



**The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies**  
and  
**The Open University**

**The Church as a Bulwark against Extremism**

PhD, Gideon Gichuhi Githega

**1997**

**The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies**

[www.ocms.ac.uk](http://www.ocms.ac.uk)

# **The Church as a Bulwark against Extremism**

Development of Church State Relations in Kenya with particular reference to the years after political independence 1963 - 1992

PhD Thesis, Gideon Githiga, 1997

## **Abstract**

This thesis discusses the Church and State relationship in Kenya since 1963. It seeks to establish that the Church in Kenya has acted as a defender of its members and the citizens against the extremism of the State. It pays attention to the following four periods: the missionary era, Kenyatta era, first *Nyayo* era and the second *Nyayo* era.

The work is divided into ten chapters and the conclusion. The introductory chapter sets the argument, outlines the main themes, describes the chronology of political events and focuses on the metamorphosis of the Church's involvement in politics. Chapter two focuses on the genesis of the Kenyan Christian Church and is intended to explain the nature of the Church and State cooperation at Independence. Chapter three discusses the Church and State relation during the Kenyatta period. The analysis here shows that both the Church and the State had developed a real model of cooperation and the two institutions were in a learning stage of becoming truly African.

Chapter four assesses the political reformation of the Kenyatta era by Moi, his successor, with the assistance of the Church through his *Nyayo* slogan. This period, known as the first *Nyayo* era, ends with consolidation of power on the presidency, after which the Church is seen reacting against the autocracy it helped to create. Chapters five, six, seven, eight and nine describe and analyse the reaction of the Church to the political upheavals of the second *Nyayo* era.

While the first *Nyayo* era is seen as the consolidation of power on the presidency, the second *Nyayo* era is characterised by misuse of power by those in authority. Chapter five thus traces the broken cooperation between Church and State by the former's criticism of electoral amendments and the rigging of the 1988 general elections. Chapter six discusses some of the successes of the Church as a pressure group through the formation of the KANU Review Committee [KRC] to listen to people's political grievances. The Church's political involvement is evidenced by the launching of the programme of Education for Participatory Democracy [EPDP] by the NCCK.

Chapter seven discusses the political crises created by the Government in resisting the wind of change on one side, and the Church, mainly the NCCK and other pressure groups, forcing in the change towards multiparty democracy. Chapter eight discusses the contribution of the Roman Catholic Church to political change. This separate discussion is made because the Catholics joined the NCCK churches in addressing political issues much later, but with a new and strong impact.

We devote chapter nine to discuss the first multiparty general elections since Independence. The elections symbolised the democracy that the church leaders and other political dissidents had been fighting for, and the end of the *Nyayo* era.

Chapter ten serves as a theological epilogue on the mission of the Church in Kenya. It discusses some of the features that enabled the Church to speak against the State's extremism. The conclusion summarizes the findings of the previous chapters, emphasising the inseparability of religion and politics in African life, centrality of the Christian Church in bringing about political change and in defending the people against political extremism, in particular through its testimony, its emerging theology and growing unity.