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CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
OF
EASTERN AFRICA

JESUS AS A MODEL OF SOCIAL CHANGE FOR KENYA

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Long Essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for Bachelor of Arts , Religious Studies .

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STUDENTS DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material used herein has not been submitted for Academic Credit to any other Institution : All sources have been cited in full .

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Signed : David KASHANGAKI , CSC.

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INTRODUCTION

0 : 0 - UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN REALITY :

African Theology seems to have been dominated by its quest to find a historical justification for it .

History, say many African theologians, is the cornerstone for the development of and understanding in

theological terms . It is through an historical approach that African theology finds its agenda. Looking at the

past provides the framework for giving Christianity its deeper intellectual roots.

However, while history is important to developing a fully fledged theology that can interpret the

message of Christ for Africans, it does seem that it focuses too much on the past, to the extent that it ignores

the present, and presents a skewed African Theology that seems mostly an attempt to blame and to justify,

rather than to explain and to understand . African Theology seems to be one that essentially tries to bring back

and glorify the past. This past is rapidly loosing it's relevance to the present . The search for elements of African

Christian theology that can be incorporated into Christianity; the time spent exploring colonialism, and saying

that it is the cause of all Africa's current problems, without an equal look at post - colonial independent Africa,

has left African theology virtually irrelevant to modern day Africa. This seems to be creating a crisis for

modern day African theological studies .

If African Theology is to move forward into the 21st Century, it seems that it will need to begin to get

a grip on the question, " What is African Reality ? " [1] Is African Reality the Past ? Is it the continued effects

of Colonialism and Western Imperialism on African Society ? Is it the impact of the diversity of cultures that

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[1] A good , but still " *old fashioned* " look at this question is offered in Emmanuel
Martey's   " *African Theology - Inculturation and Liberation* "(Maryknoll : Orbis
Books , 1993) , Ch . 2 , pg . 36ff. He looks at African Reality from the historical
perspective , and by doing so , is able to explain and justify the African theological
agenda of inculturation and liberation .

make up the African Continent ? Is it the unity expressed by the people's in their traditional ways of life, a unity that combined the humanity and spirituality of the person into one single act of living ?

Is African Reality the Present ? Is it an Africa moving into the 21st Century with a 19th Century mentality ? Is it a reality that is flexible and prepared to change ? Is it a reality that is prepared to face the present and deal with it effectively ?

Is the African theological reality one that is able to acknowledge that quite possibly Jesus Christ and his message of salvation and the Kingdom of God are not time and space bound, but transcendent and universal ? If Jesus ' message is transcendent, can it be relevant to a complex Africa moving towards the 21st Century, without having to address a past that seems more and more at loose ends with the present ? If African theology is going to find an agenda that will incorporate Jesus Christ, then it seems that this will more likely come from a look at the present. This Present provides conflict and tension between the reality and Jesus Christ. The Past, on the other hand, does not seems to have any notion of Jesus Christ, but dwelt largely on the level of humanity, Ancestors and the Supreme Being. Those are time and space bound concepts that suited a pre - Christian era . Christianity has introduced Jesus Christ into the African Religious sphere. He did not exist in pre - Christian Africa. Therefore, an African theology that seems to spend most of its energies and efforts on trying to bring Jesus into its past, pre - Christian era seems to be loosing a lot of time. My point of departure with much of current African theology will be to focus on the Present and try to find out if Jesus Christ is relevant to present day socio - economic and political realities of Africa. This examination will lay more specific emphasis on what seems to be the Africa of the 21st Century - namely a complex, multi - cultural and very urban Africa. To do this, I will focus largely on the situation that I know best ; living and growing up in Nairobi, and with an experience of Nairobi in its extremes . To find out if Jesus was relevant, one would have to look at what his socio - economic and political messages were, and to see what kind of impact these had on his society, and compare this with the socio - economic and political situation of present day Kenya, and offer up Jesus as a rebuke of this situation . This kind of analysis assumes that Urbanization is one of the ways Africa is going as She heads into the 21st Century . This does seems to be a fair assumption to make as we shall discover later in the analysis . If this is a major direction, then it surely deserves the guidelines that can be offered up by some

theological reflection . This is not to ignore the fact that a large portion of the African population lives in the country - side. It does, however, stress that urbanization is a relatively new phenomenon on the African Continent, and besides being a situation that is likely to persist well into the future, urbanization offers a situation of tension, conflict and change - vital ingredients to help an evolving theology .

The African social reality and the African theological reality need to find a meeting point, and it seems that this meeting point could be found in what has come to be called *" the anthropological pauperization of the African person. "* [2] In a quote taken from the *" African Report "* presented at the Second General Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), at Oaxtepec, Mexico, the authors express the reality of this anthropological pauperization of the African person. They say ,

> *" the social underdevelopment of Africa represents a fundamental aspect of the anthropological pauperization of the African person . If we define pauperization as the fact of becoming or making poor, namely being deprived of all that we have acquired , all that we are, and all that we can do, we shall recognize that Africa is subjugated to structures which result in complete pauperization : political, economic and social. When it is not a matter of being deprived of all that we own, but rather of all that we are - our human identity, our social roots, our history, our culture, our dignity, our rights, our hopes, and our plans - then pauperization becomes anthropological. It then affects religious and cultural life at its very roots . "* [3]

If one takes an historical perspective of this understanding then one gets bogged down in the anthropological aspect which inevitably deals with the past, at the expense of the *" becoming or making poor "* aspect, which seems to deal more with the present . Theologically, we need to deal with the pauperization of Africa, and particularly as it makes itself evident in our urban centres. Poverty is probably the greatest challenge facing African society today, especially as it seems to be increasing unabatedly, and manifesting itself in a variety of serious social problems, as will be seen in an indepth look at the political ,social and economic situation of present day Kenya in a later chapter .

What I hope that this paper will achieve is the beginning of a redirection and refocussing on the African Reality that takes into more account the present, so that theologically, as Africa moves into the 21st Century, there is a beginning of an understanding of the 20th Century, and not this stagnation in the 19th Century pre -

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[2]   *ibid* . pg . 38

[3]   *ibid* . pg 38

Christian Africa that seems so dominant in current African theology .

CHAPTER ONE : - THE SOCIAL STANCE OF JESUS

1:1 - SOCIETY IN THE TIME OF JESUS :

In order to understand the social message of Jesus, and its impact on his own society, one needs first to take a look at what kind of society Jesus was a part of. A major question facing biblical scholars has been - Was Jesus a person of his time and culture - or as I suggested in the introduction - does Jesus transcend time and space, and thus fit into any culture and society ? This question arises despite the fact that Jesus was an historical person in a particular time, and used the social situation of his time to proclaim a universal message. This seems very plausible. One author says quite bluntly : *"Jesus had no specifically Jewish concerns ; his interest rather was social experiment.* "[4]

" *Social experiment* " - A very telling phrase ! - A social experiment would imply something that could go beyond cultures and time. Jesus' mission was a mission of social experiment . He was looking for a method to transform, to change society from whatever was, into a society that would reflect the presence of God within it. His was an effort to bring about the Kingdom of God within his own society, in a way that would be applicable to the whole of humanity. Thus his experiment was one of finding attitudes and principles that could be extracted from the way his own society lived, and applied to the universal society. He worked from within his own milieu to create something that would be applicable to all.

How do we find out what society was like at the time of Jesus ? Through Scripture scholars study of New Testament writings and other non biblical writings of the first century, such as Q material. We also find out from archaeological discoveries and reconstructions of the early first century. These archaeological findings of the last 30 - 50 years have been a major source for new understandings of Jesus and his times.

[4] Paula Fredriksen : " *What You see is what You Get : Context and Content in Current Research on the Historical Jesus,* " *Theology Today,* April 1995 . Vol . 52 ," 1 , pg .80. Much of this work is an analysis of J. D. Crossan's two books , " *The Historical Jesus : The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant,* " (San Francisco : Harper San Francisco ,1991) , and , " *Jesus : A Revolutionary Biography,* " (San Francisco : Harper San Francisco ,1994) .

There seem to be two major contrasting interpretations of Jesus , [5]and to a large extent these reflect the kind of society that could have been dominant at the time of Jesus. The first interpretation comes out of an understanding of Jesus that seemed to give society in the first century a fairly urban look, and is an interpretation of Jesus as a *" wandering cynic "*[6] It assumes that for this to be so, society in Jesus' time would have to have been fairly urban, as well as highly culturalized and educated. Why ? Because for Jesus to attract followers with this kind of approach, he would need to be communicating with a people able to share his disenchantment with society the way it was, and understand his call to follow him. Cynics tended also, to be persons who experienced the full complexities of the society of the day, and to suggest that there were cynics at the time, implies a more complex situation than just a peasant, agrarian society. We know from first century historical data that society was heavily influenced by Hellenistic thought and culture. These were very highly developed systems, and by the middle of the first century the Hellenistic influences were being combined with Roman imperial expansion, to produce an even richer cultural milieu for Jesus and his activity. There also seems to be archaeological evidence for Palestine being a highly urbanized area. One needs only to look at any map to see that southern Galilee was dotted with towns and villages in very close proximity to one another. There have been recent discoveries of long forgotten towns which aren't even on any maps . A good example of this would be the finding of the Greco - Roman cultural and administrative centre of Sepphoris, a town close to Nazareth, and one which, in Jesus' time, would be reaching its peak development. It would be a source of major employment for Joseph and Jesus. [7]

Finally in this interpretation, we have the message of Jesus. Jesus told his followers, " *Live on the road ; be homeless ; travel light.* "[8] This follows closely the way Jesus sends out his disciples, telling them to

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5   *ibid* . - In the above article , Paula Fredriksen presents four interpretations of Jesus , but the two that I focus on seem to derive directly from an understanding of the society of the period . The other two interpretations are : The Apocalyptic Jesus , and the Anti - Nationalist .

6   *ibid* . pg . 79 - 80

7   Howard Clarke Kee : *" A Century of Quests for the Culturally Compatible Jesus , "* *Theology Today* , April 1995 , Vol . 52 ," 1 pg. 23 .

8   *op. cit* . pg . 80

go out and take nothing with them, but to depend entirely upon those to whom they are sent. This seems, in a way, to be trading the giving of the Gospel message for whatever they needed along the way. " *Do not take a purse or a beggar's bag or shoes ; do not stop to greet anyone along the road. . . Stay in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they offer you. For a worker deserves their pay.* " [9]

Depending on those to whom one was sent seems to indicate that the followers of Jesus went into towns and villages where there were a variety of people who would be open to this "new" message, as well as the possibility of not being welcomed. Again, signs at least, of the beginnings of a highly developed urban community. If this is the case, why does it seem that so much of Jesus' message and examples are drawn from the rural agrarian life, and that this is what dominates people's understanding of Him ? Is there a Jesus who understood urban life, and who had a message for the peoples of the towns and villages ? There seem to be indications that this might be the case. If so, then it would seem to be profitable for Africa, as She moves towards the 21st Century, to try and retrieve this message.

A second interpretation of Jesus would be one of Jesus as " *a wandering Jewish cynic ,* "[10]. This wandering Jewish cynic seems to have a message for everyone. It places Jesus in two contexts, although it is not all that clear whether these two contexts were all that distinct. The first context was a Jewish peasant context, although it is not all that clear how much of a Jewish setting this was, since Jewish religion made little difference to the Jewish peasant behaviour. It seems, rather, that the operative context of this interpretation was an ancient generic Mediterranean peasant society, and therefore, most likely, a pagan society. If this were the case, it would explain why it was so easy for Jesus to mingle with them. In any strictly Jewish setting, Jesus would not have been able to do many of the things that he did do - eat with sinners, touch the sick, perform miracles, exorcisms, etc . All of these actions were directly contrary to anything in Judaism. All mention of the fact that Jesus does these things speaks of a Jesus who is

"a radically counter - cultural social critic who proclaimed immediate access to an unbroken reign of God

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[9]   Lk . 6 : 4 , 7 ff

[10]   *op .cit,* pg . 81

for persons marginalized from the conventional means to humane living. "[11]

A radically counter - cultural Jesus would have no difficulty operating within the second social context, which was a " *Purity within Temple* "[12] Judaism. This was were Jesus encountered all that was antithetical to him. The Temple was hierarchical, patriarchal, exclusive, and oppressive. Jesus, on the other hand, was egalitarian, liberating, inclusive, and just. The situation forced Jesus to be different.

If this was the complex society that Jesus belonged to, how , then, did he transmit his social message ? Was it distinctive for particular groups, or was it a general message that was applicable across the board ? As we look at Jesus' social stance, particularly as presented by the gospel of Luke, these are some of the questions that we will attempt to examine.

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[11]   *op. cit* pg . 84

[12]   *ibid.* pg 84.

1. 2 - LUKE'S PRESENTATION OF JESUS' SOCIAL STANCE :[13]

Besides the difficulty of really knowing what kind of society Jesus was responding to, as seen by the above analysis, there is no definitive consensus on whether or not Jesus set out to proclaim a social message. What we are left with, therefore, are interpretations by scholars of the Gospel, and then some practical extrapolation from these interpretations of a social message. Of the four gospels, the one that seems most amenable to a social re - interpretation is Luke. Why is this so ? This seems so largely because its author had experiences that made it important for him to try and present a Jesus who cared and loved all peoples. The author was a widely travelled man, and in his travels, he had come across a variety of peoples and situations. The author came from pagan traditions, and so was interested in presenting a Jesus who would reach out to non Jews. The author was, therefore, writing primarily to a Gentile audience, as well as to a society that seemed to be afflicted by various minority groups that suffered from neglect. He, therefore, wanted to write some words of encouragement to them, and found that by presenting a Jesus who was open to everyone, he could accomplish this intention. [14]

Looking at society in Jesus' time, one can begin to put together a picture of Jesus' social message. From the above analysis, it seems that a number of distinct groups emerge whom Jesus attempted to reach with his social message. These include the urban dwellers, and particularly the traders, merchants, the financial wizards ,and the vocational workers (tailors, carpenters, builders, masons , etc .) ; the peasants ; the religious leaders and the political leaders. There were also numerous travellers and visitors who may have been around when Jesus was preaching. If Jesus' social message was a response, through teaching and the conduct of his life, that Jesus made, to the questions of how persons and groups ought to live together, then it seems that he would have had to respond to each of these groups.

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[13]   Much of the material in this section comes from Richard J . Cassidy's , " *Jesus , Politics and Society : A Study of Luke's Gospel* , (Mary knoll : Orbis Books , NY , 1978) , Ch . 2 and Ch . 3 , pg .20ff

[14]   Carroll Schihlmueller , "The Gospel of Luke , " "*Jerome Biblical Commentary,* " in Brown , Fitzmyer , Murphy, eds. (New Jersey : Prentice Hall : 1968) pg . 115ff .

However, it seems that for Jesus, there were special concerns, which touched all these groups and which he preached on quite often. These included concern for the poor and the infirm ; and approach towards material possessions that was not the customary way of looking at the issue ; and a unique stance regarding the use of violence towards persons. We shall touch on each of these concerns shortly, but first some of the factors that helped shape Jesus' social stance. As shall be noticed, Jesus social stance was borne from his strong religious foundation and belief that happened to come from his trust in the providence and action of God in his life.

In the context of Jesus' deep belief in God, then, the only response that Jesus could offer was one of deep love and compassion for all God's creatures, and especially for the poor and the suffering amidst humanity. Jesus believed profoundly that all of life and human endeavour took place under the watchful gaze of a loving God. Because he felt God's love , Jesus was able to live radically and adopt the social stance that he did, in the sure knowledge that what he did and proclaimed was supported by a greater power than even his could be. Jesus' social stance was a direct result of what he perceived to be God's purposes. In his preaching, Jesus spoke often of his Father, and his Father's Will, and anyone who heard Jesus knew that these were the most important aspects of Jesus' approach and attitude to life than most people experienced. Finally Jesus' perception of God's purpose came from a life lived in close union with God through frequent prayer; that is communication with God.

Despite the lack of consensus on whether or not there was an intention in Jesus' teaching to raise social issues, it is clear from the Gospel of Luke that he did indeed show immense concern and compassion for the outcasts of society. Let us take a look at some of these concerns.

12.1 - CONCERN FOR THE POOR, INFIRM, WOMEN, WIDOWS AND PAGANS :

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus is pictured as travelling the length and breadth of southern Galilee, healing, comforting, raising the dead, encouraging and welcoming all those who were outcasts. There were many different types of acts within these broad out - lines, but they were all motivated by his strong sense of compassion and love. Jesus included all peoples in his actions : from Roman Officials (pagans), women, Gentiles, the poor, captives, blind, oppressed. Samaritans, widows, to synagogue officials, children, adults, cripples, etc . This in all likelihood is why his message had such an impact. It wasn 't so much in what he did, but in who he included in all his activities. As we have mentioned above, Jesus' impact was that he shunned all convention and Jewish law to do what he believed was right. In Lk. 14 : 1 - 6, we have the telling first verse, " *One Sabbath, Jesus went to eat a meal at the home of one of the leading Pharisees ; and people were watching Jesus closely. . .* " Various aspects of Jesus' social stance are evident in just this one verse. It's a Sabbath. Jesus is eating a meal with a leading Pharisee. People are watching him. A major question on people's minds, and why they were watching him so closely, was to see how he would handle situations that would contravene the Law, which was paramount in the Jewish people's lives. Jesus knew this, and much of his social stance was directed at guiding his listeners away from their over - reliance and dependence on the letter of the law to lives governed by compassion and love.

Jesus showed by his actions what a difference it made to welcome all people. His miracles, his healings, were not so much acts of physical relief from suffering as they were outward signs of acceptance of people into the *"new Kingdom "* that he was proclaiming, as they were. Jesus was trying to proclaim by his life and actions, that a life of trust in God was so much more gratifying than any that people knew on their own. Jesus' concern for people went beyond their physical and material needs. His was a concern that promised transformation and change through the gift of blessings which God bestowed on those who asked for them with faith.

In spite of his message seeming to be very spiritual, properly understood, Jesus' social stance towards the poor, the infirm, women and pagans, was most welcoming and reassuring. It told them that they were not

the outcasts that society made them feel like, but welcomed, loved and supported by a God who loved all as they were. It challenged people to see what they could do about changing their attitudes towards those around them. It focussed on the need for people to live lives that were not so deeply imbedded in law and ritual, but rather how their lives could become more responses of compassion and love, and that human persons were what mattered, not " *sacrifices and oblations.* "

1 : 2. 2 - STANCE TOWARDS THE RICH AND RICHES :

Jesus' sayings about the rich and the Kingdom of Heaven are many , well known, and ofter misunderstood. Two well known passages are the Rich Man and Lazarus the Beggar (Lk. 16 : 19 - 31), and the Rich Man who asked what he needed to do to follow Jesus more closely (Lk. 18 : 18 - 25). The conclusion of this passage has Jesus saying, " *How hard it is for rich people to enter the Kingdom of God. It is much harder for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. "* (Lk 18 24 - 25).

This seems to be a very harsh condemnation, especially if taken together with the consequences meted out to the rich man, who denied Lazarus even the scraps that fell from his table, and for that he was consigned to eternal fire and punishment. However, once again Jesus holds up these examples to offer us a mirror to examine our own lives. Jesus wants people to live lives of simplicity, not lives encumbered by the need to acquire all the possessions that one wants. Jesus gives us the description of the lifestyle of the rich man to put before us specific practices that need to be examined critically. Jesus tells us that the rich man was " *dressed in the most expensive clothes, and lived a life of great ease and luxury everyday. "* Ease and Luxury ! These are values much of humanity tries to achieve, but which possibly less than 2% of humanity does achieve. Why is there such a strong desire to acquire wealth beyond human need ? Is it because in a world that doesn't seem to offer that much security, the acquisition of wealth and possessions is the best guarantee of security ? Jesu wants to show us that our greatest source of security should be a trust and faith in him and the Father. This comes about when people learn to share what they have with others. This is especially so in the case of those who have more than they need. This is the criticism that Jesus is holding up to humanity. This is the right relationship between riches and humanity - a sharing of what one possesses.

Understanding how to live lives of simplicity . Understanding how to share what we have with one another. Understanding how dependence, faith and trust in God are all we need to have secure lives. These seem to be the cornerstones of Jesus' stance towards riches and the rich. It is not an attitude of outright condemnation of riches and the rich, but one of encouraging humanity to consider what is important in life

and what really brings happiness. Jesus tells the rich man to sell everything and give to the poor, and to follow

him, but the man turned away sad, because he was very rich.

1 : 2. 3 - JESUS, OPPRESSION AND INJUSTICE :

The main story depicting Jesus' stance towards oppression is the parable of the Widow and the Judge (Lk . 18 : 1 - 8). It is a parable of a person seeking compensation from a judicial system that wasn't ready to fulfill its duty, and so all this person meets is resistance and denial of what is rightfully hers. What emerges is a tale of persistence and perseverance, and finally justice given just to get rid of the woman. It is an example of a God who will provide justice to those who cry out all the day long. It is a parable about a God who is aware that this is a world filled with injustice, and by sheer human strength, it is difficult to achieve what one rightfully needs. There is a need for humanity to know that injustice can be overcome with the help and belief in a God who is just, and knows what it is to struggle with an unjust society and world.

The judge was also called a person who neither feared God, nor humanity. He was also called corrupt for refusing to administer justice to those who deserved it. Such a person would obviously have no idea how to uphold the law, for he had no guidelines within which to know what justice would mean. And yet despite these flaws, Jesus says he gave the woman what she wanted. What was wrong with the judge was more than just his pride in feeling that he could do whatever he wanted, even at the expense of denying others their rights. He had a major attitude problem towards people. He did not respect others. He did not like others. And he did not respect and like himself either. What he did have was a lack of tolerance ; an ability to be annoyed and a heightened sense of self importance. He had no sense of what was right or wrong, nor of human feeling. He had no idea of what compassion could mean . In presenting the judge in this way, Jesus is challenging society to take a look at itself, and see how often it falls short in showing compassion to others.

Another group of people that Jesus found distasteful in their lack of expression of justice were the scribes. Jesus took every opportunity to rail against them as *"people who were so sure of their own goodness, and despised everyone else. "* (Lk . 18 : 9), and who had a craving for public salutations and the best seats. In a biting passage (Lk . 11 : 37 - 53), Jesus roundly criticized the Pharisees and Scribes (teachers of the Law) for their hypocrisy in thinking that they were the best, but in actual fact they were merely, *" clean on the outside, but on the inside full of violence and evil. "* (Lk. 11 : 39) For Jesus it was the inside that mattered, and the inside

is made up of attitudes and motivations. These are what Jesus, in his struggle against injustice and oppression tried to change. It was a struggle that Jesus left for his followers to continue to this day.

1. 2 : 4 - JESUS AND VIOLENCE :

Jesus' attitude towards violence is something that often has to be presumed. There are not that many

clear texts on what Jesus thought about violence. He did, however, express his anger violently in one known

incident - the temple scene where he chased out the money lenders (Lk . 19 : 45ff). There were also occasions

when Jesus spoke of murder, punishment and killing all in the same breathe (Lk. 11 : 46 -53). Jesus spoke also

of bringing conflict and division among households ,

" fathers against their sons, and sons against their fathers ; mothers against their daughters, and daughters against their mothers ; mothers - in - law against their daughters - in - law, and daughters - in - law against their mothers - in - law. " (Lk. 12 : 51 - 53)

Jesus spoke of the destruction of towns and villages with fire and brimstone unless people repented, and turned

from their evil ways. (Lk . 10 : 13 - 16). Finally, the disciples asked if he would call down fire from heaven on

those towns of Samaria that rejected him. In this instance Jesus responded in the negative (Lk . 9:51-56) .

These are some of the passages that could typify Jesus' attitude towards violence. All except the last

one seem to present a Jesus who was prone to violence, and this certainly was not the case. There is indeed an

incredible amount of debate as to whether or not the scene in the Temple actually did take place, since that is

Jesus at his most violent. If this scene did occur, it is regarded as a scene depicting *" eschatological restoration.*

" [15]This would take into account the necessity for the Temple to have the money traders, traders, etc. within

it, and place Jesus' act in the realm of a symbolic act. The symbolism was one of an apocalyptic prophecy. "

The present Temple, his actions proclaimed, *" would soon be destroyed, to cede to the final temple, the temple*

of God's coming Kingdom. "[16]

So was Jesus really violent ? Not if our understanding of him is anything to go by. If Jesus were

violent, it would contradict his radically counter - cultural lifestyle. For, it seems, violence is an ever present

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[15]   *op. cit* , pg . 78 - For a fuller discussion see E . P . Sanders , *" Jesus and Judaism* , (Philadelphia : Fortress Press , 1985)

[16]   *op. cit* pg. 78

reality of all societies. Jesus' was a commitment to love - to bringing this into all one's affairs in a thorough and creative way. Jesus offered non - violence and non - resistance, and to a people suffering the oppression of a colonial master, this plea for non - violence must have been very hard to swallow. [17] Jesus' policy of non resistance on the social level meant a rejection of actions that would involve doing physical harm to others ; an ability not to confront those responsible for existing evil, and on the positive side, seeking solidarity with those who were suffering from these evils without offering any defense. With regard to non - violence, Jesus' response would be one of challenging and confronting those responsible for existing social evils verbally in an attempt to bring about change. Jesus tried to do this often - even to the extent of trying to get Pilate to change his attitude during his trial.

In all likelihood, the attitude that expresses Jesus' response towards violence best, is his attitude of forgiveness towards all, but most especially towards sinners. Jesus was not ready to tolerate any lack of acceptance on the part of people. His attitude was that there was no one who was perfect, and anyone who thought that they were was a liar. Jesus challenged his followers and hearers to realize and understand this, and in the story of the woman caught committing adultery, and ready to be stoned for it (Jn. 8 : 1), Jesus was able to give the perfect example of forgiveness.

Thus, despite Jesus not setting out to proclaim a social message, and hold out for all a model against which all other societies would be judged, he did in fact proclaim a very comprehensive social message by his words and his actions. His association with the poor, with the sick, with sinners, with the reviled and outcasts, and with women, proclaimed very loudly a social message different from the one that existed, and open for all who wished to follow it. The greatest expectation that people had was for him to transform all things with one sweep of his hand. This was not, however, in Jesus' plan, and it seems useful to take a look at what kind of political agenda Jesus may have had, and how that could have fitted in with the expectations of the people of his time. This is what we shall do next.

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[17] We shall examine the political aspects of Jesus' non - violence and non - resistance a little more deeply in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO : - THE POLITICAL STANCE OF JESUS

2:1 - BACKGROUND

Jewish society at the time of Jesus was in need of, ready and waiting expectantly for a liberator from the oppressive elements of Roman rule and structure. The Jews were familiar with the history of their ancestors, and knew that the time was about right for the God of their ancestors to restore to them their rightful rule over their own kingdom, as promised throughout the history of salvation. They knew, or thought they understood, that the *"Messiah"* who was to come would be a great political Power with forces that would overcome all that the Jewish people were undergoing at that time in terms of oppression, injustice and misrule by both the Roman colonizers and by the Jewish *"stooges"* placed over them by the Romans. In order to understand why things were so harsh, we need to take a look at the political structures of the time. and see if in Jesus' response to that structure, the Jewish people had their own expectations for liberation met.

2 : 2 - POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF FIRST CENTURY PALESTINE

In a Chapter entitled, *" Christ and Power, "* [18] the author of the book writes about Christ as the on who overcomes those powers that deny humanity the capacity to live absolutely free lives. He speaks of Chris as the one who maintains the unity of these world powers, and grants them the ability to carry out whateve functions they can. Christ has total control over them. Despite these powers being considered as fallen, the did have the capacity to deceive and create the illusion of being all knowing and all powerful. Often thes Powers were negative and sought to separate humanity from God ; place humanity in servitude ; and subjec humanity to their tutelage. These powers included tyranny, the law, and any other structures that curtailed human freedom.

These powers, in Yoder's terminology, sound very much like human political structures. The autho does say that human society cannot exist without these structures, and yet at the same time Christ came int the world to transform them. What then, were these structures that were so in need of transformation, an which Jewish people thought would be completely overturned ? In the book by Cassidy quoted above [19] th author elaborates on the political structure of the time. He tells us that Judea was under the direct rule of Roman Govemor , with Herod Antipas continuing as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. Daily administration wa also largely carried out by the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, giving the Chief Priests immense political power.[20] Therefore, we need to examine Jesus' response to the Romans and their political structure , to Herod Antipa and to the chief priests. This was the defined political structure of the time, and it was in relating to thes groups and people that Jesus' political stance emerged.

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[18]   John Howard Yoder , *" The Politics of Jesus ,* " (Grand Rapids : William B . Eerdmans Pub. Co , 1972) , Ch . 8 , pg . 135ff

[19]   see footnote #[13] above .

[20]   *ibid* . pg 50 ff .

2 : 2 : 1 - JESUS AND HEROD ANTIPAS

The major encounter that Jesus had with Herod Antipas occurred during Jesus' trial. Prior to the trial,

Herod is mentioned with regard to the imprisonment, and subsequent beheading of John the Baptist. Herod

thought that by removing John the Baptist from the scene, he would remove any threat to his rule, that might

come from any groundswell, or Jewish movement. Unfortunately, he begins to hear some very disconcerting

reports about a Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus also hears that Herod would like to see him. (Lk. 9 : 9)

In the only other reference to Herod prior to the trial, we learn a little bit more how Herod's attitude

begins to harden towards Jesus, and how he desires to kill him (Lk. 13 : 31 - 33). In this passage, in a somewhat

contradictory way, Jesus accepts a report from the Pharisees, not exactly friends of his, that Herod wants to kill

him, and that he needs to escape. It was Jesus' social stance that was creating controversy with the political

rulers, and as we saw in the previous chapter, it is understandable why this was so. Jesus' response to the

Pharisees is not to tell them that they were hypocrites, or to regard their motives with anything other than they

deserved, but rather to take them seriously, and accept their warning for what it was, namely a warning.

Jesus also reaffirmed his commitment to his ministry, saying he would not alter his course despite

Herod's threat. Jesus was ready to defy the leadership in order to continue his ministry. Jesus was willing to

challenge the leadership in what he believed was right. Jesus had no desire or need to placate political rulers

and he does not do so.

Jesus even criticizes Herod, showing him to be destructive, and of secondary importance as a

political. He also held him in scorn and derision, thus not really feeling compelled to justify or change his

behaviour. He shows no inclination to honour him as the most important person in any way, and goes on with

his activity despite Herod.

It was during his trial that Jesus really encountered Herod, and expressed his stance towards those

rulers who were no more than political lackeys for their masters. Herod had the power and authority to convict

Jesus, and have him crucified, and yet he finds that there is nothing to find him guilty of. This despite all the

claims to the contrary by his detractors. Why was it that Herod could do nothing about Jesus?

Despite Herod's seeming power over Jesus, and his demands for Jesus to answer his questions and

perform some kind of sign, Jesus remained studiously silent. It seems that Jesus was aware that nothing he could do or say was going to alter the mind of Herod, or any of his other accusers, and his best bet was to let them do what they wanted, without his interfering. Jesus' attitude seems to arise from his knowledge that anything the political leaders came directly from a Higher Power, that they neither understood, nor were they really interested in. It seems that if there was to be any resolution to the situation, other than that which was a foregone conclusion, then it would have to come from this Higher Power.

Jesus refuses to cooperate with the authorities, and in some instances, this is understandable. In the case of Herod and Pilate, however, it would seem to make more sense to work with them rather than antagonizing them through silence and outright criticism.

Therefore, knowing that Herod could not really prove anything against him, and that Herod did not seem to want to pass judgement, one way or the other, Jesus maintained his silence. This was he using the understanding that he had to the fullest.

2:2.2 - JESUS AND THE CHIEF PRIESTS :

The chief priests were Jesus' main political enemies. It was in his encounters with them that Jesus found a political system at loggerheads with his own ideals, and it was they, along with the Sanhedrin and the Pharisees that Jesus found himself having to challenge with recurring frequency.

This challenge of the chief priests was borne of the fact that they most manipulated the system to achieve their own ends. What was it that Jesus found so repugnant about them ? Above everything else, they were amongst the wealthiest class in society, and because of their position, they had numerous sources of wealth, some legal, most illegal. Besides their salaries, paid out of treasury funds, that they were entitled to, the Chief priests had at least four other means of earning an income, and most of the chief priests used all of these means to supplement their main source.

The first of the ways by which the chief priests added on to their incomes was by taking as their own income, various parts of the sacrifices that the temple produced. This was mostly by way of taking for themselves, the best part of what was offered in sacrifice. This included the best in animal products, including the prized skins and hides and the choicest first produce from the land. They were able to acquire these goods by virtue of the law, and their position within the temple, and dispose of them as they wished, sharing the income generated amongst themselves.

A second way of supplementing their incomes was through the contacts and partnerships that the chief priests were able to establish with the merchants and traders in the temple. The temple, in the first century, was a place of very lucrative business, and the chief priests enjoyed a prominent share of it.

A third way of enriching themselves, and closely related to the trading and merchant business of the temple, was the fact that the chief priests and their families owned much of the commercial space in the outer courtyard of the temple, and so were able to lease these out to merchants and traders for further income.

A final source of income for the chief priests were the personal lands that they owned, and which provided income in various ways : through selling portions of it ; through leasing it ; through selling the produce of the land, and so on.

With this kind of lifestyle, was it any wonder that Jesus felt compelled to constantly criticize and

lambast them ? What was the form that this challenge towards the chief priests took ?

Jesus' action in the temple, where he chased out the merchants, and overturned the moneychangers tables, has already been alluded to as a very strong symbolic action . As can be seen, however, from the above analysis of the chief priests and their structure, Jesus' actions could have been very real actions of displeasure towards the chief priests and their quest for wealth at the expense of all else. This physical act was one of Jesus' responses to the situation presented by the chief priests.

The chief priests tried to pinpoint Jesus by a series of questions, all with the intention of seeking ways to destroy him. Jesus' response to the questions was not direct, and he always managed to turn the questions back to the chief priests and his antagonists.

Knowing that, rightly, they should have been the major source of authority, the chief priests questioned Jesus as to where his authority came from (Lk. 20 : 2). They asked this because they could see that there definitely was some power about him in the things that he did and said, and they felt threatened by their inability to understand where it came from.

The second question came via spies sent by the chief priests, to ask Jesus whether it was lawful or not to pay tribute to Rome (Lk. 20 : 21 - 22). It was essentially a question of who one owed most allegiance to - the earthly kingdom of Rome, or the heavenly kingdom of God, and it was phrased in the manner of who one was to pay tribute to. Jesus' response was to be practical. To who was the monetary tribute made out ? If it was to the Roman Emperor, then it was to be paid to him. If it was made out to God, then it should be returned to God. Jesus' response puts into doubt all the Jewish beliefs about images, and the taboos that went along with them, for by questioning them, Jesus forced them to do things that by law they were forbidden from doing. And yet they did not see the irony in what they did. Jesus taught that both temporal obligations as well as duty to God were important, and one could not be separated from the other. Everything ultimately fell in place in terms of God's realm. It was God who had control over the entire universe. Whatever was of this world was from God, and so by giving to the temporal rulers, one was actually giving to God.

The third question came via a hypothetical problem posed by the Sadducees. It had to do with how many husbands a women, who had gone through life married to seven brothers, one after the other, would have

in heaven. They wanted to know whose wife she would be at the resurrection. Again Jesus' response wa

indirect. He went about making a comparison between earthly life and heavenly life, saying that in heaven i

was unnecessary for people to marry or to be given in marriage.

In all Jesus' responses to attempts by the chief priests to trap him, and find fault with him, Jesus wa

able to turn the questions around, and show that they were based on false assumptions. He concluded hi

encounters with the emissaries of the chief priests by attacking them, and showing them to be irresponsible an

murderous stewards, in a parable about wicked tenants of a vineyard (Lk. 20 : 9 - 16). The chief priests knew

that Jesus was attacking them directly, and so tried to get a hold of him. They, however, could not do so .

2 :2. 3 - JESUS AND THE ROMANS :

In his response to the question of tribute, Jesus shows his essential attitude towards the Roman rulers - namely that as representatives of the authority that comes from God, they were to be respected and treated as such. However, insofar as they went against what came directly from God, they were to be ignored.

Jesus' political response to the society of his day was one that would not tolerate anything that was contrary to God's law of love. Jesus was not intimidated by the political leaders of his time, but found that because they supported rather unjust social situations, he had to be rather critical of them. In many of his responses, Jesus answered in ways that his hearers had not even imagined. Jesus accepted what was just, and was to work within it, but he was highly critical of those who had more than they deserved. Therefore, Jesus tried, and, to a large extent, succeeded, in establishing a very independent, and largely counter - cultural stance. With this background in Jesus' political and social stances, let us now take a look at present day Kenya, and see if there are similarities or differences from Jesus' day and age.

CHAPTER THREE : - THE SOCIO - ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION OF PRESENT DAY KENYA :

3 : 1 - INTRODUCTION :

The socio - economic and political story of Kenya is one of rule / government from the top, with a facade of participation by the masses. It is a story of growing wealth for a few elite, and massive pauperization of the majority. Nowhere is this more evident than in the major cities and towns of Kenya. It shows itself in numerous ways : the rural - urban migration ; the increasing crime with violence rates ; the decaying infrastructure and services in most urban centres ; the escalating growth of slum areas, and the informal sector, and numerous other ways. Some of these will be looked at in some detail in the course of this chapter. In this Chapter, I will also examine the factors that make up Nairobi 's diverse socio - economic and political structure, and see how the inter - linking of them has contributed to Nairobi as the unique city that it is. However, prior to that, a look at some statistics might help, as well as a little deeper understanding of the process of urbanization .

In a comparison of a number of developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, two interesting facts emerge. The first is that Kenya is projected between the years 1985 - 2000 to have one of the highest increases in % urban population in the world. It is projected to rise from 19 . 7 % - 31 . 8 %(a 12 . 1 % jump). Only three countries in the world are expected to have a greater or similar change - namely Nigeria , Cote D'Ivoire and Malaysia. These are three of the fastest developing countries in the world. It is important to note that we are currently moving towards the end of this projected time span, and all indications are that this expected increase is really taking place. In 1993, the estimated urban population % of total population was already at 26. 1 %, well on its way to the projected 31. 8 % by the year 2000 [21]. A second fact is that Kenya is expected to have the highest average rate of growth of both urban and rural populations. This could simply be

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[21]   World Bank SourceBook , 1995

a consequence of the fact that Kenya has the highest overall population growth rate in the world. What these numbers do point to is the increasing importance that urban life will continue to play in these developing nations. At a staggering annual growth rate of 6. 72%, Kenya's urban population is set to place massive stress on local government in the years to come. A major question will be : Will local government be up to the challenge ? We shall examine this question in some detail later on in the chapter. Therefore, despite having extremely high local taxes, and fees charges, Kenya's urban population has little to show for it. Again, despite in 1976 producing 20.0% of Kenya's national income, Nairobi 's standard of living has, over the last 20 years or so, continued to decline. These statistics paint a disturbing picture, and unless they are really looked into, they could pose some serious challenges for the future. [22] With these statistics as our background, let us now take a look at what urbanization is.

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[22] _Urban Policy and Economic Development - An Agenda for the 1990s - The Challenge of Urban Growth_ , (Washington D .C . : International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / World Bank , 1991) , Ch . 1 , pgs . 20, 24 - 25 .

3. 2 - URBANIZATION - What is it ?

The phenomenon of urbanization is a unique one. It is also quite complex and has a number of inter - related factors involved. In order to understand Nairobi 's dynamic composition, it seems useful at this juncture to try and look at urbanization in general, and see what this might entail. Benjamin Tonna, in a work specifically geared towards understanding how to bring the Gospel Message to urban centres, [23] goes to great lengths to examine and explain the process of urbanization. He refers to it as a process, because it is something that never really ends. In his examination, he comes up with a number of characteristics that help to define what this process of urbanization is.

His general definition of this process of urbanization is ,

"the phenomenon by which millions of people move, en masse, from rural to metropolitan areas, and more importantly, transform their lifestyles. [24]

Urbanization most often occurs in *"strategic space* " [25], in *" certain nerve centers " *[26], where large numbers of people can find responses to their basic needs. This is what draws people to these metropolitan areas - offers of improvements in their lifestyles and meeting of basic needs in a much more satisfactory way. Initially as these nerve centers are established, either to take advantage of new techno - scientific discoveries such as irrigation for agricultural improvement, or more efficient use of resources such as coal, petroleum , and other energy sources, these basic needs look like being improved. However, over time, and especially as the process of urbanization takes on its own momentum, with its very rapid increase in population in these limited areas, and population growth outstrips the capacity for urban planning, the meeting of these basic needs becomes a mere illusion. At this point the realities of urbanization begin to set in.

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[23] Benjamin Tonna , "*A Gospel for the Cities - A Socio - Theology of Urban Ministry* , " (Orbis Books : NY , 1978) , pg . 60

[24] *ibid* , pg . 5

[25] *op . cit* . pg . 78

[26] *op . cit* .pg . 78

Tonna classifies these realities as geographic, demographic, economic, political and cultural, and essentially these are the elements that contribute to the uniqueness of each of these urban settings. This uniqueness is in the fact that they offer a microcosm of the national population of any given area in a restricted, confined setting. Therefore, as one looks at these elements in the life of a particular metropolis, one often does get a glimpse of the life of the entire society, nation or peoples. Nairobi fits into this definition quite well, and as I examine the social, economic and political realities of Nairobi, a picture of Kenyan society will emerge.

Two fundamental factors in understanding the process of urbanization are that of the concentration of this large mass of people in *"strategic limited space "*, and the need for the *"forging of new and stable relationships ,"* that often result in new typologies of persons. [27] These two factors have consequences for all the other realities of this new lifestyle.

The fact, for example, of limited space within, say, the environs of Nairobi, means that as the population expands, new alternatives are going to have to be found in terms of services offered, such as housing, public transport, health, education and employment. With a larger and larger population, the capacities of these services get stretched, and often become unattainable for large portions of the population. How the administration responds to these situations as they develop, is what often makes up the daily lives of the people of these metropolitan areas.

The forging of new relationships is the backbone of survival in these metropolitan areas. Because of the large numbers, it is often not what you know, but who you know, that matters. Employment, receiving of services, answers to queries, etc. often all depend on talking or seeing the right person. Thus, the ability to establish and maintain the "appropriate " relationships becomes crucial to survival in metropolitan areas.

A major aspect of metropolitan areas, is the representation of a microcosm of Kenya's population in a limited space. As we examine Nairobi 's social context, it will be interesting to explore how this microcosm lives with one another, in the context of the two factors above. Nairobi is truly a cosmopolitan city, with people from every corner of Kenya ; from virtually every other continent and sub - continent, as well as from all the neighbouring countries in Africa . The interaction of this kind of setting plays a crucial role in the character

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[27]   *op. cit* .

of urbanization, and as time passes, different typologies of persons emerge from this kind of mixture. As Keny

moves into the 21st century these persons are going to emerge in important areas of the life of the country, an

changes will take place.

As we try to understand the process of urbanization, it seems clear from the above description tha

Nairobi is deeply into this process. How is this evident ? There is a massive influx of people into this limite

space that is the city of Nairobi, all looking for the means to improve their lifestyles. In the process, there ha

been an absolute breakdown in the capacity for planners to carry out any meaningful planning, and this i

evident everywhere. A major example of this is in the urban transport system. [28] For the last ten years at leas

there have been discussions on how to alleviate the problems caused by too much traffic on Nairobi roads, an

particularly during the peak hours of morning and evening. Suggestions have ranged from building supe

flyovers that would encircle the city, connecting all major residential areas to the city centre in a more direc

way ; to having commuter train services ; to making certain streets one way ; to having car - pools ; etc . Ther

have even been some grandiose plans drawn up with great designs of what new systems could look like. In th

end, nothing concrete has been done, and the urban transport system today, is the same as it was twenty fiv

years ago. The results of this inability to change, plan, adapt are evident for all to see. Huge traffic jams almos

everywhere one travels in the mornings and evenings are the order of the day. Constantly overcrowded publi

vehicles, throughout the day. A police force, that despite adequate training, seems stretched and unable to cop

with these daily traffic occurrences. Traffic accidents that take place on a daily basis on almost all roads. Anc

saddest of all, the inability to keep up maintenance of the roads both in the city, as well as in the country as a

whole. This is one of the major indicators of an urbanization process that has taken on a life of its own, and

is beyond the control of human planning.

Other indicators of the process of urbanization include the continued growth of squalid slum areas

like Kibera and Mathare Valley, with no provisions of water or electricity, and newer areas like Korogocho,

Gitarimarigo, Kibagare, etc. There is also the continuing expansion of other overcrowded residential areas like

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[28]   For a recent article on this issue see *"Weekly Review* ," Feb . 9 1996, opinion column
, *A Nation Asleep at the Wheel* , Matunda Nyanchama , pg . 20 - 23 .

Dandora, Umoja, Buruburu, Kangemi, Kawangware, etc. These are areas that tend to have a better supply of basic necessities, but that often feel the crunch first when things are stretched. For example, in the months of September 1995 - January 1996, there was probably no area aside from Dandora that suffered daily rationing of electricity. Many other areas did have regularly announced power rationing, but I contend none had it on as regular a basis as the residents of Dandora. [29] Overcrowding is another major indicator, and Dandora's population must be one of the fastest growing in the city. There are an ever increasing number of high rise buildings being built in Dandora, an area that was initially designated to have no buildings more than two floors up. Because of the inability to plan (amongst others) this could not really be enforced, and now it is a very common sight to see high rises of five or six stories. The space available for building has virtually been used up in Dandora, and so the only alternative is to build upwards. Some of the other indicators of urbanization are the basic inhumaneness of people in public offices, and the high degree of totally unnecessary bureaucracy ; the collapsing health care system and numerous others. Above all else, the most obvious indicator of urbanization is the rapid increase in the number of the poor. The factor of poverty in the process of urbanization cannot be overlooked, and in Nairobi, it is something that is very difficult to miss. The gap between those who have in the city, and those who do not have widens rapidly on a day to day basis, and as we examine society of Nairobi, we will go into this in greater detail.

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[29]   Personal lived experience .

3. 3 - THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF NAIROBI

In large developing countries, urban centres can generally be said to be characterized essentially as *" linkage "* sites in the large international network of trade. [30] These cities act as a conduit for international trade organizations in their tasks as carriers of unprocessed raw materials from the host nations to their own nations, and also play a role in the return of the finished products from the mother nations to the original exporting countries. This kind of system keeps the developing nations in the position of tertiary states, relying primarily on raw material export, and being unable to develop their own large industrialization. This is the state that Kenya is in today. These cities develop largely as potential areas of high class transportation and worldwide communication, in a hinterland with a tremendous potential of untapped raw material, ready to be exploited. This is fundamentally how Nairobi developed. It grew as the railway centre for the British Highlands, that were rich agricultural land at the turn of the century, and it has rapidly developed into a major metropolis for International Organizations.

These types of cities develop their own types of economies and structures. These structures and economies are often geared towards impressing the outside world, with little thought on how the indigenous population will fare. It therefore seems that there are two perspectives from which the life of a city like Nairobi can be understood. The first would be the developmental perspective [31], and what the government would like to see happen in terms of encouraging and fostering growth for the sake of continued good relations with the international community. The second approach would be from the level of the indigenous local population, and what they do for daily survival. Let us take a look at each of these approaches, as we try to examine Nairobi 's economic context.

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[30]   *op. cit* , pg . 60.

[31]   A book that seems to take this approach is , *" Kenya - Country Study and Norwegian Aid Review , "* edited by Arne Tostensen and John G. Scott (Norway : The Chr . Michelsen Institute : 1987) pgs . 9ff

3.3:1 - THE DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE :

One of the major factors affecting the life of the people of Kenya over the last ten years or so has been the role of International Organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the major donor agencies of western nations such as MDC / NORAD (Norway), ODA (UK), DANIDA (Denmark), and the Governments of these Western Nations themselves. All have had an increasingly vocal role in developing he economy of the country , and all have been particularly stringent on putting in place reforms that would guarantee the development and continuation of the secondary markets of Kenya 's economy, while at the same time opening up the financial sector to ease their own participation in this economy. It has reached such an extent that often Kenya's leaders spend more time speaking words / plans / policies of substance to the International Community, than to their own people. Attendance at any of Kenya's National days of Celebration will bear this out.

The reasons that these communities have become such major players is the need to maintain Kenya as a major producer of raw materials, and a market for their finished products. Thus, they have, since the mid - 1980s forced the Kenya Government to adopt extremely tough Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPS), all under the guise of freeing up the economy, but in reality, attempting to create a society that would retain and grow in its need for the products of these Western, consumer Nations.

These organizations, therefore, encourage governments to develop programs that increase investment, work at improving the quality of the raw materials (agricultural) through greater expenditure on research into new and better quality seeds and other inputs ; the freeing of government control of major parastatals that often have monopolistic tendencies over important sectors of national interest - e . g . - the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB). national transport carriers (Kenya Airways, Kenya Railways, etc.), national telecommunications (Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Ltd.) - all with the intention of opening up the economy, and making the country more competitive. In fact, what most of these improvements do is allow international organizations to increase their own stake and control of these important sectors. The recent 26%

buy into of Kenya Airways by the Royal Dutch Airline KLM, is a vivid example of this process at work. It remains to be seen whether this buy into will visibly affect the lives of the thousands of Kenyans who work for the airline. All it may do is improve the competitive edge of the airline, and make it a more profitable business for its owners. Often these attempts at opening up the economy have serious consequences for the local population, including at times loss of jobs. This is the developmental perspective of the economy, and the role of Nairobi in its functioning is fairly evident. There are at times attempts by the government to resist these changes, but they are less on humanistic grounds, than on grounds of greed and in order to maintain control.

3 : 3. 2 - THE LOCAL URBAN POPULATION

In the context of a city that essentially is involved in the export - import business of raw materials and their finished products , the vast majority of urban dwellers are going to be poor and unemployed. This is because life in the city is not geared towards the creation of employment, or the industrialization of the city , but in maintaining it as a tertiary territory ; i. e . a territory used by an outside force for production of raw materials, and as a market for their finished products. Therefore there will be two types of economic activity that can be provided. These would be any linked to the production of these raw materials, and their processing and transportation, including developing local markets for these raw materials, and employment with the government and international organizations in administrative and menial roles. Nairobi, having developed also as the political capital of the country does offer a large amount of menial clerical opportunities. Outside these two areas, there is very little opportunity for employment in the city , and the consequences of this are evident. The only alternatives are for people to try and generate their own employment, and so there is a proliferation of small - scale, "*jua - kali* " activity in Nairobi. This is what the majority of the local population engages in. What is it that they do ?

The vast majority of Nairobi's two million inhabitants are either unemployed, or underemployed in their own small businesses. They are basically engaged in trying to meet the needs of the steady influx of people into the city. What are these primal needs ? Food, shelter and clothing. What are the major occupations of the residents of Nairobi ? Selling food, shelter and clothing. How and where ? Mostly in and around where people have set up there homes. Therefore if one goes into any of the major residential areas of the local population - and here we are talking about the areas of Kangemi, Kawangware, Kibera, Mathare Valley, Buruburu, Dandora, etc. , - one sees vast amounts of food, shelter and clothing dealers. They are found selling and even making their goods in an array of situations. Many have turned one of the rooms in their homes into little shops, so that almost all those that have windows opening out into the streets, have stocked these rooms with all sorts of essential goodies to sell to their neighbours and passers - by . Thus here in Dandora, virtually every single plot has at least one shop in it. In these " shops " they sell the essentials - soap, rice, sweets, sodas, batteries, a

proration of over the counter medicines, bread, milk, tea, sugar, maize - meal, biscuits, etc. If they are not inside these little rooms, they are outside on the pavements, either literally sitting on the pavement, or with some kind of stall on which to sell their goods. Often those outside are the fruit and vegetable sellers, and they too have their specifics - potatoes, cabbages, carrots, peas, spinach, sukuma wiki, tomatoes, onions, green peppers, oranges, mangoes, bananas, pineapples, etc. These are the food sellers, and there are thousands of them in these residential areas. Dandora has designated market areas where these people can set up shop. It also has various streets and pavements, and any open areas covered by these sellers.

Competing with the food sellers are the artisans, - the carpenters, the barbers , the electricians, the metal workers, the sand transporters, the masons, etc. These are the suppliers and repairers of one's essential housing goods - chairs, cupboards, beds, *jikos* ,pots and pans, tables, door makers, window makers and repairers, radio and TV technicians, etc . Once again one is spoiled for choice, as there are thousands of them.

Finally come the *mitumba* dealers - the second hand clothes sellers. They are generally not as profligate as the previous two groups, since obtaining second hand clothes is often a little harder, and fraught with risks. However , they do have a prominent and well known area to operate from - namely Gikomba - a market area set up close to the city centre. What have become more prevalent over the last few years have been the peripatetic salesmen, who walk the streets of these residential areas, shouting out their wares.

This is the economic life of the vast majority of the people of Nairobi. With such an abundance of these people, the major question becomes : How do they survive ? I haven't figured out the answer, but I do see them surviving every day.

The second major source of employment is the government sector. This sector is mainly reserved for rewarding special political favours, and thus depends more on a who you know basis than what you know. The Civil Service is a major employer, but often at such minimal wages that it is hard to imagine a person earning a living from. In the civil service there are mainly clerical jobs available - sitting at windows to respond to the volumes of paper work required for every single activity. Secretaries, messengers, drivers - these are some of the positions open in this state bureaucratic machinery.

In the private sector, a major employer would be the tourist industry. With its need for tour van drivers,

waiters, porters, hotel cleaners, etc, this would be a major player. Kenya being a very popular tourist destination, and having a large number of top class hotels, there is potential here for greater expansion. Entry into this area might demand some level of education, as well as financial resources, and so could be limited to the educated few. This then is a brief look at the economic context of Nairobi. As seems clear, it is not a very promising situation . It has all the signs of a dependent economy, and unless it can move towards becoming a self - reliant economy, prospects for growth and improvement seem minimal. Let us now move into the social make - up of the city.

3.4 - THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF NAIROBI

As we mentioned earlier, a characteristic of metropolitan areas is that they become a microcosm of the society of a particular country. This is no less true of Nairobi. In Nairobi, one can find and meet people from almost every corner of the world. Being the political capital, it is blessed with having at least a few representatives from all the major countries of the world. But as we saw earlier, Nairobi's existence depends very much on it being a focal point for international organizations, and members of these communities play an important part in the socialization of Nairobi. Aside from the international community, [32]there is the indigenous population, and in this regard, Nairobi truly is a microcosm of Kenyan society. There are people from literally every corner of this nation. All ethnic groups of Kenya are well represented. There are Kikuyus, Luos, Kambas, Luhyas, Kisiis, Kalenjins, Mijikenda, Pokots, Turkana, Masaai, etc, etc. There are also people from all over Africa in Nairobi, and particularly from the neighbouring countries - Tanzanians, Ugandans, Ethiopians, Somalis, Sudanese, Rwandese, Burundians, Zaireois, etc. Finally there is also a large Asian community (and this is a rare but truly blessed addition). How do all these diverse groups fit into Nairobi ? What do they do to give it the unique character that it has ? These are some of the questions that I will try to look at.

Nairobi is predominantly a two class society - made up of the Elite, and the Poor. This is what we would expect from the economic analysis given above. There is a negligible middle class, and it is negligible largely because its potential for growth is very small, whereas the potential among the other two classes is much greater. Let us take a look at these two major groups in terms of their social impact on Nairobi.

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[32]   See *Sunday Nation*, Sunday February 11 1996 for article on consequences of crime on International Community in Nairobi.

3. 4 : 1 - THE ELITES

The Elites are both indigenous and expatriate. Each of them have a different *raison d ' etre*, as well as response to the situations that they find themselves in.

The indigenous elite draw their wealth from two major sources : their business holdings and acumen, and secondly, their manipulation of the political system (especially with regard to getting huge kick- backs from contracts for over priced projects). As we saw from Jesus' social stance, he was very critical of this kind of situation, and we will look at this more in the next chapter. Many of Kenya's elite have used wealth that they may have initially acquired legitimately, to enhance it by acquiring more and more properties and business interests, thus depriving others of an opportunity to participate in the economic activities of the country. Often these further acquisitions are through very devious means. This greater and greater acquisition of wealth by the few is strengthened by these wealthy persons taking centre stage in the political life of the nation, and using that political control to tighten even further their grip and control of the economy. A look at the *"Who's who "* of Kenyan politics would read like a *" Who's who of the wealthiest people in Kenya. "* They are almost synonymous. It is often through their economic wealth that the indigenous elite maintain their political visibility. It is by being seen to be generous, and handing out *largesse* at fund raisings, or plum positions in major parastatals to loyal supporters, that the elite maintain their control. Thus they are caught up in a circular activity. Without the wealth, a person cannot get into the political system, and without control of the political system , it is very hard to obtain further wealth. This seems to be the situation facing the professional class in Kenya. [33]It is therefore important that these elites continue to have access to economic opportunities and wealth. As we shall see in the discussion of the political situation, this inter - linking political - economic system is a mainstay of the way Kenya functions, and any attempts to break it up, by allowing greater numbers

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[33]   Among Kenya's lawyers and other professionals there is a group of young lawyers (nicknamed the *" Young Turks "* in the run up to the 1992 General Elections) , who seem to feel that they have gone about as far as they can by their own means in terms of acquiring wealth , and in order for them to acquire more wealth , they need to have some kind of control of the political system (this is only skeptical speculation on my part , but it does seems to fit the pattern) .

of people to participate in the economic life of the country, often meets with a high degree of resistance from the elites.

The elite class tends to expand horizontally, i. e . moving wealth within the same families. It is largely through inheritance, and positions in family owned businesses that wealth spreads, and this is a factor that limits the growth of a middle class in Kenya. Unless one is really well connected, with for example, the Hotel Industry, or the Financial / Insurance Industry, or one owns large tracts of quality farmland, there is really little prospect of advancement. Consequently, someone who enters the hotel industry at the ground level of waiter, porter, chamber - maid, etc. is likely to spend their whole life in that position, with possibly one or two salary adjustments in their lifetime . They are never really able to move out of a particular social class, and there is very little upward mobility in Kenyan society. On the other hand, the son of a chief executive officer of a major corporation, may start out as a manager of one particular branch of the corporation, and with some level of competence shown, move up the ladder of wealth to as high a level as he wants. In the process, he acquires wealth and capital to branch out on his own, and often with all this wealth, they become the next key political players.

As noted above, this kind of system leaves very little room for the professional class. The lawyers, doctors, academicians, small businessmen, etc. find very little room to maneuver. They often seem to be on the fringes of both the economic sphere (with a limited amount of wealth, but unable to increase it substantially), and the political sphere (with attempts at gaining access to the political machinery - many times for very mixed motives).

The elites tend to fluctuate with the political system . Nairobi, being very close to the heartland of the Kikuyu ethnic group, seems predominantly the home of Kikuyu elites. This is because they have been tagged with the label of being the money makers of Kenyan society. However the reason goes much deeper than this. It is largely because Kenya's first President was a Kikuyu, and like all good politicians, he took care of the needs of his own ethnic group first. During his fifteen year reign therefore, he was able to build up and encourage quite a strong Kikuyu elite, who all owed their wealth to him. Among Kenya's current opposition leaders, there is a strong representation of this group of elite, and they are attempting to regain the political

control that they lost when the first president died in 1978.

During the last eighteen years or so, a new elite group has been growing. It is allied very much to the current leader, and his ethnic group, the Kalenjin. It is not a very visible or large group yet, but it is present, and people are aware of it. This group has established control of a substantial part of the economy, particularly in the energy and agricultural sectors, and when these sectors are liberalised, they are the first to look for new ways to maintain their dominant interests in these sectors. All these factors play themselves out in the life of the city.

One of the effects of urbanization is the weakening of ethnic ties. This happens mainly through the necessity of forging new relationships with whoever is going to help in the struggle to survive. Initially people who migrate into the cities look for areas where their own ethnic groups reside. As the population expands, these areas become more and more intermixed so that finding areas that are isolated enclaves of particular ethnic groups is rare. Here in Dandora, it is very uncommon to find areas made up of only one ethnic group. It has even reached the stage where members of different ethnic groups reside in the same plot. Dandora has members of all Kenya's ethnic groups, and it is a very interesting experience to see them working together as members of the Church at all levels. Among the elite, however, it does seem that this process of interaction is a little bit slower, and the element of ethnicity that we see being played out on the national level, is still dominant, even in the social lives of the elite. They are less dependent on others for their survival, and so can afford to be somewhat selective in their interactions. The elites social activities include membership in various prestigious clubs, with regular rounds of golf ; regular entertainment and dinners in Nairobi's top hotels ; Sundays at the racecourse, or playing polo, etc . They indulge in a lot of activities similar to the expatriate elite , including sending their children to notable private schools, and abroad for university.

The expatriate elite are ,both the long term residents in the country, who because of their expertise, have managed to get involved in long term interests, and the short term experts / consultants, who are hired on short term contracts of two or three years, at exorbitant fees, to solve particular difficulties, and then return to their countries of origin. In the short term that they are here, they acquire as much wealth as the indigenous elite, often at the expense of some equally qualified indigenous person. The expatriate elite also consist of

members of the diplomatic corps, employees of world wide Non Governmental Organizations, etc. They haven important impact on the economic life of the city of Nairobi, but mostly maintain a distance when it comes to involvement in the political life (unless of course, one is a high ranking diplomat from a powerful Western Nation, with vital interests to safeguard). The expatriate elite tend to inhabit the most exclusive areas of the city : Karen - Langata, Muthaiga, Loresho, Gigiri, etc. They tend to remain in their own social circles, with an occasional foray into the worlds of their domestic staffs. This seems to be the composition of the top half of society in Nairobi, and they are very evident in the life of the city.

3. 4 : 2 - THE POOR

What about the major portion of the population of the city ? The Poor ! We have examined their economic lives, and the struggle that seems to shape much of their lives. What impact does this sense of struggle have on their social lives ? Tonna[34] describes a culture of poverty that develops, which is mostly a *"reaction to the situation"*[35], that is part of the struggle for survival. Underlying this reaction is a set of values that these urban dwellers develop as a result of their perceived marginalization from the mainstream. Among the values that seem to develop are : a strong sense of identity ; a well articulated but informal internal organization that knows and passes on all the needs of the entire group, as well as holding and enforcing a code of conduct for the group ; a strong awareness of the need for security and numerous others [36]. These values and characteristics are developed in a particular way as the poor strive to build their

" capacity to develop relations with their environment, and with their fellow human beings, in the way that they live, and live well, with minimal financial and political means. "[37]

The poor often have to struggle to make their daily ends meet, and yet they do so in a spirit that defies any appearance of struggle. Tonna describes it as nothing less than a *"miracle.* "[38] What helps this culture develop comes essentially from an interior spirit that does not depend on the exterior elements for survival. What they develop is a harmonization of their interior attitudes combined with those exterior elements that are available, such as tools and other resources, to produce the kind of life that they do live. How else would one explain their capacity to live in the overcrowded, unsanitary conditions that most of the poor do live in ?

Tonna classifies the urban poor into two types : the slum dwellers and the shantytowners,[39] with the

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[34]   *op. cit* pg. 85 - 86

[35]   *ibid* . pg .85

[36]   *ibid* . pg . 80 - 81

[37]   *ibid* . pg . 78

[38]   *op .cit*

[39]   *op . cit* , pg . 80

distinction seemingly in the ownership of the dwellings. Slum dwellers generally own (or in most cases in Nairobi, pay rent on a contractual basis) their housing, and so have some sense of security. Shantytowners, on the other hand, live in permanent fear of eviction from their *"illegal "* dwellings. Nairobi does have both groups of people, but the distinctions are less clear. Many of the apparently so called shanty town areas (Kibera, Mathare Valley, Kawangware, etc.) have become more or less permanent dwelling places, so that people can be defined by their plot numbers, and where they live. There are a few areas in Nairobi, like parts of Kangemi, Muoroto, Kibagare, etc. where people have to be constantly on the alert for possible eviction, but it is a less dominant feature in the Nairobi of the 90s. It seems, therefore, simpler and accurate enough to speak of one culture of poverty in Nairobi.

Life among the poor develops in its own distinct way, and often it is not possible to judge or compare it to any other way of life. It is a lifestyle filled with the *"beautiful promise of urban prosperity,"* and faced instead with *" the ugly reality of urban squalor and deprivation. "*[40] It is a life that develops goals, norms and values. It is a life that actuates these goals, norms and values to each succeeding generation. It is a life in which the young become adults very quickly, as they learn to look after themselves and their siblings with very little parental support. This way of life seems most evident in the street children of Nairobi. By all standards, they are the lowest that anyone can get. And yet if observed closely, there is a sense of unity among them ; a sense of purpose ; a sense of loyalty to one another and a sense of moral behaviour (not judged or compared to of regular society) . All this despite the generally negative image that the majority of society has of them.

Street children are thought of as menaces to society, often harassing people for money and food, and exhibiting tendencies of wild animal like behaviour. They are inclined to act violently at times. They steal and cause damage, and they threaten people. They are also forever *" sniffing glue. "*

When one gets a little closer, one certainly does observe all of the above. But there is also a whole lot more. All the very positive aspects of the culture of poverty are present among them. They have a very high "internal " moral code (which when observed from the outside seems non - existent). They have a strong, well articulated internal informal organization, with leaders and responsibilities well defined and respected. Most

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[40]   *op .cit*

important, they seem to have a deep care and dependence upon one another. [41]

A characteristic of the urban poor, is that they often feel cut off and marginalized from the benefits of urban life. These benefits include employment, education and a general participation in the economic, social and political life of the city. This generally does not happen for them, and frequently they just remain in their vicious circle of poverty, cut off from mainstream society. This is where their dreams fade and reality sets in. It is because the poor are becoming more and more marginalized that numerous social problems and especially crime are on the increase.

Often the social context of a given area depends very much on the environment in which society is trying to establish itself. That environment depends very much on the political context of the area. This is very true for Nairobi and its environs, and as we have seen the kind of impact that the economy has on an area like Nairobi, let us see if there is an equally strong political impact.

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[41]   From personal interaction and observation of a group of street children who have
        been a part of our surroundings in Dandora for the last five years or so.

3.5 - THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF NAIROBI[42]

Being the capital city of Kenya, the politics of Nairobi is both local as well as National. These will, from time to time, overlap as we try to understand how the political situation affects all the other aspects of life in the city.

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[42] Most of what follows come from personal memory and understanding of what has been going on in the country over the last five years . There is no single reference from which this material is taken , but is rather what I remember from my own keen interest and following of Kenyan political matters .

3. 5 : 1 - BACKGROUND

A major change that has taken place in Kenya over the last five years, has been the *de jure* move to multi - party politics, after close to twenty five years of *de facto* single party politics. This change came about due to intense internal and external pressure over the 1990 - 1992 period. Despite it being a *de jure* multi - party system, the present political set up acts as if it is still in its *de facto* single party system . There are a number of legally registered political parties, but they are operating in a climate of intimidation, harassment and fear, and in this type of climate, any attempts at proper organization meet with intense resistance, both from within the parties, as well as from the government in power. This is the situation today, three years after the first multi - party elections in nearly twenty five years. This situation plays itself out in a number of ways. The two most common are the reluctance of the government to permit opposition leaders from organizing at the grassroots, especially through being able to address public rallies nationwide, and the internal wranglings within the opposition parties themselves that make it unclear to the majority who the *bona fide* leaders are. Until these two issues are solved by getting rid of the draconian pre - independence statutes in the Constitution, that gives the central authority the right to determine who and who cannot hold public gatherings, and elections from the bottom upwards in all the major political parties to choose nationally recognized and accepted leaders, the current status of Kenyan politics will not change much.

Kenya held her first multi - party elections in December 1992. It was the first time a sitting president in Kenya had faced a direct challenge since 1966, and it is only because he so decisively manipulated the vote, and kept the opposition so well divided along ethnic lines that he was able to return to power. He did this despite being totally rejected by the two largest ethnic groups in the country - the Kikuyu and the Luo. He achieved this because they voted almost entirely as a block for their own respective candidates from their own ethnic groups. The Luo voted almost to a person for the late Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and his FORD KENYA party (all Luo Nyanza is firmly in FORD KENYA even to this day over three years later). The Kikuyu split their among their two candidates - Mwai Kibaki of the Democratic Party, and Kenneth Matiba of the FORD ASILI Party. Between the three of them, they garnered 3. 4 million votes, to President Moi's 1 . 9 million votes. What

they failed to achieve was nationwide support - as measured by the clause that was hurriedly inserted in the Constitution that the winner needed to obtain 25% of the vote in at least five of the country's eight provinces. Only Moi was able to do this receiving the required 25% in the Rift Valley Province, NEastern Province, Eastern Province, Coast Province and Western Province. Kenneth Matiba achieved this in four provinces - Coast, Nairobi, Central and Western Province. [43]None of the other candidates came close.

On the parliamentary level, KANU - the ruling party used its' over thirty years experience as the dominant party (sometimes *only* party) to almost completely lock out the opposition. They dominated the Rift Valley Province, which has the highest number of constituencies (except for the large urban areas like Nakuru, which were won by the opposition). Major areas of the Province were declared *"KANU Zones "*, and KANU candidates went in unopposed in many of these areas. Thus by the day of the elections KANU was already guaranteed at least 20 seats, and this was to be an insurmountable headstart, since no opposition party would gain more than 32 seats. KANU ended up winning about 104 seats in the 188 member house, with the combined opposition winning between 75 - 80 seats. With their ability to nominate 12 more members, KANU has been able to enjoy a comfortable *modus operandi.* Coupled to that has been the inability of the opposition to establish a sense of stability, due to continuous defections, and a major struggle to hold onto members. As Kenya heads towards her second multi - party election any time between now and the end of 1997, this is the scenario that She faces, and all the signs are there of a repeat of the 1992 elections. There has been little change in the characters, or in the mode of operation in the preceding three years, and it doesn't look like changing. Where these elections did have an impact was on the urban areas, and it seems important to take a look at the particular impact the 1992 elections had on Nairobi.

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[43]   From the Report of the National Election Monitoring Unit, *"The Multi - Party General Elections in Kenya, "*29 December 1992 .

3. 5 : 2 - THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF NAIROBI

FOLLOWING THE 1992 MULTI - PARTY ELECTIONS

Nairobi, like other major urban centres in the country, largely rejected the President, and the ruling party, KANU. In the eight constituencies of Nairobi, KANU only won one. That constituency was won by an Asian running in the most densely populated Asian section of the city. They voted for the ruling party because they had the experience of what anti - government forces were likely to do to their community during the failed coup attempt of 1982. The Asian community was singularly picked out to bear the brunt of anti - government wrath during those few days in August. They therefore reasoned that their interests lay in the ruling party, and showed it by giving KANU their only seat in the city. It was also expected that the ruling party would win the elections, and they did not want to end up on the wrong side, with their vast economic interests in the city, and throughout the country. The Asian community has continued to prosper over the years despite some well publicised scandals involving prominent members of the community that have come to light in the last couple of years. [44]

The other seven constituencies were split between the two main opposition parties, with FORD ASILI taking five of the seats,[45] and FORD KENYA taking the remaining two seats. Four of the five FORD ASILI winners are Kikuyu, reflecting the party's dominant ethnic group (the fifth is a Kamba), and the two FORD KENYA members are Luos, also reflecting the party's dominant ethnic group.

In sharp contrast to the Asian community's ability to deliver one of their own to the ruling party, the European community were not able to return their previously elected member of parliament. He faced strong

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[44]   The daily press is currently dominated by stories of three Asian businessmen who are facing court proceedings for various offenses : - swindling the government of millions of shillings , tax evasion , and a car importation racket .

[45]   The FORD ASILI MP for Starehe , Mr. Stephen Mwangi , quit his Party and politics February 17 1996, forcing the people of Starehe to prepare for another by - election . This will be their second by - election within a year . If previous polls are anything to go by, FORD ASILI should retain the seat, but it will most likely be marked by a very low voter turnout. Mr Mwangi was the first Mayor of Nairobi in the multi - party era, and was hounded out of office because of the lack of any possibility of getting anything done .

opposition from a very popular Luo politician, who happened to be instrumental in the run up to the multi - party elections, and the small and relatively fixed European population with Kenyan citizenship could not compete with the massive importation of Luo voters from other parts of the city. What seems clear from all this is that ethnic considerations seem to have dominated the elections in the city. In the presidential election President Moi was a distant fourth behind Kenneth Matiba, Jaramogi Odinga and Mwai Kibaki.

At the local level, the opposition parties dominated the ward and council elections, with the new mayor coming from the FORD ASILI. Because of the authority invested in the Minister of Local Government, he was able to nominate enough people who supported the ruling party to completely frustrate all attempts by the Nairobi City Council to bring about reform and change. Therefore, administratively, Nairobi has for the last two decades or so, been ungovernable, and the lives of the residents has stagnated or worsened, but not really improved.

Consequently, the advent of multi - party elections, while promising much for the residents of the city, and particularly the poor, has been unable to deliver on any of the promises, due most especially to the intransigence of the system that is currently in place. The result of this inability to deliver has been a general apathy among voters, as seen in three (two in Mathare constituency) by elections held in the city since 1992. Both were in heavily populated constituencies of urban poor, with one having at least 116, 000 voters, and the other at least 84 000. The voter turn out in both these constituencies in the by elections was between 25 - 35%, with the winners getting about ten or eleven thousand votes. Both constituencies maintained opposition members of parliament.

At the political level then, there has been a complete failure to discover, plan and implement any major program of reform, and the lives of city residents continues to be one of business as usual.

Under these social, economic and political conditions, is it any wonder then that Nairobi is seeing a rising level of frustration, crime , death, accidents and most of all poverty ? Nairobi truly is a symbol of *" the anthropological pauperization of the African person. "* What would Jesus say to a situation such as this, that is crying out for justice and change ?

CHAPTER FOUR : - JESUS AS A MODEL OF REBUKE OF KENYA'S SOCIO - ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

4 : 1 - INTRODUCTION

In trying to offer Jesus as a model of rebuke of Kenya's current social, economic. and political structure, it seems important to do it from the perspective of the poor. They are in the majority in urban society, and yet they are often the most neglected and ignored in society. They are the ones who at election time are promised the most, but who when the time to deliver comes they are the most forgotten and uncared for . In this section, I will attempt to offer what I imagine Jesus' would seem like, and it appears it could fall under the following four areas : the alienation of the poor from mainstream society ; the political control of the elite to serve their own interests ; the systems of violence and division that are perpetuated in direct contradiction to the pronouncements of peace, love and unity ; and the absence of any social justice in a country that claims God - fearing leaders and an understanding of social and moral norms. In the second section of this chapter, I will offer some pastoral suggestions.

4 : 2 - THE ALIENATION OF THE POOR FROM MAINSTREAM SOCIETY

Jesus' major call in his life time was for people to begin to change their attitudes towards one another, in a way that would allow a growth of inclusiveness and unity to develop. In the diverse urban structures of the modern world, and in particular in Nairobi, there seems to be a need for a deeper Evangelization and understanding of a Jesus who calls for this unity and inclusion. In a society that appears more geared towards looking for individuals own interests, often at the expense of others, there is a need to look for ways of inviting everyone to participate fully in all aspects of life .

Jesus would find Nairobi, and its two or three separate societies, very disconcerting. How, after 2000 years of his message being preached and taught, it is still possible for there to be outcasts in society ? The outcasts of modern society are not generally those who are ostracized because of some strange incurable diseases like leprosy (although the scourge of AIDS is presenting this kind of ostracisaztion), but rather are economic outcasts. People in modern cities generally associate with those of their own economic and social status. Thus the economically poor spend much of their lives with other economically poor. The well educated tend to stick to other well educated ; the suburbanites tend to associate with other suburbanites, etc. This is the alienation that is predominant in Nairobi. This type of alienation leads to a stereotyping of people and places that leads to further alienation . My own experience of Nairobi confirms this . The images that the general public has of a place like Dandora, is fed mostly by heresay, and persistent stories in the media that portray only one aspect - that of a very dangerous, overcrowded out of the way place that no one in their right minds would go to. So few people from outside Dandora venture into it. Like wise with an area like Muthaiga - It is perceived of as a place of wealthy stuck up, expatriates all behind fenced off properties, with elaborate security systems, and anyone venturing into these areas who is not a resident is liable to be mistaken as a thief and shot, by over zealous security. These are the surface realities of these areas, and these are the barriers that a Jesus preaching and teaching today would try to break down . I have had the experience of both environments, and people in both situations, and the common thread that I have found is that Jesus is present to all of them, and that all yearn to know Jesus better. Few however seem to realize that Jesus is found in encounters with one

another, and in the breaking down of barriers and building of unity and inclusion.

Urban alienation is worsened for the poor, because as we have seen, they do not have access to the amenities that every person is entitled to, and more especially, they do not have access to the influence and authority that the wealthier people might have access to. so the poor get stepped on and mistreated, and nobody offers a helping hand. Often what does happen is that the poor get pushed aside, or are treated as a nuisance to society, and given piecemeal solutions, very much in the attitude of the judge and the widow (Lk . 18 : 1 - 8), in order to get rid of them. In this way, problems are never overcome, but only temporarily pushed out of one's view.

Jesus ' all powerful tool of inclusion seems to be the perfect antidote to this all prevailing view of alienation. It's a tool that recognizes the importance and dignity of each and every human person as a creature of God . It's a tool that says that because you are a creature of God, I will welcome you and treat you with all the dignity that you deserve. Jesus ' ability to welcome all is unique and amazing. He doesn't only welcome the poor, the outcasts, the sick, the sinners. He welcomes and invites the pharisees, the Roman officials the rich etc. This is the model that Jesus holds out for humanity. This is a model that I have experienced, and yet it doesn't seem to be a model that has been emphasised on a large enough scale. Alienation, therefore, is so much more than just the physical separation that is so evident in much of urban society today. It goes beyond that. Tonna refers to urban centres as the place of " *God's plan of salvation.* " [46]God 's plan of salvation requires a working out of a system of reconciliation, inclusion and unity. These seem to be the three central themes of any attempt to bring the life of Jesus more deeply into the lives of the people of urban areas . Jesus as Reconciler. Jesus as unifier. Jesus as welcomer of all . Not Jesus as proto ancestor, or Jesus as master of initiation, or Jesus as Elder Brother[47] . These seem very much to be themes of a rural pre - Christian society not the urban semi - Christian society that we find today. Bringing about this plan of salvation requires working together, working at building a unity and overcoming the very strong tendencies of living, not, " *from on*

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[46]   *ibid* . pg . 121

[47]   Charles Nyamiti , "*Christ as Our Ancestor.*" , (Zimbabwe : Mambo Press : 1984) pg
         . 19 ff

another, but for one another "[48]. Living from one another is the knack of using one another to attain our own needs, without meeting the needs of others. It is about abuse and exploitation. This seems to be very much the challenge of urbanization and alienation that is presented to us in the context of a city like Nairobi.

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[48]   Tonna , pg. 128.

4. 3 - JESUS ' REBUKE OF THE POLITICAL CONTROL OF ELITE TO SERVE THEIR OWN NEEDS

Jesus ' battle with the chief priests, and the dominating effect of the elite on the political - economic process of Kenya are the two converging interests in this section. The similarities between the chief priests and Kenya's elite are too close to be accidental. What they seem to say is that once again, over a period of 2000 years, society has failed to respond to Jesus ' message.

All that political leaders seem to do is to acquire wealth, and try to hold on to political power. They are driven by the need to serve their own interests, at the expense of all else in society. This is the attitude that above all, Jesus found so difficult to understand. Grabbing wealth, holding on to power, were unexplainable as far as Jesus was concerned. Jesus ' rebuke to both the Kenyan elite and the chief priests is not that wealth and riches are bad, but that to be in positions of leadership only to acquire and maintain one's wealth is predominantly wrong. It is also the attitude of acquiring wealth at whatever cost that Jesus found repugnant. It is the multiplicity of ways by which the chief priests acquired and held on to their wealth that annoyed Jesus so much. It is also, what I believe he would criticize in the elite of modern Kenyan society. Any _one_ of the multiplicity of ways would be enough to maintain the chief priests and the elites status for the rest of their lives. They had / have no need for the total dominance of the economic systems that they enjoyed. This is the rebuke that Jesus would like to offer, and which he would like to be listened to .

In his rebuke, Jesus would wonder most especially at what had happened to the attitude of service. Jesus came very much to be a servant, and he lived his life as an example of service. He came with nothing, and he left the world with nothing. In between he lived trying to teach simplicity of life, sharing and responding to the needs of others.

The current lack of any of these is modern society, means again that Jesus ' message has fallen on deaf ears, and that much work still needs to be done. The absence of any kind of consciousness on the part of the elite about what they are doing, is the most crucial element in their behaviour. Jesus needs to be presented to them in a way that forces them to look at their own behaviour in a more challenging manner. They need to be challenged to see that they don't need to control the whole economy in order to maintain their wealth. They

need to be challenged to see the harm that they do to society, especially in depriving much of the populace of its' right to participate in the economy ; of their role in the encouragement of corruption at all levels, by the way that they benefit from shady deals and kickbacks.

Jesus ' rebuke is stinging. What needs to happen is for them to hear it and to respond positively to it.

4.4 - REBUKE OF A SYSTEM OF VIOLENCE THAT GOES CONTRARY
TO ALL PRONOUNCEMENTS OF PEACE, LOVE AND UNITY

Kenya 's valued " *NYAYO* " system of Peace, Love and Unity is much talked and preached about by her leaders. It is, however, not lived much, and over the last five years, a culture quite the opposite , that of violence, in various forms, has begun to take root. Jesus probably would have said that there was one element missing in Kenya's philosophy, namely JUSTICE. It was missing because had it been present, it would have made a mockery of all else. Because of the importance of justice, we will look it on it's own in the next section. The point here, is that without justice it is very easy to live in a world of contradictions, and that is what Kenya is doing right now.

Over the last five years, Kenya has experienced an increase in both urban and rural violence, for a multitude of reasons. It is not within the scope of this paper to go into the details of violence in Kenya. What is important is to acknowledge its reality, and to see that in Jesus there is an alternative.

Violence in Kenya, is very much humanly instigated, and therefore very controllable. in a non violent manner. Jesus ' non - violent attitude, particularly towards oppression, has been noted in a previous chapter. We saw how he reacted to political rulers who were inclined to treat him and society at large with violence. His was a reaction of virtual silence. When he was questioned and intimidated by Herod and Pilate, he maintained a stony silence. When mocked and cursed, again he was totally silent. In circumstances where violence is predominant, any attempts at non violence seem absolutely out of place. Yet in the Kenya of today, where violence still hasn't taken root deeply, a counter - culture of non - violence needs to be emphasised. In the urban setting of Nairobi, this counter - culture would be one that specifically tries to counter crime. Besides poverty, crime is the most pressing issue that needs to be dealt with in Nairobi. Current methods of dealing with it include sweeps of areas inhabited by criminals, by teams of security agents, and carried out in a very brutal manner ; patrols of city streets by armed police with license to kill ; moving around armed with some kind of weapon - knives, whips, guns, ready to confront any would be attacker fatally, and general harassment and intimidation of innocent people, until criminals are found and locked up in prison. In a recent incident in the city centre, four gangsters attempted to rob a money changer of whatever he had. Besides the usual guns,

knives, etc. , this particular group was armed with a grenade. The money changer attempted to resist the robbery, and in the melee, the grenade went off injuring a number of innocent bystanders. The gangsters ran off, and one of them was shot and fatally wounded by the police. There just happened to be some Sisters of Charity around, and two of them went over to the man lying in a pool of his blood and asked him if he wanted to be baptized . He said yes, and the two sisters proceeded to baptize him . This was a truly prophetic and non - violent witness to a very violent situation . There actions received as much coverage as the actual attempted crime, and included a front page photo in one of the Daily papers . [49] As I 've walked through the streets of Nairobi over the last couple of months, I have encountered an increasingly violent Nairobi . The non - violent witness of people like the two Sisters of Charity needs to be emulated on a much wider scale if Nairobi is going to survive this rather frightening period in its urbanization process.

Preaching peace, love and unity without actually living it, is guaranteed to be a failure, and in this world of contradictions, they become meaningless slogans that have no bearing on people's lives .

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[49]   *Daily Nation* , February 3 1996 . - Two weeks later there was another ambush - this time near the Jacaranda Hotel in which five gangsters were shot dead - *Sunday Nation* , February 18 1996.

4. 5 - REBUKE OF THE ABSENCE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN A

NATION OF GOD - FEARING LEADERS.

It seems that one of the major tasks of society throughout world history has been that of seeking a society in which justice is the hallmark . It is something that has been promised since time immemorial, and something that many Jews were expecting of Jesus . All leading philosophers from ancient times to the present have tried to understand what justice might mean, and few have come up with some kind of agreement . Aristotle spoke of justice as

" *a mean between acting unjustly and being unjustly treated - a mean in the sense that it produces a state of affairs that stand midway between that in which A has too much and that in which B has too much .* "[50]

This sounds very much like the general understanding of social justice in which everyone is given what they deserve . This certainly is what Jesus wanted to bring, but because people were looking for a particular type of justice, namely freedom from oppression, and the chance to rule their own nation, they were not attentive to any other types of justice that might have been present . Jesus ' justice was for all people, and not just for a select few . His justice was a recognition that without basic human cooperation not much can be accomplished in this world .

Social justice more than anything else, is concerned with the rights of individuals in a society with regard to the possibility of living decent human lives . Social justice reflects the way an individual is incorporated into society . Social justice implies an understanding of God and God's activities in that specific society . It is about the distribution of goods and services to all the members of that community .

For a Nation whose leaders are ever in Churches, proclaiming and listening to the Word of God, it is disappointing to realize how little there is in actual society to show that they understand what this social justice is . There seems to be a sense that social justice is something good to speak about and to listen to on Sundays, or on National Days, when we are reminded again and again to be " *mindful of one another's welfare,* " but to actually have to put anything into practice is not necessary . If it was put into practice, then we wouldn't

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[50]   Frederick Copelston , *A History of Philosophy*, BK One , (New York : Doubleday : 1962) pg. 342

have to be reminded of it time and time again .

Due to the importance of Justice and peace on the Continent of Africa (and indeed in the whole world), the Bishops of Africa emphasized its value at their 1994 Synod of African Bishops . In his Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul II re - echoed their plea and said ,

> " *Every person according to their state of life, should be specifically trained to know their rights and duties, the meaning and service of the common good, honest management of public goods, and the proper manner of participating in political life, in order to be able to act in a credible manner in the face of social injustices .* "[51]

He was most insistent that leaders be aware of what they had to know, since they would ultimately be the ones who would have to implement these programs .

Jesus ' rebuke of the situation would be that despite their God fearing attitude, Kenya 's leadership really has no idea about what social justice is . Even when the Churches in Kenya speak out, and try to tell Kenya's leaders about justice, they refuse to listen . A lived, active justice is integral to anyone who wants to be a true leader . Jesus showed it by his life . He did not send people away hungry after they had spent the day following him around (Lk . 9 : 10 - 17) ; he sought fairness in the case of the woman who committed adultery, and did not just hand her over to her accusers ,(Jn. 8 :1ff) etc . Social justice was something that Jesus was very much aware of in his lifetime.

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[51]   Pope John Paul II , "*The Church in Africa - Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father,* (Nairobi : Paulines Publications Africa : 1995) pg . 79

4 . 6 - PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHALLENGES OFFERED BY JESUS ' LIFESTYLE

The major pastoral implication of a Jesus present in this divided urban setting seems to be the need for a greater emphasis to be laid on Jesus as Unifier, and caller of all peoples together . In his review of the early Church,[52] Tonna describes Paul as referring to the Church as the gathering of *all* the believers of a particular city in one place for worship . In Paul 's time this may have been possible, for cities were relatively smaller in the first century . This was the *ekklesia* . There was a concerted effort to have one parish per city . This seems to have been the goal of the initial Church - to maintain as much unity as possible . In an urban setting as diverse as Nairobi 's, this seems very impractical . The point that needs to be looked at, however, is that in parishes that do have a diversity of residents, that diversity needs to be brought together in building the Parish Community, and ultimately the Kingdom of God . There needs to be greater direction from the Hierarchy in this . Churches and parishes need to become more and more the unity in diversity that is represented by all their members . This then is likely to have a much greater impact ton the general society . As urban parishes realize the reality of Jesus being a welcoming person, they are likely to become more welcoming themselves, thus reaching beyond the boundaries and borders of their town particular social groups.

To counter the control that elites have of the political and economic system, there is the continued need of non - violent pressure for them to relinquish and / or share the resources that they have with those who have nothing . This has to come through letting the message of Jesus, the model servant, really come out, and penetrate the minds of these elite . The emphasis needs to be on how Jesus came into the world with nothing, and left the world with nothing, and that all of humanity came in exactly the same way, and will leave in exactly the same way.

Perhaps more than anything, a counter to the climate of violence is needed . Jesus the non - violent, the one who wouldn't argue with his accusers and condemners . How would a brutal police react to a totally non - violent public? I have witnessed crowds of people gathered for different occasions, turn violent the minute they caught sight of a squad of anti - riot police . How would the public react to police ton patrol, who

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[52]   Tonna ,*op. cit* , pg . 123 - 128

begin their encounters with normal citizens with a pleasant, " Good Day ! How are you? I am Const . / Private, etc So and So . We are just checking on the security in the neighbourhood . Have you seen anything suspicious? " etc . etc, instead of the regular brutal whipping and chasing of innocent people . Wouldn't this lead to more cooperation and respect by the public ?

To the lack of Social Justice, the most obvious implication would be to follow the plea by Pope John Paul II, and have everyone fully concientized and educated in what their rights and duties are with regard to being active participants and citizens of Kenya . This means especially giving people the support and courage to face in a non - violent manner, any situations that are unjust, and to be able to demand what is rightfully theirs .

These are just some possible ways of beginning to make the Church in the city of Nairobi, a more active source Jesus ' presence in society. One of the great approaches that the Church has been developing over the last twenty years or so have been the Small Christian Communities . These need to be continued until they become real sources of the life of Jesus in community and in individuals .

CONCLUSION

As the reality that is Africa shifts more and more into an urban way of life, it seems that the difficulties encountered by humanity will need new explanations . In this paper, I have tried to look at the process of urbanization as it applies to a city like Nairobi . I have taken a very personal approach, and so there may not be abundant evidence and research, but I think that the value of this approach is in the realization that there is a systematic process taking place that is affecting people in a variety of ways . There is also a sense of common features that affect a broad spectrum of society, and in the ability we have to understand what goes on, will lie our ability to come up with solutions that will be helpful to the whole of society . In writing this paper this is what I hope has become a little clearer to myself, and will become a little clearer to whoever may read this paper .

In his approach to understanding the process of urbanization, and the possible avenues for responding to the situations as they present themselves in an urban setting, Tonna comes up with what he calls *"values "* that could be used as guidelines to counter various impulses that seem prevalent in the process of urbanization . [53] He names these values as : community, justice, communion and solidarity . These are very common terms, and I think they describe well what human responses to the rebukes of Jesus that I discussed in the previous chapter call forth.

The four values all seem to stress the important point of bringing forth a Jesus that calls all people to unity, to oneness, to an acceptance of each and every human person regardless of social, economic or political status . There seems to be a stress on bringing people together, a stress on walking in each others shoes, and trying to really understand what each and every person might be going through . These values stress an interaction and a building of relationships on a level that doesn 't really seem to occur in reality . These values seem to stress that whatever there is in the city is for whoever comes into the city, and not just for the few who can afford it . This all may come off as very utopian, but in my understanding of Jesus, this is what he came to proclaim - a utopia that is possible only if all peoples really come together as one group and body of people . If attention was paid to these values, an analysis like the one presented in this paper would not be

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[53]   *ibid* , pgs . 129 ff

necessary, for such a situation would not exist . For Jesus ' *"new Jerusalem ,"* and God's plan of salvation to occur, there is a need for life in the cities to begin to move in the direction contained in these four values : community, communion, justice and solidarity . Only then will the major problems of poverty and crime be overcome.

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