

Boom and Bust, Revival and Renewal

The Copperbelt is, to borrow a turn of phrase from one of the reviewers of this book, one of anthropology's "longstanding laboratories" (see also Schumaker 2001: 75–116). Ethnographers have been working in this particular province of what is now Zambia for nearly a century, and have left behind an extraordinary body of work. In particular, beginning in 1937 anthropologists associated with the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI), the first social science research institute established in Africa, did pioneering studies that fundamentally shaped scholarly understanding of the region. Through their analyses of urbanization, the shifting relational patterns associated with wage labor, and the apparently fading importance of ethnic loyalties, RLI researchers fixed the Copperbelt in the anthropological imagination as a site in which to examine social change. Insofar as this is the case, for anthropologists the Copperbelt has served as an idea as much as a location. While the classic studies of the RLI and subsequent research in urban Zambia inform the discussion that follows, I do not attempt to provide a survey of Copperbelt anthropology here. This has already been very ably done both with regard to the theoretical contributions of the Manchester School (Werbner 1984) and the research culture of the RLI (Schumaker 2001). My more modest aim in this chapter is simply to capture the Copperbelt as I have found it, and more specifically to paint a picture of Nsofu, the Kitwe neighborhood that provides the context for my analysis.

Kitwe residents generally regard Nsofu as a “middle-class” township, which in Zambia means that it is a place where a sizable number of residents are in formal-sector (if not necessarily salaried) employment. While living in Nsofu is not the same as living in one of the high-status, “low-density” neighborhoods of Parklands or Riverside, it is a significant improvement on life in a shantytown or former mine townships like Buchi or Wuzakile. This means that Nsofu is an aspirational place. Poor people move to Nsofu in hopes of escaping some of the scourges of shantytown life, while those with greater means are attracted to the township because it offers the opportunity for them to construct their own homes, as it is one of the places in Kitwe where the city council is offering plots for new houses. Construction of a new home may seem like a different sort of aspiration from renting a few rooms in Nsofu, but both strategies are of a piece, part of a large-scale social project through which rich and poor alike seek to make moving happen.

Recent work on middle-class experience and identity in sub-Saharan Africa has highlighted the “uneasy privilege” (Sumich 2016: 5) that accompanies a higher class status than that enjoyed by most people on the continent. In part this unease is a function of the overabundance of qualified labor alongside a shortage of permanent jobs. A great deal of formal sector employment in places like the Copperbelt is offered on a contract basis, which translates into a lack of job security even for educated professionals (Spronk 2012: 64–76). Middle-class identity is also precarious insofar as it is increasingly propped up by debt, which finances the purchases that index economic status (James 2015). Finally, the greatest source of insecurity for the middle class is the obligation to care for an ever-widening network of kin and neighbors (Sumich 2016). As we will see in this chapter, the obligation that follows from one’s status as a middle-class person is written into the very built environment of Nsofu.

My description in this chapter focuses on those features of Nsofu that make it a particularly good place to make moving happen, namely, the economic diversity of the township and its large number of Pentecostal congregations. Economic diversity is relevant because moving is most often realized through social relationships that span differences in status, particularly economic status. Similar relational asymmetries are found in Pentecostal congregations, the second aspect of Nsofu life that helps to facilitate moving. Before going on to explore these elements, however, I must first take a moment to update the Copperbelt ethnographic record, so to speak, and in so doing help to set it straight.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

It is safe to say that if anthropologists have read one book about the Copperbelt, they have read James Ferguson's *Expectations of Modernity* (1999). Ferguson carried out fieldwork in Kitwe in the late 1980s, a time of economic crisis triggered by a rapid drop in copper prices alongside a global spike in the cost of fuel. Real incomes fell dramatically during this period, as did most metrics of development. In the light of these circumstances, Ferguson's treatment focuses on the apparent reversal of the "modernist metanarrative," as he dubs the view that the Copperbelt had been on track for its own industrial revolution (see Ferguson 1999: 16). Faced instead with the prospect of lower incomes, less education, and shorter life expectancies than his informants' parents had known, the Copperbelt seemed to be heading "down, down, down," as one resident put it (Ferguson 1999: 13).

During the time of Ferguson's fieldwork, the population of the Copperbelt was shrinking, and he relates the experiences of several miners who moved to rural villages after losing their jobs in town. Over the years I've had several colleagues ask, upon hearing that I work on the Copperbelt, if anyone still lived there; the impression they had was that people had more or less cleared out when the bottom fell out of the economy in the 1980s. I'm sure that this question was asked with at least a bit of irony, but it nevertheless suggests that Ferguson's analysis has fixed the Copperbelt in the minds of many anthropologists as a place of desolation and despair. In part, this impression can be attributed to the very particular moment at which he did his fieldwork—though, as I noted in the introduction, it also reflects a disciplinary emphasis on the cultural semiotics of economic crisis. There is, however, more to the story of the Copperbelt than what *Expectations* reveals, as a quick glance at the region's subsequent economic history makes clear.

The downward turn in the Zambian economy continued for years after Ferguson finished his fieldwork. Structural adjustment measures implemented in the 1990s succeed in curbing inflation, but at tremendous human costs; the result was widespread unemployment and a massive increase in overall poverty levels, despite rising economic growth rates (Bloemen 2016). By 1998, 71 percent of the Zambian population was living below the poverty line (McCulloch et al. 2000). The Zambian writer Binwell Sinyangwe captures the mood of this period in his novella *A Cowrie of Hope* (2000: 14):

These were the nineties. The late nineties. They were lean years. They were the years of each person for himself and hope only under the shadow of the gods. No one wanted to give because no one had anything to spare. The rains were bad and so the crops and the harvest were bad too. Without what to sell from the fields people had no money. Even chiefs and headmen who usually had a grain or two more than the ordinary people, roamed the land without an *ngwee* in hand. The days were truly hard.

Eventually, however, Zambia's fortunes began to change. Between 2000 and 2005 the price of copper, Zambia's primary export, increased on the global market by 102.9 percent, owing primarily to a massive growth in demand for primary product exports in China (Zafar 2007). In 2006 China opened one of the first manufacturing special economic zones in Africa on the Copperbelt (there is another in Lusaka), further cementing the central role that Chinese investment has played in the Zambian economy since the turn of the century.¹ Between 2002 and 2005, GDP grew by 4.7 percent per annum (Central Statistical Office 2006). GDP is of course a poor measure of individual welfare, but when I first moved to the Copperbelt in 2003 I found some signs of this growth in the experiences of people I got to know in the city of Chingola. An example here is the young family of a miner I call Bashi Mumba. Bashi Mumba's wife had trained as a schoolteacher and, in an entrepreneurial move common in the aftermath of structural adjustment, had opened her own primary school in a former mining township. The couple owned a small Toyota sedan, of which they were immensely proud, and their living room contained a large television set. They were financing the tertiary education of Bana Mumba's brother, in addition to caring for their own children. The future, in short, looked very bright.

This period of steady growth was abruptly cut short by the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, an ominous phrase that people on the Copperbelt soon replaced with the shorthand English term “global.” When the price of copper on the international market fell precipitously in 2008, the number of mining jobs in Zambia was reduced by 27 percent (Ndulo et al. 2009: 21). This number does not include those who were employed on a contract basis, who represent a significant number of those working in the mining sector; since contract labor was greatly reduced during the crisis, even a conservative estimate of the number of contract jobs lost dramatically increases the number of people left unemployed by the *global* (Ndulo et al. 2009: 19).² In addition, the value of the kwacha declined sharply during this period, depreciating by roughly 40 percent against the dollar between October 2008 and April

2009 (te Velde et al. 2010: 52).³ The primary effect of the drop in the kwacha's value was an increase in the price of imports. A sizable number of those employed in the informal sector purchase their wares outside of Zambia, and as the kwacha lost value, much of this transborder trade ground to a halt; where it did continue, increased expenses on the supply side meant much higher costs for customers. Sales on the Copperbelt, already hurt by layoffs, were further hampered by rising prices.

Since the crisis of 2008–2009, the Copperbelt economy has witnessed further periods of expansion and contraction. Returning to Nsofu in 2013 I found the vacant land surrounding the township filled with dozens of new houses in the latest styles. As we will see, ongoing construction in Nsofu ensures the continued economic diversity of the township, as partially finished houses provide ready accommodation for the community's poor. My neighbors pointed to the new houses and cars with pride, seeing in them a clear marker that their community was moving. This period of visible development was short-lived, however, and by 2015 *Forbes* reported that the kwacha was the worst performing currency in the world (Guest 2015). At the time of this writing (2016), the kwacha has recovered again, thanks primarily to an increase in copper prices.

In short, the economic history of the Copperbelt, not only since Ferguson's writing, but also well before it (Macmillan 1993), has been characterized by regular cycles of boom and bust. In an economy dominated by a single commodity it could hardly be otherwise, as the changing fortunes of the mines send regular waves of prosperity and penury rolling across neighborhoods like Nsofu. Returning to Ferguson's work, it is clear that the downturn of the 1980s did not, as he thought, trigger an upending of the modernist metanarrative, an end to Copperbelt life as the people who lived there knew it. It was simply one very difficult moment in a volatile political economy that has historically been marked as much by "ingenuity, resourcefulness, and essential optimism" (Macmillan 1993: 712) as by despair and "abjection," a key term in Ferguson's analysis. Indeed, one could argue that the periodic disruption of the Copperbelt economy fuels hopefulness in times of growth, just as moments of free fall on a roller-coaster help propel the riders up the next incline. As Owen Sichone puts it in his critique of Ferguson, "Optimism surely is based on the knowledge that others have been through decline before and survived" (2001: 379).

This sustained (and sustaining) hope for the future, the forward pitch of moving, is the subject of this book. While there has been no shortage

of crisis on the Copperbelt in the thirteen years I have worked there, neither has there been a shortage of optimism. My aim in the discussion that follows is to tease out the mechanisms behind this hopefulness in a context particularly well suited to this topic of study. This brings us to a more detailed description of Nsofu.

SETTING THE SCENE: A PORTRAIT OF NSOFU

Nsofu is a rambling collection of houses situated on the outskirts of Kitwe, the largest city on the Copperbelt and the region's commercial hub.⁴ From Nsofu one can just glimpse the smokestacks and cooling towers of the Nkana mine, which are more visible at night when illuminated by a blaze of floodlights. Turning your back to the mine and walking just over a mile to the other end of the township, you come to the far edge of Nsofu. To the left there is a massive power line that connects the township with the city's electric grid. Straight ahead the land quickly falls away to a broad expanse of forested savannah dotted with trees and boulders. Further on, the Kafue River winds its way south, where it will eventually plunge over the Kafue Gorge dam before joining the Zambezi. A serpentine strip of tarmac runs down the middle of Nsofu, but the remaining roads are unpaved, or were paved so long ago that they are now a jumble of stones and crumbled asphalt, rutted by wear and rain. Cutting across these roads are dozens of hard-packed footpaths, which take advantage of vacant lots and gaps between fences to create a network of shortcuts. The fastest way to get most places in Nsofu is therefore on foot, and during my fieldwork I walked several miles a day as I called on different people in the neighborhood or went to Pentecostal meetings.

Nsofu is a pleasant place. In the evenings the roads fill up with people coming home from work, some wearing the polyester blouses required for employees at the Shoprite supermarket, others in suits and ties or sensible pumps. Many have plastic bags on their arms, bearing bread for the next day's breakfast or perhaps vegetables to eat with dinner. Children play soccer and tag in the dusty streets, their school uniforms dripping on clotheslines strung alongside their houses. Women who have been to visit neighbors make their way slowly home, meandering along in the company of their hosts, who will be sure to see them a good part of the way home (*ukubashindika*). Along the tarmac, a few charcoal braziers glow in the gathering darkness, loaded with roasted maize or cassava for sale. It should be obvious from these observations that I liked Nsofu very much. I enjoyed the call of neighbors and children in



FIGURE 1. An unfinished plot with a “cabin” in the back (behind the bricks and drying clothes). The potatoes in the foreground are for sale.

the evening, the cool air rolling up from the river, and the greetings of those I passed during my morning runs along the township roads.

Some of the houses in Nsofu were formerly company housing for the mine, or homes built for government workers that have since been privatized. Others were or are being built as part of a “site and service” scheme sponsored by the Kitwe City Council, which offered plots of land with electricity and water hookups to those willing to develop them. While some of these houses have long since been completed and are ringed with fruit trees and bougainvillea, many others are not yet finished. One of the implications of this ongoing process of construction is that the township is dotted with small “cabins” built on larger plots that, if all goes well, will one day boast big houses (Nielsen 2011). Piles of cement and stacks of bricks are heaped next to front doors, and foundation slabs or trenches for footings stretch out in front of the tiny cabins, marking out the boundaries of homes that will be built someday (figure 1). Other houses are further along in the process of construction, with walls and a roof, but without windows or a connection to basic services.

The variety of housing situations in Nsofu reflects the socioeconomic diversity of the township. Some residents own their homes, but most are tenants. Rent in Nsofu is quite expensive compared with other parts of Kitwe, or indeed, with other cities on the Copperbelt. As I have already noted, many Nsofu residents are in full-time professional employment. Another significant percentage earn a living through what is locally glossed as “business”: trade, often informal, in everything from agricultural products brought in from rural parts of Zambia to clothes and housewares purchased in urban centers from Lusaka to Dubai. Alongside these middle-class residents of Nsofu live others whose situations are much less secure. Included here are pensioners, some widows, and those who are unemployed or underemployed. These are the people who live in the small Nsofu cabins or stay in unfinished houses, where they pay little or no rent, but instead provide security for the owner by keeping an eye on bags of cement or loose window frames.

For Nsofu’s underclass, residence in the township is precarious. Many of the neighborhood’s poor are on the edge of their capacity to afford even a cabin or part of an unfinished house, and a small disruption in employment, or the unexpected expense of a funeral or an illness, can put them irrecoverably behind in payment. It is also possible that construction on a house will be completed, resulting in a hike in rent that puts it beyond the reach of those who lived there before there were windows or electricity (this is what happened to Bana Vincent, whom we will meet in the next chapter). Faced with the necessity of relocation, people try very hard to stay in Nsofu. Poorer residents said that they were afraid their children would learn “bad manners” in a township where the cost of living was lower. In many such places they would also have to contend with increased crime, as well as smaller houses, shared toilets, and an overall higher population density. A young mother named Bana Charles told me once that she had gotten used to (*ukubelela*) Nsofu, where she was living with her two young sons in her parents’ home, and that she was determined not to lose her foothold in a more middle-class life. For Bana Charles this goal proved illusive, and in time I watched her, like several other informants, relocate to townships in other parts of the city. Bana Charles had followed a new husband to a more dangerous and densely populated neighborhood, where her growing household shared two small rooms without indoor plumbing. Bana Charles tried to keep a positive attitude, however, and on my last trip to Zambia she was happy to tell me that her family had moved a few blocks nearer to Nsofu. “We’re heading that direction,” she said, coming closer (*ukupalaminako*) bit by bit.

While part of what made Nsofu a desirable place to live was the difference in the built environment, the sense of security and of class distinction, I would argue that the primary reason that Bana Charles did not want to leave was because Nsofu offered opportunities for moving. This is not just a question of social mobility, of living in a better neighborhood. Rather, as the foregoing description makes clear, Nsofu was a place where it was possible to develop relationships with neighbors of a different social status, relationships that might in turn help to make moving happen. People of all social classes live cheek by jowl in Nsofu, as plots are small and houses are very close together. When the owner of a new house with satellite television lives next door to an underemployed carpenter and his young family, the possibility of a social connection between these two households increases. The potential for moving in Nsofu is not just a result of the township's economic diversity, however, but was also connected to its large number of Pentecostal churches. I describe these congregations in a moment, after first providing a brief account of Pentecostal expansion in Zambia.

CHRISTIAN INNOVATION IN ZAMBIA: A SHORT HISTORY

Compared with other parts of southern and central Africa, Christian missions in the British protectorate of Northern Rhodesia developed rather slowly due to the low population density in much of the territory (Taylor and Lehmann 1961: 21). Over time, however, people began to convert throughout Northern Rhodesia's rural areas, and by the early 1920s there was a significant Christian presence in many village settings. Despite this rural expansion of Christianity, converts who went to the growing cities of the Copperbelt to look for work found themselves without a church of their own. Missionaries had neglected the Copperbelt because it was understood that residence at the mines was temporary. The result of this lacuna was a spontaneous Christian movement, a new church made up of Africans from different denominational backgrounds. In 1925, this group was formally established as the Union Church of the Copperbelt, and it operated independently for nearly a decade before missionaries eventually set up their own churches in Copperbelt towns (Taylor and Lehmann 1961: 33–56).

The formation of the Union Church of the Copperbelt is just one example in a long history of Christian religious innovation in Northern Rhodesia and later Zambia. Most famous here is the Lumpa Church, founded by

Alice Lenshina in the early 1950s. Following a miraculous recovery from a coma, Lenshina claimed to have met with Jesus Christ and was baptized at the nearby Presbyterian mission. In time Lenshina's followers set up a new church outside the established mission, which they called "Lumpa" (Superior).⁵ Similar groups include the Sweetheart Church, another indigenous development with Catholic roots (Hinfelaar 1994, Burlington 2004). Also important have been Jehovah's Witnesses, which historically represented "a vehicle of religious protest" (Hinfelaar 1994: 43; Assimeng 1970), and African Independent Churches, particularly those of Zimbabwean origin (Jules-Rosette 1975, Dillon-Malone 1978, Kirsch 2008). Taken together, these examples point to the parallel importance of emergent religious forms, established ecclesiastical frameworks, and transnational networks. Each of these elements is crucial to the most recent generation of Zambian religious innovators: Pentecostals.⁶

Pentecostalism first arrived in Zambia via missionaries from the Apostolic Church of Pentecost of Canada and the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Canada (PAOC), who came in 1954 and 1955, respectively (Burgess and van der Maas 2010). These missionaries were what are usually called "classical" Pentecostals, representatives of denominations founded on the heels of the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. Broadly speaking, classical Pentecostalism emphasizes personal piety and holiness, as well as separation from the world, including a rejection of conspicuous consumption. Zambians talk about early Pentecostals as those who do not permit women to wear jewelry or to chemically treat their hair. Missionary-established Pentecostalism continues to play an important part in the country's religious life; in particular, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Zambia (which was born from the PAOC mission) is now the largest Pentecostal denomination in the nation, with more than one thousand churches. However, it is telling that this very successful group has moved away from many of the emphases of classical Pentecostalism, a transformation that reflects a broader theological shift toward "neo-Pentecostalism."⁷ In large part this is a shift away from ascetic holiness to the prosperity gospel (see Corten and Marshall-Fratani 2001: 7). The vanguard of this new form of Pentecostalism has been churches that are nondenominational and locally initiated. In Zambia, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa, it is neo-Pentecostalism that has served as the primary engine of Pentecostal growth since the mid-1980s.

The easiest way to track Pentecostalism's growth in Zambia is through the numbers.⁸ Today, the vast majority of the roughly 13 million Zambians are Christians (95.5 percent according to the 2010 cen-

sus), and more than 3.8 million could be classified as “Renewalists”—that is, as classical Pentecostals, charismatics (i.e., members of mainline denominations who engage in Pentecostal practices), and neo-Pentecostals. Of these groups the last is by far the largest, comprising more than two million Zambians (Johnson and Zurlo 2014). While these numbers are helpful, they do not tell the whole story. On the Copperbelt there are many people who would not describe themselves as Pentecostals when asked, but who nevertheless participate in Pentecostal religious activities. This may be in the context of a mainline congregation, as in the case of charismatic Catholics, or perhaps through an interdenominational prayer meeting. Add to this auxiliary Pentecostal participation the fact that mainline churches in Zambia have been increasingly “Pentecostalized” in recent years (Cheyeka 2006), borrowing ritual and aesthetic forms from Pentecostalism, and it becomes clear that on the Copperbelt local religious practice is perhaps best described as a continuum of Pentecostal participation that incorporates a large percentage of an overwhelmingly Christian population. In Nsofu, historic mission churches, as well as older and newer forms of Pentecostalism, are all features of the local religious landscape.

NSOFU’S RELIGIOUS SCENE

Like most urban neighborhoods in Zambia, Nsofu is home to dozens of churches. The biggest congregations belong to missionary-established groups, in this case, the Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist churches, and the United Church of Zambia (a denomination born from the Union Church). Smaller Christian bodies, such as the Baptist and Dutch Reformed churches, are also represented. Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, there are more than a dozen Pentecostal groups in Nsofu. The oldest Pentecostal church in the township is Life Chapel, founded in 1995 by Pastor Kalanga, who has remained at the helm of this congregation ever since. Life Chapel is also the largest of Nsofu’s Pentecostal churches, with more than one hundred members in 2008. Life Chapel was connected to a transnational Pentecostal body, as were two of the other Pentecostal congregations in Nsofu. When I first began my fieldwork in 2008, the remaining Pentecostal groups in Nsofu were independent, and most of them met in private homes or rented spaces, primarily classrooms.

In addition to established churches, a significant amount of Pentecostal ritual activity in Nsofu takes place in midweek gatherings, the most

popular of which are interdenominational “fellowships.” These groups meet for prayer, the practice that is most emphasized here, and in fact some fellowships are simply referred to as “prayers” (*amapepo*). There will also be singing and sometimes a sermon. While fellowships do not meet on Sundays, they operate very much like churches. In particular, they often have a formalized leadership structure, or at least a designated leader, who is usually called a pastor or a prophet. This person is in charge of the group’s ritual practice and also uses fellowship meetings as a platform for providing personalized religious services like prophecy and deliverance. Alongside this dense network of fellowships, there is an even looser field of Pentecostal membership in Nsofu, most commonly associated with “the mountain” on the edge of the township. This rocky hill is covered with dense forest and crowned with a mobile phone tower (it is, as far as I could tell, the highest point for over a mile). Individual believers will sometimes go to the mountain to pray, drawn by the comparative privacy of this out-of-the-way place. Up-and-coming pastors can also be found at the mountain, where believers may seek them out for prayer and where they may even hold informal meetings.

In short, Nsofu is a place that is permeated by Pentecostalism. Pastor Kalanga once told me that by his count there were forty-three pastors living in Nsofu—nearly one for every five hundred people. There are new fellowships springing up all the time, announcing their presence only by the unmistakable sound of prayer spilling out someone’s front door, attracting a crowd only by word of mouth. Groups split and new churches form in a regular process of congregational mitosis. As I discuss in more detail in chapter 8, individual believers move frequently from church to church, and sometimes maintain connections to more than one group at once. The sheer density of Pentecostal congregations in Nsofu makes this easy, and if someone wanted to go to a different Pentecostal meeting each day of the week—as I did early on in my fieldwork—it would not be difficult to do so.

While I have visited dozens of Pentecostal groups in the time I have spent on the Copperbelt, my fieldwork focused on three small congregations that, at least at the beginning of my research, were all independent churches with fewer than one hundred members. I chose to focus on these groups for two reasons. First, while not all Zambian Pentecostal congregations fit this description (i.e., nondenominational and small), the vast majority do, and the churches I studied therefore provide a representative picture that can be used to help understand Pentecostalism in Zambia more generally. Second, I wanted to offer a point of

contrast to most anthropological work on Pentecostalism, which has overwhelmingly focused on mega-churches rather than smaller congregations. Since the three churches that I studied represent the backbone of my ethnography, I describe them in some detail here.

Freedom Bible Church

Pastor Ephraim first started Freedom Bible Church in 2002 as a mid-week interdenominational prayer meeting, and when the group grew large enough he began holding Sunday morning services as well. This move represents a common trajectory for Pentecostal groups in Nsofu. Fellowships often become churches, and in some cases that is the leader's plan from the beginning—to establish a church by establishing a fellowship first. When I arrived at Freedom Bible Church in February 2008 the group was by all accounts at its peak. Each Sunday the classroom the congregation used for worship was bursting at the seams, with latecomers forced to stand outside or in an adjacent room during the service. Church members began to talk of registering the congregation with the Kitwe City Council, the first step toward securing a plot of land for their own building. This is the great dream of all Pentecostal churches, though few are able to make it a reality.

This period of heady growth continued for the better part of a year. However, in late 2008 a scandal erupted when two women came forward, both claiming to be pregnant by Pastor Ephraim. The church leadership asked him to take a leave of absence from preaching and individual ministry—no praying for people or offering prophecy—while they figured out what to do. With their most charismatic leader out of the pulpit, the remaining members of the pastoral team did their best to keep the congregation going, but church members felt that these other pastors were less skilled and often nodded off during their sermons. By the time I left the field in July 2009, Pastor Ephraim had been restored to his position, even though the situation that had caused his removal had not to my knowledge been resolved. It seemed the church leadership felt they had to reinstate Pastor Ephraim if the congregation was to continue to function. Already scores of people had left when faced with the loss of the leader that had been the church's main attraction. While Pastor Ephraim's return to ministry seemed to stem this tide, during my doctoral fieldwork Freedom never recovered the momentum it had when I first arrived.

When I returned to Nsofu in 2013 I found that some of the dreams of the glory days of Freedom Bible Church had become reality. The



FIGURE 2. Pouring cement for the floor of the Freedom Bible Church chapel in 2013 with Pastor Ephraim and Mr. Moyo, the church administrator.

congregation had been given a plot of land on the far edge of Nsofu, near the mountain where Pastor Ephraim had once held prayer meetings. There was no money for a building, but church members had built a small chapel (*cikopa*) from timber offcuts and filled it with narrow wooden benches (figure 2). Each week a few of the most dedicated believers arrived early to sweep the chapel and hang curtains around the room, covering the rough walls with panels of mismatched polyester lace. While the church remained small, believers proudly told me of the new “branch” congregations that had been opened under the banner of Freedom Bible Church, one in a different part of Kitwe and another in a nearby rural area. In these churches Pastor Ephraim was referred to as the “bishop,” as he oversaw them all, and a few of his friends jokingly referred to him as “ba Archy,” a suggestion that he was or one day would be an archbishop.

Higher Calling

As with Freedom Bible Church, the popularity of the group I call Higher Calling was evident from the first time I visited. In early 2008 the aver-

age attendance at midweek prayer gathering on Wednesday mornings was over one hundred people, a significant number of whom returned on Saturdays for the weekly fast. Around two dozen Higher Calling members had also started holding church services on Sunday mornings. The group met at the home of its popular founder, Bana Mfuwe, in a chapel similar to the one that Freedom Bible Church would eventually erect on its plot: timber offcuts nailed to a long wooden frame. The interior was decorated with curtain panels, carpets, tinsel, and silk flowers. A collection of tarps and empty maize meal bags covered the roof, providing protection from the sun, but not necessarily from the rain, and members of the group sometimes held their bibles under umbrellas during particularly heavy showers.

Bana Mfuwe was without question the primary attraction at Higher Calling. She had no formal religious training but was nevertheless a gifted speaker and singer. Her sermons usually focused on encouraging members of the group to remain true to their faith and continue to expect that God would “come through” for them. As I discuss in chapter 5, Bana Mfuwe often used her own experience as proof of this promise. While the early years of her Pentecostal commitment had been rocky, she had persevered and (here Pentecostals would say, “as a result”) had been blessed on every front; she dressed well, had a nice house, healthy children, and a happy marriage. Not long after I arrived in Nsofu I learned that Bana Mfuwe planned to move to South Africa, where her husband had been offered a job. When it came time for her to leave Nsofu, Bana Mfuwe held a final worship service in the Higher Calling chapel, where she announced that a widow named Bana Chilomba would take her place as head of the fellowship.

After Bana Mfuwe left, Higher Calling members dismantled their chapel and carried the materials several blocks to the home of church members Mr. and Mrs. Ntembe, where they rebuilt the structure over a freshly poured cement slab. They were not able to stay in this new location for long, though, as Mr. Ntembe lost his job a few months later, and soon after his house as well. In the absence of a central, rent-free location, the congregation found itself in a difficult situation. After searching unsuccessfully for someone who might offer his home as a new meeting place, Bana Chilomba decided that the group would use a nearby community center for midweek prayers and a school classroom for Sunday morning meetings.

All of these changes took a toll on Higher Calling membership. As with Freedom Bible Church, the removal of a popular leader was

followed by a significant drop in weekly attendance. Eventually, Bana Chilomba also left Higher Calling, and when I returned to the field in 2013 the group was being led by Pastor Conrad, one of the few men who had been part of Higher Calling leadership. Every few years Bana Mfuwe would return to Nsofu to great fanfare, and her former followers would rent one of the local church buildings so that she could hold meetings. Many of those who had long since left Higher Calling attended these special events, which nourished the connection they still felt to Bana Mfuwe. All the same, in her absence the group was not what it had been.

Key of David

Key of David Pentecostal Church was led by Pastor Mwanza and his wife, both of whom had trained at a Bible college in Lusaka before moving to the Copperbelt to “plant” a church, as Pentecostals put it. During my fieldwork I lived in the Mwanza home and therefore saw a side of Key of David that I did not have access to in other churches. Members of the congregation were always stopping by to see the pastor and his wife, and much of what I learned about the all-important relationship between leaders and laypeople was picked up in the Mwanza home. Bible studies, prayer meetings, and the occasional deliverance session were held in our sitting room, giving me exceptional access to Pentecostal ritual life. I was able to ask Pastor and Mrs. Mwanza about things that I had observed in their church much more easily than I was able to follow up with other Pentecostal leaders. And finally, because I lived with the Mwanza family, I became associated with them in the minds of many Nsofu residents. This had some drawbacks, as I often suspected that people were more cautious when I was around, careful to be on their best behavior lest a prominent pastor learn of their moral shortcomings. But my association with the Mwanzas also had advantages; the inside knowledge about Pentecostal communities that I was assumed to have developed while living in a pastor’s house prompted conversations that I doubt would have happened otherwise.

Key of David differed from the other two congregations in my study in several respects. While both Freedom Bible Church and Higher Calling held meetings either in private homes or rented spaces, Key of David had its own building—a large cinderblock structure positioned prominently on the tarmac road (figure 3). The Mwanzas had been able to build a church with notable speed thanks to a grant from their former



FIGURE 3. Outside Key of David in 2013 (the sign has been altered to obscure the church's real name).

Bible college. While, like the other churches in my study, Key of David had been an independent congregation when I first began to visit it, soon after I left the field in 2009 the church joined the Pentecostal Assemblies of God.

In addition to these differences in meeting space and denominational affiliation, Pastor Mwanza took great care to separate himself from some of the other Pentecostal pastors in Nsofu by advocating what he called a more “holistic” model of spiritual development. Although the core message of Pastor Mwanza’s sermons was similar to that of other Nsofu pastors—he too preached about prosperity and spiritual warfare—his teachings were peppered with references to things like psychology, market research, and popular business advice. Perhaps as a result of these unique features, Key of David had a larger number of professionals than the other congregations in my study, though there were a number of members whose existence was more precarious, including some who were un- or underemployed. Although in this way the church fulfilled a desire that Pastor Mwanza often expressed for congregational diversity, we will see that differences between richer and

poorer members of Key of David—and especially the influence of the former in the affairs of the church—created serious problems there. This was one reason for the turnover in church membership. While believers tended to stay at Key of David longer than they did in other Nsofu congregations, over the years a significant number of people, including prominent members like the Zulus, have left this church.

As we turn our attention to how people in Nsofu work to realize moving, it will become clear that the characteristics of township life that I have highlighted here are crucial. As we have seen, Nsofu is known as a middle-class community, but this label obscures an internal economic diversity. Importantly, the presence of poor people in Nsofu has not to my knowledge affected the view that it is an aspirational place. Nsofu's status as a middle-class township has proved to be as enduring as the optimism that has thrived despite the Copperbelt's endless cycles of boom and bust. Just as these cycles represent the key to township residents' remarkable sanguinity, so the presence of people of different economic statuses is not a detriment to aspiration, but rather its driving force. It is economic difference, in other words, that makes moving happen.