLEWO	http://kenyangospellyrics.blogspot.com/2015/01/bwana-ni-nguvu-yangu.html (accessed 2021-06-15) https://www.facebook.com/127017924036243/posts/shangilia-amete-nda-mema-yesu-bwana-paz-eni-sauti-shangwe-na-nderemo-obrigado-ten-/420158641388835 (accessed 2021-06-15)

TABLE A7.4 Songs sung in observed services in CITAM Woodley, by name. ... (cont.)

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
W10	Bwana u sehemu yangu	2014-01-26	Elizabeth Nyambura/ Translation of Close to Thee/ My Everlasting Portion	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4a-Ehd6HTWM (accessed 2021-03-10) https://hymnary.org/text/thou_my_everlasting_portion (accessed 2021-03-10)
W11	Cha Kutumaini Sina	2014-03-12	Translation of My Hope is Built on Nothing Less/The Solid Rock	https://www.facebook.com/pceonline/posts/cha-kutumaini-sina-ila-damu-yake-bwanasina-wema-wa-kutoshadhambi-zangu-kuziosh-akw/206372996188808 (accessed 2020-08-25) https://hymnary.org/hymn/NzIY2003/237B (accessed 2020-08-25) https://hymnary.org/text/my_hope_is_built_on_nothing_less (accessed 2020-03-10)
W12	Come Expecting Jesus	2014-01-12	John Chisum, Nancy Gordon	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2119829/come-expecting-jesus (accessed 2020-07-14)
W13	Enlarge my Territory ^a	2014-01-26	Derick Thomas	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4508036/enlarge-my-territory (accessed 2020-08-26)
W14	Faithful is Our God ^a	2014-03-16	Hezekiah Walker, Jules Bartholomew	https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Hezekiah-Walker/Faithful-Is-Our-God (accessed 2020-08-25)
W15	For who You Are	2014-02-09	Marty Sampson	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4591799/for-who-you-are (accessed 2020-08-26)
W16	Friend of God	2014-03-16	Israel Houghton, Michael Gungor	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3991651/friend-of-god (accessed 2020-08-26)
W17	Hail Jesus you're my King /Victory chant	2014-02-02	Joseph Vogels	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/23873/victory-chant (accessed 2020-07-14)
W18	Haiye	2014-02-02	Kaberia & the Klan	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqw1hODPDA (accessed 2020-07-14)

TABLE A7.4 Songs sung in observed services in CITAM Woodley, by name ... (cont.)

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
W19	Hakuna kama wewe	2014-03-12	–	<i>Origin not found</i>
W20	<i>Hakuna mwingine ila Jehova</i>	2014-03-19	–	<i>Text and origin not found</i>
W21	Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? ^a	2014-02-02	E.A Hoffman	https://hymnary.org/text/have_you_been_to_jesus_for_the_cleansing (accessed 2020-04-06)
W22	His blood still works	2014-02-02	VaShawn Mitchell	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7031270/his-blood-still-works (accessed 2020-07-14)
W23	I give myself away	2014-03-19	Sam Hinn, William McDowell	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/5873382/i-give-myself-away (accessed 2020-08-26)
W24	I need Thee every hour	2014-03-12 2014-03-19	Annie S. Hawks and Robert Lowry	https://hymnary.org/text/i_need_thee_every_hour_most_gracious_lor (accessed 2020-04-06)
W25	I surrender All	2014-02-09	Judson W. Van DeVenter, Winfield Scott Weeden	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/23189/i-surrender-all (accessed 2020-08-26)
W26	In Christ alone	2014-01-12	Keith Getty/ Stuart Towndend	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3350395/in-christ-alone (accessed 2020-07-14)
W27	In the sanctuary	2014-01-26	Kurt Carr	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3324039/in-the-sanctuary (accessed 2020-07-14)
W28	Jehova You are the most high God (Africaribb Medley)	2014-03-12	Kofi Thompson	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4KzCrpLjo (accessed 2020-08-26)
W29	Kama sio wewe ningekuwa wapi mimi	2014-02-02	Trad. chorus	<i>Origin not found</i>
W30	Leaning on the everlasting arms	2014-02-02	E.A. Hoffman	https://hymnary.org/text/what_a_fello_wship_what_a_joy_divine (accessed 2020-04-06)

TABLE A7.4 Songs sung in observed services in CITAM Woodley, by name. ... (cont.)

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
W31	Let your presence fall	2014-03-16	David Willersdorf	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1368946/let-your-presence-fall (accessed 2020-08-26)
W32	Lord, I lift your name on high	2014-02-02	Rick Founds	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/117947/lord-i-lift-your-name-on-high (accessed 2020-08-26)
W33	Many reasons	2014-03-16	HenriSoul	http://lyricsbible.blogspot.com/2013/07/many-reasons-lyrics-henrisoul.html (accessed 2020-08-26) https://sonichits.com/video/HenriSoul/MANY_REASONS (accessed 2020-08-26)
W34	Mimi	2014-02-09	CITAM Woodley Music Team	https://soundcloud.com/citam-woodley-music-team/disc-1-11-mimi (accessed 2020-08-26)
W35	Mwingine	2014-02-09	Pete Odera	https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Pete-Odera-2/Mwingine (accessed 2020-08-26)
W36	Oh, come all ye faithful	2013-12-29	John Francis Wade	https://hymnary.org/text/come_hither_ye_faithful_triumphantly_sin (accessed 2020-04-06)
W37	Only You are holy	2014-02-09	Donald McClurkin	https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/donnemclurkin/onlyyouareholy.html (accessed 2020-08-26)
W38	Our God	2014-01-26	Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/5677416/our-god (accessed 2020-07-14)
W39	Our God reigns	2014-01-12	Martin Smith	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/461570 (accessed 2020-08-26) https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/4615709/our-god-reigns-forever-his-truth-shall-reign (accessed 2020-08-26)
W40	Sing for joy	2013-12-29	Lamont Hiebert	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1861357/sing-for-joy (accessed 2020-07-27)
W41	The Lord is good	2013-12-29	Patrick Nakaya	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLRQsg40qc4 (accessed 2021-05-10)

TABLE A7.4 Songs sung in observed services in CITAM Woodley, by name. ... (cont.)

Song no.	Song title	Date	Origin/artist	Source
W42	The solid rock/My hope is built on nothing less	2014-03-12	Edward Mote, William Bradbury	https://hymnary.org/text/my_hope_is_built_on_nothing_less (accessed 2020-03-10)
W43	There is a fountain filled with blood ^a	2014-01-12	William Cowper	https://hymnary.org/text/there_is_a_fountain_filled_with_blood_dr (accessed 2020-08-26)
W44	Unastahili	2014-03-12	Kaberia & the Klan/Trad. chorus	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQnqsrkbp0 (accessed 2020-07-14)
W45	Usiyeshindwa	2014-03-19	Sarah Kiarie	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bGUG3UnxLk&list=RDR0sqUjSCSVE&index=14 (accessed 2020-08-26)
W46	Wakuabudiwa Jehova	2014-03-19	Trad. chorus	<i>Origin not found</i>
W47	We bring the sacrifice of praise	2013-12-29	Kirk Dearman	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/9990/we-bring-the-sacrifice-of-praise (accessed 2020-07-14)
W48	We want to see Jesus lifted high	2014-02-09	Doug Horley	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1033408/we-want-to-see-jesus-lifted-high (accessed 2020-08-26)
W49	Wewe Watosha	2014-02-09	Kaberia & the Klan/Trad. chorus	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQnqsrkbp0 (accessed 2020-07-14)
W50	When I think about the Lord	2014-03-16	James Huey	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2834496/when-i-think-about-the-lord (accessed 2020-07-27)
W51	Who has the final say	2014-03-19	Bernice Ansah	https://zionlyrics.com/bernice-ansah-who-has-the-final-say-lyrics (accessed 2020-08-26)
W52	Withholding Nothing	2014-01-26	William McDowell	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7037764/withholding-nothing (accessed 2020-07-14)
W53	Worthy is the Lamb	2014-02-02	Darlene Zscech	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3217555/worthy-is-the-lamb (accessed 2020-07-14)
W54	You deserve the glory	2013-12-29 2014-01-26 2014-03-12	Eva-Lena Hellmark	https://songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1240868/you-deserve-the-glory (accessed 2020-08-26)

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Vibrant worship music is part of the charismatic liturgy all around the world, and has become in many ways the hallmark of pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. Despite its centrality, scholarly interest in the theological and ritual significance of worship for pentecostal spirituality has been sparse, not least in Africa. Combining rich theoretical and theological insight with an in-depth case study of worship practices in Nairobi, Kenya, this interdisciplinary study offers a significant contribution to knowledge and is bound to influence scholarly discussions for years to come. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in pentecostal worship, ritual, and spirituality.

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This work is an excellent study of lived theology. In Björkander’s analysis, the theological riches of pentecostal spirituality come to the fore.

– Mika Vähäkangas, Director of The Polin Institute at Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Björkander here makes a significant contribution to a pentecostal theology of worship that accounts for the various affective, performative, and embodied dimensions of pentecostal spirituality, enabled through meticulous ethnographic foregrounding of two charismatic East African congregations and their ritual practice. This is practical theology at its best, lifting up the many (disciplinary) tongues and (linguistic) accents of global pentecostal-charismatic Christianity.

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