
CAUSES OF THE NEW CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS (NCMS) IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *Kenya is a habitat to many New Charismatic Movements (NCMs) today. What mainly causes them? What factors lead to their rapid proliferation yet the mainline churches have been in existence in Kenya for more than a century? This study which was conducted in the month of December 2013 undertakes to investigate their causes especially in the Kenyan urban centers. The study has identified various factors that contribute to the rise and growth of the NCMs in Kenya, which mainly revolve around all dimensions of life including economic, social, political, psychological, cultural, political, and religious. The main factors are hopelessness, sense of communal belonging, unanswered questions in life, psychological satisfaction, search for vision, recognition, spiritual needs and poverty. So some of these causes are genuine while others not. Nevertheless one thing is clear: These NCMs have a future in Kenya as other denominations or religious organizations are not able to address needs of the Kenyan people.*

KEYWORDS: Kenya, New Charismatic Movements, Rapid Proliferation

INTRODUCTION

Kenya is today a home to many new charismatic movements (NCMs). The NCMs in this article refer to the religious movements that are founded by pastors/preachers/individuals with charisma in response to social, political, economic and religious changes in the contemporary Kenyan society. These movements began to appear in the country especially in the 1980s and 1990s, and since then they have successfully grown and flourished in the Kenyan soil.¹ What is very interesting is the fact that although the mainline Churches have been existence in Kenya for a long time with the Roman Catholic Church having been started in 1860², the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) in 1844³, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in 1891⁴, the Methodist Church in Kenya in Kenya (MCK) in 1862⁵ and African Inland Church (AIC) in 1895⁶, the New Charismatic Movements (NCMs) tend to do well once they are started. Whenever they are

¹ Aylward Shorter & Joseph Njiru, *New Religious Movements in Africa*. Nairobi: Paulines, 2001, p. 19

² John Baur, *The Catholic Church in Kenya*. Nairobi: Paulines, 1990, p.23

³ Provincial Unit of Research, *Rabai to Mumias*. Nairobi: Uzima, 1994, p.1

⁴ Robert Macpherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya*. Nairobi: Jitegemea, p.21

⁵ Zablon Nthamburi, *A History of the Methodist Church in Kenya*, Nairobi: Uzima, 1982, p.1

⁶ Peter Mumo, 'A Study of Theological Education in the African inland Church, Kenya: its Historical development and its Present State', Unpl. PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1997, p.1

started they attract many followers who are mainly drawn from the mainline Churches.⁷ In every city, town and market in Kenya, there are several of these NCMs.⁸ What causes them? What leads to their rapid proliferation in Kenya? These NCMs are characterized by their rapid change and dynamism. They keep on having new forms and identifying themselves with new names. This characteristic sometimes makes these movements to be identified in a negative connotation like cults, secessionist, separatists, fundamentalists, sectarians, schematics or even syncretism. Despite this challenge, they keep on sprouting sometimes posing threat to the mainline Churches. We conducted this study to examine the causes of their rapid proliferation in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

To investigate the causes of the NCMs in Kenya we conducted a field research in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya where most of these movements are found. The study was carried out in December 2013. We felt that since these movements are mainly found in urban areas Nairobi is the most ideal place to tell us what is exactly happening. Five NCMs namely the Maximum Miracle Centre (MMC), Neno Evangelistic Ministry (NEM), Jesus is Alive Ministry (JAM), Christian Foundation Fellowship (CFF) and Jubilee Christian Church (JCC) were purposely selected for this study. In each of these Churches we targeted at least two leaders and twenty members for interviews. We then designed questionnaires and interview guides which we used in all the churches. Both tools focused mainly on the churches the respondents were before joining the NCMs, what made them join NCMs, and whether they are more comfortable in the NCMs.⁹ We distributed 25 questionnaires in each Church and they were returned as follows: MMC-21; NEM-19; JAM-22; CFF- 20 and JCC-17. To get the members easily we attended their church services and crusades. Through our interview schedules, we interviewed 11 church leaders and 29 church members. The total respondents in this study were 139. We also employed observation method where we observed what was happening in these movements and drew conclusions based on these observations.

FACTORS LEADING TO THE PROLIFERATION OF NCMs IN KENYA

This section contains the information we received from the respondents.

Need for hope in life

Asked why they had joined NCMs 133 (95.68%) respondents cited the fact that these movements had given them a new hope in life. 117 (84.1%) respondents claimed that initially they belonged to the mainline Churches but had defected to NCMs as they were more assuring. Kenya being a developing country, a number of its citizens lives below poverty line, thus experiencing various unfavorable socio-economic and political structures. These structures lead to inadequate or no access to basic needs like clean water, food, education, social amenities, cloth and shelter. This leads to shortened life expectancy. One of the respondents explained this experience in a clearer manner,

⁷ Susan Kiende, 'Factors Leading to the Migration of Church Members from the Methodist Church in Kenya' Unp. MA Thesis, Chuka University, 2013, p.11

⁸ Interview with Bishop Charles Mwendwa, Bishop of ACK Meru Diocese on 12 Sept. 2013 at Meru.

⁹ Samples of these can be obtained by writing to the authors using the address shown above.

The slums are so squeezed here in Kibera (one of the slums in Kenya) such that getting a place to dig a latrine is a problem. Majority of the residents here use plastic bags as their potties. After using them they throw that content [human waste] in the dumping sites. This gives room to frequent outbreak of diseases like cholera and typhoid. We also do not have access to clean water and wherever it is found, we pay much for it, that is, Ksh.10 for every 20 litres. Many of us here would not like to live this awful kind of life but because we cannot afford to pay rent in better estates we have to persevere the un-healthy conditions in slums.¹⁰

Such situations make people to eagerly look forward for any organization or a body that may provide them basic needs or at least give hope to live for the next few days . In many times such victims simply resign to any social, religious, economic or political activities that may seem to create some hope upon them.

Such unfavorable socio-economic situations create a fertile ground for the upsurge of NCMs. Today's life, being unlike in the traditional African society, which had all-round structures that give response to any upcoming complexity, warmly embrace any ideology that seems to be satisfying and successful.¹¹ NCMs are looked as one of these ideologies, which are creating a new notion to its members by instilling a feeling of being away from the harsh and brutalizing realities in life. The NCMs are creating a sense of importance in their member's lives. These movements are coming up with new values of self-perceptions, self-growth and self-development upon the members by developing goals in life. They always try to interpret any social, economic and political turmoil or deprivation in a positive manner thus creating hope upon the members. This explains why poor Kenyans are flocking in these NCMs in large numbers.

Need for community belonging

In the traditional Kenyan society life was basically communal. J.S.Mbiti elucidates that the individual could only say that 'I am because we are and since we are therefore I am'.¹² Due to the current wave of globalization this communal aspect or 'togetherness' of the African people has slowly died out.¹³ Many Kenyan societies especially in the urban centers have lost their traditional social set ups.¹⁴ Traditionally the clan elders used plan on how the disadvantaged people in the society were to be taken care of and live a normal social life like anybody else.¹⁵ Many people today are not caring about their neighbors; instead they are confining themselves in the nuclear families. The practice of extended family is rarely in practice. Unfortunately some of these nuclear families are made up of divorcees/divorced, widow/widowed, or even single mothers/single fathers. These people feel secluded and abandoned especially those who have a poor background or in a disadvantaged condition.¹⁶ Such people desire for belonging or

¹⁰Interview with Simon Kuria, a charcoal seller on 14 December 2013 at Kibera Estate, Nairobi.

¹¹ Interview with Bishop Mwendwa

¹² J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 1969, p. 106.

¹³ See J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p.211

¹⁴ Interview with Rev. James Mwenda, MCK Minister on 13 December 2013 in Nairobi

¹⁵ Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*. New York: Vintage, 1965, pp. 52-53

¹⁶Interview with Jane Anyango, JAM member on 8 December 2013 in Nairobi

identification with other people, social group or any other ideology that seems to be collaborative.¹⁷

The NCMs seems to take advantage of these situations. They are trying to bring the scattered people from different families together by coming up with fellowships, which reach the person as an individual. They try to reach the marginalized groups in the society especially those who are hopeless and secluded like the street children, single mothers, divorced, immigrants, the poor, the handicapped and the uneducated. 128 (92%) respondents cited the search for the sense of belonging as one of the factors that led them to join NCMs. As they preach, the NCMs preachers stress on the message of hope to the hopeless people and great future for those who are frustrated. Though addressing the crowd, the preachers in the NCMs make reference to individuals for example, by using the statements, 'there is no greater gift than being a child of God!' 'God does not require your wealth but your heart and devoutness!' 'Blessed are you who have been promised the kingdom of God!' 'God will always respond to your prayers at the right time!' 'No weapon formed against you shall prosper!'.¹⁸ Whether these message of hope will come true or not, these marginalized people in the society follow the NCMs with much joy and encouragement. They consider the NCMs to be their companions where they can express themselves freely. In response, these NCMs provide great love, welcome, friendship, affection, shelter and security.

This study found that many of the adherents of these NCMs recognize their counterpart members more than they do to their blood brothers and sisters. They feel to have a new 'home' and come up with terms like 'brother in Christ', 'sister in Christ,' 'spiritual father', almost forgetting their real families since they are warmly welcomed and are given a chance to express themselves freely.

Quest for answers in life

In the modern society, life is confronted by confusion and complexity. This makes people to deeply search for solutions and ultimate meaning of various occurrences. The upcoming NCMs seem to be answering or providing solutions to these complex situations in a much simpler and faster ways than the mainstream churches as Shorter and Njiru note. They say that "... Crusades apparently provide answers ... for particular needs. Some of these may appear simplistic and easily arrived at answers to complicated questions and situations ..."¹⁹ 119 (85.6%) respondents said that the NCMs provide them with answers for very intricate situations.

During their preaching in crusades and fellowships this study found that many of these NCMs preachers always mention disasters in life like HIV/AIDS, unemployment, discouragement, homelessness, financial stress and broken families as they give answers to them. The preacher/pastors may be believed to have certain gifts like healing and exorcism, which make them to have many followers, who are eager to know the causes of their sufferings and solutions to these sufferings, as they look forward for healing in their daily the torture.

¹⁷ Interview with Rev J. Mwenda

¹⁸ Extracts from a sermon preached by Pastor Maina Ng'ang'a of NEM on 1 December 2013.

¹⁹ A. Shorter & J. Njiru, *New Religious Movements in Africa*, p.38.

On 1 December 2013, we observed the following in one of the healing ministries in NEM. Pastor Maina Ng'ang'a, the founder of this movement who is believed to have exorcism powers, mentioned various evil spirits among the members. Many people responded by moving forward to the altar one by one as they explained their problems to the pastor. As he exorcized, the victims rolled on the floor screaming in different sounds. After sometime they stood up claiming that they felt relaxed and then gave testimonies on how they had suffered for long. The pastor affirmed to the members that with faith and repentance everything is possible. He assured them that the answer to any problem comes from Jesus as he quoted from the bible, "Come all those with heavy burdens and I will give you rest."²⁰ He stressed on this verse emphasizing that with Jesus, financial stress, sicknesses, unemployment, frustrations, depressions, and any kind of stress in life will be no more. This is a common characteristic to many of the NCMs. Great hope is created among the members and theology of success, prosperity and victorious Christ is preached. Causes of even natural calamities are explained to be the desperate faithful who respond with a lot of joy.

Psychological torture

122 (87.7%) respondents attested to the fact they had joined the NCMs as they sought for the psychological healing. Everyone aspires to have a holistic life be it emotionally, socially physically or psychologically. Unfortunately, the individualistic ways of life has alienated a number of Kenyans from their families, cultures and also from the reality. This brings about isolation, abandonment and state of anonymity. For those who are not financially stable no one seems to care about them not even their brothers or sisters. This leads to their harassment in many areas like social centers, transport and communication sectors, health centers and institutions.²¹ This reveals the gap between the rich and the poor which seems to be widening up day after day. In conjunction with this there are rising cases of unemployment and empty promises to the poor by the leaders who want their favor.²²

A number of rich people are also psychologically tortured. This is for example in the cases where their children turn to drugs or even when they want promotions not forgetting their desire for more material gain to have luxurious life.²³ The future of many Kenyans is becoming doomed. Their dreams, careers and professional aspects are never fulfilled.

Thus the car parks for these NCMs are always full during Lunch hours as the rich come to seek for blessing. Both the poor and the rich are aspiring for their dreams to be fulfilled hence both look forward for any system that seems to provide a solution to their wondered spirits.

The NCMs seems to be a place that has been realized by a number of the psychologically stressed victims as a source of spiritual, emotional, physical and psychological healing. 112 (80.5%) respondents affirmed that these movements are places where harmony can be realized and that those who join them experience inner peace, peace of mind, wholeness, integration,

²⁰ Good News Bible, (Today's English version), United Bible Society, 1992. Matthew 11:28

²¹ Interview with Joseph Kiarie, member of MCC on 8 December 2013 in Nairobi

²² Interview with Bishop Mwendwa

²³ Interview with Mercy Mwendu, member of CFF on 13 December 2013 in Nairobi

harmony, reconciliation, involvement, creativity and participation. One of the followers gave a testimony of how she was emotionally healed as she listened to the testimony of the brethren, I have been suffering from emotional stress since I lost my job last year. My miracle came as I listened to one of brother's testimony on how he received a miracle job through the preaching of Pastor Ng'ang'a. Instantly, my faith was lifted and my emotions were healed. I have held that God is able to do it for me too.²⁴

Another one testified on how she was freed from the chains of witchcraft, I could not hold back my tears during the preaching on 'NENO LITAKUWEKA HURU' (The Word shall set you free). As the pastor shared the love of Christ with the congregation, I experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in myself. All along, I was a slave of witchcraft and I feared being bewitched. I could not touch or walk over anything strange but after the pastor prayed, the chain was broken.²⁵ Another one testified on his miraculous job, In one of Uhuru Park Sunday crusades, I parked my car when Pastor Muiru was preaching. Immediately I heard from the public address system 'you have received your job miracle.' I went home overjoyed. A few days later I was offered a managerial job in a leading household in Nairobi.²⁶

The social therapy was also observed to be part of the NCMs duties. This is mostly achieved by active participation of the adherents in the religious organizations and celebrations such as dancing, clapping, shouting, singing and also leading. The members are given a chance to participate freely. They are also encouraged and counseled through moral and ethical teachings. This helps the members in dealing with debauch activities caused by psychological torture such as drug abuse, sexual abuse, suicide, leisure abuse and moral laxity.²⁷ This shows that the NCMs are addressing issues which other denominations are not addressing hence attract many followers from the 'psychologically sick' Kenyan urban society.

Need for a vision

Some of the situations that the study observed for example the economic stress, unemployment, retrenchment and insecurity in the modern society are leading to a need for at least some signs of hope for the future. Many people have run to the NCMs where are being assured for better future and better world. 126 (90.6%) respondents confessed that the NCMs provide a guaranteed future. We observed that in these movements the adherents are encouraged by statements which their pastors frequently use. Some of these include: "A new dawn is coming when God is going to uplift his people!", "... this is the year of breakthrough. Blessings are going to flow as God had promised!", "... the time for amazement is now, great things are going to happen to God's people, the jobless will be employed and other great opportunities are going to be revealed!".²⁸ Being overwhelmed by hardships and empty promises from the political leaders, many people never hesitate from joining these NCMs with the hope that the prophecies will come true. After joining, they are counseled and encouraged.²⁹ By being offered hope and faith in betterment and

²⁴ Lucy Muthoni, A youth member in NEM, 21 December 2013, Huruma Estate, Nairobi.

²⁵ Hannah Wangechi, a Praise and Worship Team member in NEM, 13 December 2013, Dandora Estate, Nairobi.

²⁶ Jonah Ombachi, a member of MMC, 20 June December 2013, Mathare Estate, Nairobi.

²⁷ Interview with Andrew Kinigeni, member of JCC on 14 December 2013 at Ngumba Estate, Nairobi

²⁸ In every service we attended we noticed these seem to be common words used by the pastors.

²⁹ Interview with Rev. J. Mwenda

advancement, a new approach of their lives is provided.³⁰ We came across one of the staunch adherent of MMC who believed that by being next to the pastor he would be man of vision as his pastor. He stressed this conviction by responding, Walk with wolves and you will leap like them; walk with eagles and you will fly high like them. My pastor is a man of vision and therefore I have to be next to him always to have visions like him.³¹

Search for recognition and fame

Complex and discouraging situations, in the contemporary society, like unemployment, lack of professionalism and general inaccessibility to basic needs in life are leading to marginalizing and depersonalizing of many people in the society.³² Majority of these people feel the need to rise out of anonymity and build an identity. Some of these people could be from rural areas where they are considered as great men and women of the village due to communal factor. Realizing that in urban areas no one seems to recognize them, they feel marginalized and try to seek for ways and means to uplift themselves from the anonymous situation for their dignity to be felt even in these areas.³³

It becomes hard for them to gain identity or recognition especially if they belong to the mainstream churches where there are rigid restrictions for the accessibility to the pulpit. The only option found is to join the NCMs where conditions are flexible and there is a sense of self-identity.³⁴ 109 (78.4%) respondents affirmed that they had joined the NCMs in search of identity. In many of NCMs that we visited during the study, the leaders always recognized the visitors by giving them a chance to greet the congregation as they introduced themselves. This is unlike in the mainline churches where no one cares about the visitors. In the NCMs there are wide opportunities for ministering and leadership. One can freely participate, witness and express oneself especially by giving testimonies, leading prayers, singing or leading songs, arranging the church and praying musical instruments.

Other responsibilities in these NCMs that uplift ones recognition include ushering, offering, counseling, interceding, interpreting and also being in praise and worship team. One can also easily gain popularity especially during the outdoor ministries like crusades where one gets a chance to relate with various groups of people, the elite, professionals, youth, old and also the children. The relationship of members in these movements is taken to be very intimate as that of brothers and sisters hence terming each other as a brother or sister in Christ.³⁵

Quest for spiritual orientation

This fact was cited by 131 (94.2%) interviewees. 123(88.4%) respondents said that the mainline churches are not spiritually satisfying. Kenyans are thirst of spiritual nourishment and they also want answers to various occurrences in life like natural calamities. In the NCMs the adherents

³⁰ Interview with A. Kinigeni

³¹ Alexander Njogu, an usher in MMC, 20 December 2013, Mathare Estate, Nairobi.

³² Interview with Bishop Mwendwa

³³ Interview with Susan Karimi, Youth Leader in MMC on 13 December 2013 in Nairobi

³⁴ Interview with Susan Karrimi

³⁵ Interview with Hannah Wangechi

take their pastors to have a conversation with the spirit world.³⁶ Most of the members who defect from the main line churches to these movements do so because of lack spiritual satisfaction in the former.³⁷ They desire to get spiritual nourishment in a deeper and more practical manner as explained in the NCMs through prophecy and *glossolalia* (*speaking in tongues*).³⁸ The NCMs mainly stress on the spiritual dimension in their teachings. During the study we found that majority of the members eagerly wait for the session of prophecy from the members or pastors. They believed that God talks to them indirectly through those people. Most of these prophecies are never for doom but for blessings, a thing that members always want to hear.

In the Christian Fellowship Foundation (CFF) we observed that during prayers there is a session of silence to listen to what the spirit of God is telling 'His people'. From the congregation there emerges somebody shouting in tongues, after him/her another one starts and this follows until almost all those who are believed to have a gift of prophecy gives out their prophecies. The pastor might state that the spirit is showing him more prophecies with the members that could come out. This makes the session of silence be extended and one by one more prophecies come out in *glossolalia* form the members. After that the pastor starts interpreting these tongues starting from the first one to the last one as the congregation shouts, jumps and claps with joy.³⁹ These NCMs also preach on physical conditions of the members and prophesy healing upon them. We observed one of the MMC crusades at Uhuru Park, Nairobi which was fully parked with thousands of people from all races and different personalities that is the rich, middle class and the poor. We noticed that most of the people in the congregation were awake and concentrated more during the session of prophecy as pastor roared.

There is a woman amongst you has been suffering of breast cancer for more than three years. Something is happening now the cancer will be no more and no more medication will be undertaken". "The spirit is also telling me that one month from now a hundred young people who are here and jobless will be employed". "There is a woman amongst you whom her husband disappeared six month ago; the spirit is showing me that three days from today he will be back."⁴⁰

As the pastor continued to prophesy the congregation clapped, shouted and danced. This joy was accompanied by the thrilling music that was being played from the strong electronic music instrument on stage. These NCMs also try to reach people through 'televangelism.' Prophecies are made to the viewers who are given assurance on the fulfilment of their heart desires with the The NCMs also try to reach people through televangelism. The pastors make prophecies to the viewers giving a condition of faith and commitment to Godly work. The viewers are advised to accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour and to seek for a church that they would fully be spiritually nourished. To emphasize how God is working even through the Radios and Television programs, during one of his Sunday service, the MMC Pastor read some letters sent by some of his viewers testifying on how they have been blessed,

³⁶ Interview with A. Kinigeni

³⁷ Susan Kiende, 'Factors Leading to the Migration of Church members from the MCK', p.25

³⁸ Susan kiende, p.26

³⁹ This incident was observed by the authors in CFF during the end of the year *Kesha* (Night Vigil) service on 31 December, 2013.

⁴⁰ This incident was observed by the authors during a MMC crusade in Uhuru Park on 15 December 2013.

We received you loud and clear here in Lodwar. I thank God for your air your programs. You do not know what exactly is happening at the grassroots. You will be surprised in heaven. The devil is getting dislodged. Many are being healed; many are being delivered for the glory of God. This is my prayer that God will uplift and perfectly use you for his glory. You have blessed families and individuals. We feel that we can be blessed more by sending this Kshs. 20,000 as our tithe. Thank you and May God bless you abundantly.⁴¹

Others send their testimonies on how they have been healed by touching the screen of televisions as the pastor prays. One letter read, Praise God, I had had suffered from chest pain for more than five years. Last Sunday as I listened to your program, I was blessed by the various testimonies that were made by my brothers and sisters. This made me to believe that God can also heal me. I remembered the woman who had suffered for twelve years and how by just touching the cloak of Jesus, she was healed. With much faith I extended my hands on the screen of my TV as you prayed for the sick viewers. After prayers I felt relaxed, days and now a week have passed without having any pain in my chest. I thank my God for this by enclosing Kshs. 5000 as I pray for more anointing upon you.⁴²

This shows that the NCMs touch where other denominations are not able to touch. They address the spiritual needs of the people directly, hence attract many members who become their followers and contribute large amounts of money without hesitation.

Money making/ Source of Employment

The unfavorable economic, social, psychological, emotional or physical conditions in the contemporary Kenyan society are leading many people to look for any means of obtaining the daily bread. Lack of employment in the public and private sectors is bringing about an increase in "Juakali" industries and many other small self-employment enterprises.⁴³

Apart from being a source of spiritual nourishment the NCMs have been realized to be a good and fast money making industry as well as an appealing source of employment. Shorter and Njiru give anecdote of one young man by the name Peter Mwaura who on the completion of his secondary education could neither secure any employment nor a place at the college due his poor performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). In his desperation, one day an idea struck him. "How many pastors go to bed hungry like me? Why don't I train myself to be a pastor?" Suddenly he got a solution to his troubles. He commenced attending cinema halls in the city, where the preachers performed. He saw how they projected their voice and how they controlled the crowds in front of them. He started to practice the charismatic way of preaching. This was a beginning of the journey of fortunes that lay a head of him. He started his own ministry. He went to one of the city roundabouts and started preaching. At first he attracted only a few followers, but before long his congregation grew. He rented a large hall and his ministry expanded. Today he drives a Mercedes Benz and lives in a prestigious house.⁴⁴ There are many NCMs which have been started this way. 103 (74.1%) respondents approved the fact

⁴¹ Letter from Koech Charles, from Lodwar. Read by Pastor Muiru of MMC on 15 December 2013.

⁴² Letter from Jane Nkembo from Machakos. Read by Pastor Muiru of MMC on 15 December 2013.

⁴³ Interview with Bishop Mwendwa

⁴⁴ A. Shorter and J. Njiru, *New Religious Movements in Africa*, p. 39

that some NCMs have been started as a way providing their founders with money or employment.

This explains why a number of NCMs preachers have commercialized the gospel. There is therefore an increased number of freelance preachers in many places like the streets, resting places like Uhuru park and Jeevanjee Gardens in Nairobi, in the public transport vehicles, in the public institutions, in the shopping centers and also in the market places. A number of halls for secular ceremonies have been turned into worshipping centers especially during lunch hour, early in the morning and the evening. The agenda of offering/tithes in all these preaching sessions is greatly stressed. The preachers come with various statements that make the adherents to offer to the last coin in their pockets without hesitation. The members are made to believe that poverty comes as a result of their sins and lack faith, which one can overcome by fasting and generous donations to the evangelist.⁴⁵

The preachers quote verses from the bible that relate to the offering to stress on it. These are for example verses in the book of Malachi;

Yet you are cheating me. How? You ask; in the matter of tithes and offerings. A curse is on all of you because the whole nation is cheating me. Bring the full amount of your tithes to the temple so that there will be plenty of food there.⁴⁶

During the MMC service hours, a number of envelopes are put on the pigeon holes by the entrance. The ushers also issue to those who may have not remembered to take. Each envelope has a title indicating the purpose of the contribution and a space for indicating the amount of money that one has put. Some are meant to be for tithes, seeding, need to be healed, job opportunities, peace in the family, and other titles. For the ones which have no title one is supposed to put the money and then indicate what he wants be prayed for. The pastor always insists that the amount should be directly proportional to the requests of the ones needs. The ushers are always there to remind the congregation about these pledges. A number of members donate generously almost to the last coin in their pockets since many believe on these easy ways of being rich or being blessed.⁴⁷

In one of the major crusades of MMC held in Uhuru Park on 15 December 2013, which was titled 'THE VEHICLE GAINING CRUSADE', one was supposed to observe the various vehicles in the busy Nairobi roads before entering the crusade's venue. After the observation, one was to make a conclusion on which vehicle he/she desired and estimate the cost. At the entrance of the venue, the ushers were busy distributing the envelopes. In these envelopes one was to put amount of money that was at least proportional to the cost of the desired vehicle an exercise they called 'seeding'. Later the pastor declared that one's heart desire will be fulfilled within twelve months. However, the heavier the 'seed' the heavier will be the 'reap'.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ A. Shorter and J. Njiru, *New Religious Movements in Africa*, p.21

⁴⁶ Good News Bible, Malachi 3:9-10

⁴⁷ We observed this when we attended the MMC Sunday Service on 15 December 2013, 10.30 am.

⁴⁸ This incident was observed by the authors during the MMC crusade held in Uhuru Park on 15 December 2013, 2.00 pm.

Such services and crusades make the NCMs preachers millionaires within a short period of time. Many of the famous and rich NCMs preachers in Kenya are known to be from a very poor background. However they always argue that God has uplifted them from nothing to 'great men and women of God'. For instance, during his preaching, Pastor Maina Ng'ang'a of NEM often testifies how at one time he was a cart pusher, a gangster and the many times he had been jailed. He also testifies that he is a class three dropout but the glory of God has covered him that nobody notices. Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of JAM also testifies how she used to be a simple hotelier and the many times they slept hungry with her other siblings. She now claims that God has uplifted her to a great height to serve Him.⁴⁹ Many other preachers of the NCMs in Kenya have taken this trend as they try their luck. In many times such preachers always get followers. Majority responds to such preachers joyfully and contributes generously because they are thirsty of news about financial breakthrough, economic uplift, prophesy on physical healing and other positive life issues.

CONCLUSION

The NCMs are a force to reckon in Kenya. They are responding to the agitating life situations which other churches or even religions have not been able to address. The missionary churches have been in Kenya for more than a century but their influence remain minimal as they have failed to meet the spiritual, physical, emotional and psychological needs of the Kenyan people. The NCMs have therefore arisen to fill this gap and as such their future is certain. Most of these NCMs emphasize on the positive sides of life by giving the prophecies of hopes and promises. This makes the members not to realize their failures and faults. They end up seeing everything smooth even when it is not. As a result, a large number of people are attracted to these movements leading to their rapid growth. The mainline churches due to their rigidity have not been able to do this. This provides a favorable bleeding ground for the NCMs. A lot may be said about the NCMs in Kenya but what is notable is the fact they have a future. As far as Kenyans will continue suffering with nobody willing to meet their needs, these NCMs will continue to be born and grow.

⁴⁹ We recorded their testimonies when attended their Sunday services on 22 and 29 December respectively.