

CHAPTER 3

DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION: SPIRITUALITY INFORMED BY TRADITIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will try to examine descriptive theology and human sciences, and culture and worldview to lay a theoretical framework first. Then I will describe and interpret (1) Kikuyu worldview and religion, (2) mission Christianity, (3) the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, (4) East African Revival Movement, (5) the Charismatic movement, and (6) the socio-economic-political structure of the Kikuyu tribe. The description and interpretation of these six subjects are in answer to the questions formulated in chapter two and will explicate the spirituality of the research participants that is informed by these traditions. After detailed description of each tradition, the emphasis will be on the contribution of these traditions to the spirituality of the research participants.

Since the emphasis of this research is to understand the spirituality of Kenyan pastors, I feel obliged to describe Kenya briefly as I begin this chapter. The subject of spirituality is holistic after all. Kenya is situated across the equator in East Africa. Its neighboring countries are Ethiopia to the north, Somalia to east, Tanzania to south, Uganda to west and Sudan to north-west. Kenya took its name from the Kere-Nyaga (mountain of light) as the Kikuyu people call the 5200-meter-mountain Mount Kenya. Its population is 33,829,590 according to CIA World Factbook (2005:4). It is made of 52 tribes and the percentages of major tribes are as follows. Kikuyu 22%, Luhya 14%, Luo 13%, Kalenjin 12%, Kamba 11%, Kisii 6%, Meru 6%, other African 15%, non-African (Asian, European, and Arab) 1%. Religiously a majority of Kenyans are Christians with 45% Protestant and 33% Catholic. Muslim is 10%, indigenous beliefs 10%, and others 2% (CIA 2005:4).

Kenya's African population is divided into three linguistic groups: Bantu, Nilotic, and Cushite. The Kikuyu tribe, which is the target group for this research

belongs to the Bantu group. The official languages are English and Kiswahili. Besides these two languages, most Kenyans speak their tribal languages as well. While an increasing number of people favour English, most people still speak Kiswahili and retain their tribal languages, which number sixty-one, and all of them are living languages (Gordon 2005). This phenomenon of shifting to English is less common in rural areas than in Nairobi, which has become a cosmopolitan city.

Economically, Kenya is the regional hub for trade and finance in East Africa. Corruption, the foreign debt burden, poor management, unstable international commodity prices, poor communication infrastructure, and the effects of HIV/AIDS hamper its economy. However, with tourism and agriculture as its main economic strength, the economy is now beginning to show some growth after years of stagnation. In 2005 GDP (Gross Domestic Product) showed 5% growth (CIA 2005:6), and in 2006 Kenya GDP per capita is \$464 (Daily Nation, p 2).

Kenya enjoys a tropical climate. The long rains occur from April to June and short rains from October to December. It is hot and humid at the coast, moist and cool in the south-western highlands, and very dry in the north and north-eastern parts of the country, which comprise two-thirds of the country. The Great Rift Valley bisects the Kenya Highlands into east and west, and Mount Kenya, which is central to Kikuyu tribe, is on the eastern side.

Agriculture is the basis of Kenya's economy, contributing to over one third of the GDP. The Highlands are cool and agriculturally rich. Both large and small holder farming is carried out in the Highlands with major cash crops of tea, coffee, pyrethrum, wheat, and corn. Livestock farming is also practised. The Lake Victoria Basin is dominated by Kano plains which are suited for farming through irrigation. The northern part of Kenya is plain and arid, and its main activity is pastoralism (Bowen 2005)

Political history is worth mentioning here as well. On the coast, Arab colonizers settled as early as the 8th century AD, and this Arab influence

continued till the end of the 19th century except for a 200-year period of Portuguese domination in the 16th and 17th centuries. In the 19th century Britain became actively involved in the humanitarian situation of the territory by combating the slave trade. Economic and political interest in the country was also aroused through new information sent by the missionaries Krapf and Rebmann, and the explorers Speke, Grant, Burton, Livingstone, and Stanley. In 1886, an agreement with Germany brought the territory into the British sphere of influence, and in 1895 it was declared British East Africa Protectorate. In 1920 it became Kenya Colony and Protectorate (Barret 1973:22-24).

In reaction to the colonial government's oppressive and discriminatory measures, the Kenyans set up socio-political organisations in various parts of the colony. The most important and influential one was the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) launched in 1924. It was the Kikuyu tribe that championed Kenyan nationalism (Githii 1993:169), and Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of independent Kenya later on, was their leader in this struggle for independence (Githii 1993:180). After the government banned KCA, another organisation, Kenya African Union (KAU), was formed in 1946, and a year later Kenyatta became its chairman. Under his leadership, the KAU was soon transformed into a people's political movement. Within the KAU, however, a struggle broke out between moderates and the mainly Kikuyu radicals, and the radicals got the upper hand. They demanded complete freedom, independence, and the land of their forefathers that was taken by the British colonialists in the Highlands. Having given up belief in the possibility of achieving political and socio-economic change by constitutional means, many subversive activities were carried out in the Central province, which was a Kikuyu territory (De Jong 2000:50). In January 1952, the KAU began holding secret meetings and started planning armed rebellion (Githii 1993:208).

In October 1952, a state of emergency was proclaimed, and the leaders of KAU were arrested, including Jomo Kenyatta. Then the revolt called the Mau Mau erupted in full force. Kenyan historian Atieno-Odhiambo (1996:42) says, "...the rhetoric of Mau Mau—land and freedom—became the turning point

around which future Kenyans were to be built.” There are many different interpretations and labels put on Mau Mau, such as anti-Christian, anti-European, anti-colonial, nationalist or independence movement, “tribalism serving the nation,”¹ peasant revolt, civil war, and so on. By 1955 the Mau Mau were defeated by the state militarily in the forest and by the Home Guard in the villages (Atieno-Odhiambo 1996:38-42).

When the British government subdued the revolt, it became clear to them that future political stability for Kenya could only be gained under an African-majority government (De Jong 2000:50), and that Kenya’s metaphorical handful of Whites was unable to control burgeoning mass nationalism (Atieno-Odhiambo 1996:43). In 1961, Kenyatta was freed, and in May 1963 an election was held. The Kenya African National Union (KANU), of which Kenyatta had become chairman, obtained an overwhelming majority, and Kenya attained internal self-government. Kenyatta became the leader of the KANU cabinet formed by him and led Kenya peacefully to independence in December 1963.

3.2 DESCRIPTIVE THEOLOGY AND HUMAN SCIENCES

In this chapter, I am aiming to describe and interpret the research context and participants. As the base of discussions in this chapter, I will be using the summary statements and the questions I formulated in chapter two. More narratives of the research participants will also be used. However, before I plunge into the task of description and interpretation of the context, it would be helpful to examine descriptive theology and its relationship with human sciences in more detail. This discussion is basically drawn from Don Browning’s fundamental practical theology.

3.2.1 Purpose of descriptive theology

Descriptive theology is a multidimensional hermeneutic enterprise and a horizon analysis (Browning 1996:47). It starts with a whole, goes to

¹ Coined by Buijtenhuijs in *Essays on Mau Mau: Contributions to Mau Mau Historiography* (African Studies Center Research Reports no. 17 1982).

interpretive critical thinking and then reconstruct. It describes and interprets practices, patterns, and attitudes of individuals, institutions, and cultural and religious symbols around a selected issue, which in this case is spirituality. Its purpose is to appreciate and criticise current social, cultural, and ecclesial practices (Browning 1996:93). As a result, it aims to capture the questions that lead to historical and systematic theology and then back to the concreteness of strategic practical theology (Browning 1996:134). Descriptive theology strives for a *thick* description of situations (Browning 1996:105). Therefore, in this chapter I will try to describe the present research context, which is “spirituality of Kikuyu PCEA pastors in Nairobi area” in its thickness and richness.

3.2.2 Five dimensions of practical reason

The five dimensions of practical thinking proposed by Browning (1996:71) for thick description will be used as a guideline. They are: (1) visional level (raises metaphysical validity claims); (2) obligational level (raises normative ethical claims); (3) tendency-need or anthropological dimension (raises claims about human nature, its basic human needs, and the kinds of premoral goods required to meet these needs); (4) environmental-social dimension (raises claims related to social-systemic and ecological constraints on our tendencies and needs); (5) rule-role dimension (raises claims about the concrete patterns we should enact in our actual praxis in everyday world). Of these five dimensions, the visional and obligational levels are sometimes referred to as culture (Browning 1996:121), and these two upper levels are more comprehensive and influence the interpretations of the lower three levels, that is, the tendency-need, environmental-social, and rule-role dimensions (Browning 1996:108).

These five dimensions of practical thinking or practical reason stated above can be best arranged from the concrete to more abstract. Therefore, action is (1) made of concrete practices (rules, roles, communication patterns); (2) motivated by needs and tendencies (psychology); (3) limited and channelled by social-systemic and ecological constraints (ecology/sociology); (4) further ordered by principles of obligation (social anthropology); and (5) given

meaning by visions, narratives, and metaphors (cultural anthropology) (Browning 1996:111).

3.2.3 Relationship between theology and human sciences

As seen above, such disciplines of human sciences as psychology, sociology, ecology (natural science), and cultural and social anthropologies are employed as special foci of descriptive theology. However, although these human sciences fade into descriptive theology since they are embedded in effective history that affected them and have a religious dimension as well, this relationship needs to be understood in a wider theological context not just in relation to descriptive theology. For instance, psychology has influenced the counselling and pastoral care greatly; sociology influenced liberation and other political theologies; anthropology influenced liturgics and religious education; and psychology of moral development and development psychology have given tremendous impact on the understanding of human and Christian maturity (Browning 1996:80-81).

According to sociologist Robert Bellah, social sciences promote social self-understanding or self-interpretation and bring the traditions, ideals, and aspirations of society into its present reality. Social sciences can make connections both between the past and the present, and between the values of the society and its facts (Bellah 1985:301). This approach can be called critical social science, which puts explanation and methodology into the service of the norms and values that would guide social transformation (Brown 1996:88). Therefore, all the relations between practical theology and human or social sciences can be called the relations between hermeneutics and epistemology, truth and method, understanding and epistemology, interpretation and explanation, or narrative and theory (Browning 1996:82). Magesa (1998:37) an African theologian also contends:

The connection between the study of theology and anthropology, as indeed between theology and other social sciences, is critically important...To understand a people's God-talk, one has to be familiar with the symbols and entire system of language they employ for this purpose; thus the

necessity of studying the people and their culture, the necessity of knowing their philosophy, psychology and so on.

3.2.4 Hermeneutic sociology

According to Don Browning (1996:83), there is a modest move of human sciences toward the hermeneutic model. The psychoanalytic perspectives of Donald Spence, Roy Schafer, and Paul Ricoeur, the social psychology of Kenneth Gergen, and the sociology of Robert Bellah and Susan Hekman are some of these. I will present hermeneutic sociology here, as an example, since its emphasis on dialogue is relevant to the current research.

Hekman (quoted by Browning 1996:47-48) argues that a hermeneutic sociology views the task of sociology as a dialogue between the researcher and the research subjects, which are research participants. The researcher brings his or her understandings into the dialogue with the actions, meanings, and pre-understandings of the research subjects around social-systemic determinants (Browning 1996:48). However, their understanding has a religious dimension since they have been shaped by effective history with religious dimensions. Therefore, it can be said social science research is a “dialogue between the religious horizons of researchers and the religious horizons of the subjects of research” (Browning 1996:91). This dialogical process is an exercise of practical reason or *phronesis* and not just technical reason (Browning 1996:85-86). For Bellah, sociology is both moral and technical disciplines used to establish the means and the ends of the good society (Bellah 1983:45-46).

3.2.5 Cultural anthropology

Another area that deserves our attention here is cultural anthropology. Anthropology looks at people and describes them by what they actually do and think. It takes a holistic view of people, develops culture concepts and worldviews, distinguishes between forms and meanings, and also deals with culture changes. It is not simply a subject but a perspective (Kraft 1996:4-13). The anthropological perspective I will be using for the description and interpretation of the current research is a cultural anthropological one. Don

Browning (1996:122) also endorses the use of cultural anthropology by saying, “Cultural anthropology and ethnography are extremely useful for uncovering the interplay of the narratives, signs, and symbols that make up the visual and cultural dimensions of practical thinking and action.”

In *cultural anthropology*, culture means not only the aggregates of human thought and behaviour, but also the systems of belief that lie behind specific ideas, actions, and symbols by which those ideas and actions are expressed. Culture is seen as integrated wholes where many parts work together to meet the basic needs of the members in the culture (Hiebert 1985:20-21). In this view, a culture does not force people to follow it, but it is the habit of people that makes them follow it (Kraft 1996:37). This integrated understanding of *cultural anthropology* of human beings is the perspective I will be using here.

Especially, in the description and interpretation of Kikuyu and their culture, which is one central dimension of this research, I will be guided mainly by cultural anthropology and its structural frame. This anthropological framework, with worldview and religion at the core and surrounding socio-economic-political subsystems, will be able to give a rather complete description and interpretation of the spirituality—lived experience of Christian faith—of the research participants and is compatible with Browning’s practical reason. Both models aim at thick description of a phenomenon.

3.2.6 Summary

Spirituality is holistic. Employing the perspectives of social sciences for holistic understanding of the context is congruent to the subject of this research—which is spirituality.

The human sciences, such as anthropology and sociology, which I introduced above, will be used for discussion in this chapter, since these human sciences are the disciplines that provide us with in-depth knowledge of human behaviours. Although each of these disciplines of human sciences does not give us a complete picture of humans, they are useful when we assess human behaviour and practices. When these disciplines are used within the

fundamental practical theology, the religious and theological horizons are made clear and direct. Human sciences fade into religious perspectives at their edges (Browning 1996:89-92), and the horizons that these disciplines bring to theology makes different aspects of spirituality explicit.

3.3 ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH

Charles Kraft (1996:4-13), one of the most distinguished evangelical anthropologists, describes anthropology as follows: Anthropology looks at people and describes them by what they actually do and think. It takes a holistic view of people, develops culture concepts and worldviews, distinguishes between forms and meanings, and also deals with culture changes. It is not simply a subject but a perspective (Kraft 1996:4-13). In terms of holistic nature of anthropology, Kraft (1996:7-8) says:

Rather than segmenting humans into various compartments such as psychology, religion, philosophy, history, language, science, and so forth, anthropology tries to look at the whole spectrum together...In many ways, anthropology may be called interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary...Whatever has to do with human beings...is a part of anthropology. This makes anthropology perhaps the most holistic and comprehensive discipline there is.

Anthropology definitely overlaps with descriptive theology, as both disciplines try to obtain thick descriptions of the context. In order to describe and interpret the traditional Kikuyu culture, their traditional religion, and Christian religious traditions that have all influenced the spirituality of the research participants, anthropological perspective is indispensable. In chapter one, three approaches to the study of Christian spirituality were discussed: historical, theological, and anthropological. As Schneiders (2005a:28) said, “[T]he anthropological approach addresses the phenomenon in terms of what the researcher wants to know about religious experience, which may not be primarily historical or theological.” In this research, the spirituality of the research participants will be described more from an anthropological perspective than historical or theological.

3.3.1 Historical development

Historically, there are three main schools of anthropology. The first is “cultural evolution,” which dominated the discipline until the first quarter of the 20th century. According to cultural evolution, the meaning of human existence was interpreted in terms of history, which was explained purely in naturalistic rather than theistic terms. Culture was viewed as a single human creation in various stages of development in different parts of the world, whereas societies were seen to progress from simple to complex organisations, from irrational to rational thought, from magic to religion and finally to science (Hiebert 1985:20).

When World War I shattered the optimism of human progress and researches found that primitive societies are as rational and complex as those of modern mankind, the theory of cultural evolution was mainly replaced by “structural and functional theory.” It focused on the diversity of human societies as self-contained, integrated systems. Societies were thought to be like many living organisms and have many cultural traits. This theory contributed much to our understanding of social structures and the dynamics of sociological change. However, in its extreme form, these theories became deterministic overlooking the role of the human as a thinking, acting being (Hiebert 1985:20). This view of culture is also labelled “cultural superorganicism”—that culture as an enormously powerful living organism moulds and pushes people around, strongly influencing their beliefs and behaviours (Kraft 1996:36).

Another theory to develop after cultural evolution was rejected was “cultural anthropology.” According to cultural anthropology, culture means not only the aggregates of human thought and behaviour, but also the systems of belief that lie behind specific ideas, actions, and symbols by which those ideas and actions are expressed. Culture is seen as integrated wholes where many parts work together to meet the basic needs of the members in the culture (Hiebert 1985:20-21). In this view a culture does not force people to follow it, but it is the habit of people that makes them follow it (Kraft 1996:37). This integrated understanding of cultural anthropology of human beings is the perspective I have adopted and will be using here.

3.3.2 Culture

3.3.2.1 Definition

The term “culture” is the label anthropologists give to the complex structuring of customs and their underlying assumptions by which people govern their lives. It has two levels, a surface level and a deep level. On the surface level of a culture we see the patterns of human behaviour, and on the deep level lie assumptions called worldview (Kraft 1996:31). No one lives without a culture, and everyone is born into a certain culture. Kraft (1996:38) defines culture as follows: “A society’s complex, integrated coping mechanism, consisting of learned, patterned concepts and behaviour, plus their underlying perspectives (worldview) and resulting artifacts (material culture).”

It is worth noting that Kraft (1996:37) makes a distinction between culture and society saying that culture refers to the structured customs of people, whereas society refers to the people themselves. Hiebert makes the same argument (1985:51).

Society is a group of people who relate to each other in an orderly ways in different settings. The basic order that underlies these relationships is called a social organization or structure. A social structure is how people actually relate to one another. This is linked to, but different from their culture, which encompasses their beliefs about relationships.

Although society and culture can be differentiated as defined above, which is true in a complex society, in the current context of Kikuyu where people use the Kikuyu language in the basically same territory, culture and society are closely linked.

The following list of the characteristics of culture sheds more meaning to the understanding of culture and how it functions in life.

- Culture is complex (even though their technology may look simple).
- Culture is tightly integrated around its worldview.
- Culture is a total design for living (it is comprehensive).

- Culture is an adaptive system (to physical, social, and geographical conditions).
- No culture is perfectly adequate (there are some questions that are not answered).
- Culture is learned (we learn our customs unconsciously).
- Culture makes sense to those within it.
- Cultural practices are based on group agreements (it is *multipersonal*).
- Culture is a legacy from the past.
- Culture provides people with a way to regulate their lives (how to do things and how to eat and sleep, and so on).
- Culture may be pictured as a maze of roads (people ordinarily follow the roads or create new ones).
- There is conscious (explicit) culture and unconscious (implicit) culture (this distinction is different from surface and deep culture).
- There is ideal culture and actual culture (we do not live up to our ideals) (Kraft 1996:44-48).

With this understanding of culture, I will proceed to models of culture with subsystems.

3.3.2.2. Subsystems of culture and integration

Humans have basic needs such as biological, psychological, social, and spiritual. Each different culture functions to meet these basic human commonalities whether it is traditional culture, peasant culture, or industrial culture. The same essential questions are answered differently by different peoples (Kraft 1996:118) so we have different cultures. Different structures or models were proposed to explain how basic human needs are met and find concrete expression.

The most outdated or orthodox model puts basic human needs—biological, psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual—as commonality on the bottom with different worldviews in the middle and diversified customs on top. This model does not provide any integration, but is rather structural. Another model was

developed from this orthodox model, but there is no fundamental difference except that the second model provides a more detailed explanation. The model I am presenting here developed by Charles Kraft (1996:122) is an integrated model with worldview in the centre as if it is glue that provides cohesion to all the subsystems of culture that surrounds the worldview. It looks as follows in the next page.

In this model of culture there is worldview in the centre as an integrator of the total cultural system. The five interdependent outer structures are five or more subsystems: social, communicational, religion, economics, technology, and so

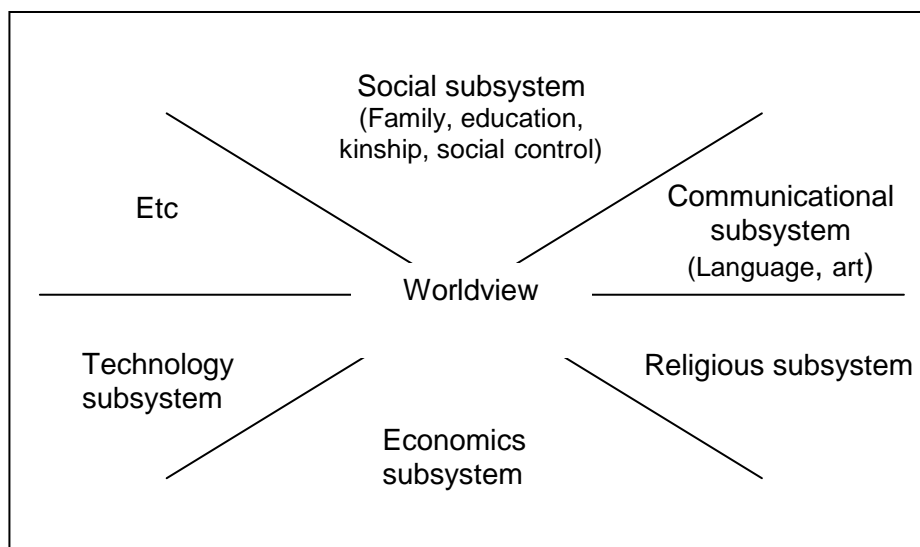


Fig 3.1 Cultural subsystems and worldview

on. These are called the surface culture. Each subsystem is made up of subsystem-specific assumptions, habitual behaviour, and creative behaviour. Just as there are worldview assumptions of the whole cultural system, there are also subsystem assumptions that are relevant to a specific subsystem. For example, times and place of worship and religious beliefs are some assumptions of the religious subsystem. Then there are habitual behaviours that people normally do in that specific subsystem. How we behave in a religious ceremony is considered habitual behaviour of the same religious subsystem. Paying money for goods purchased is a habitual behaviour in the

economic subsystem. On top of a specific subsystem lies creative behaviour. An example of creative behaviour would be that a religious leader brings in a new doctrine or change a normal religious ceremony, which are considered a creative behaviour (Kraft 1996:122-123).

What is essential in presenting an acceptable model of culture is integration. Culture is like a living organism whose parts cannot be separated one from another. For example, religion cannot be separated from society. We can hardly talk about social matters without mentioning economics. Without technology communication may not be effective, and so on. This integrated model of culture keeps people in balance as each subsystem and underlying worldview assumptions hold a society together.

However, when this integration and balance are somehow disrupted, either by a new custom introduced externally or sprung up internally, culture and worldview changes are inevitable. In the case of Kikuyu, as we shall discuss more fully later, great disruption occurred when Europeans came to Kenya. When missionaries and British settlers brought the gospel and western civilization to Kikuyu, Kikuyu traditional customs broke down. Worldview assumptions were shaken. However, as defined earlier, culture is a “coping mechanism” (Kraft 1996:38), and it is resilient. In their changed circumstances, Kikuyus resisted, accommodated, adapted to, and integrated the changes into their system, and their present cultural patterns are quite different from the traditional ones they had before the arrival of Europeans. My research participants are not an exception.

3.3.2.3 Five dimensions of practical thinking vs. cultural anthropological model

The five dimensions of practical thinking—visional, obligational, tendency-need, environmental and social-systemic, and rule-role—are compatible to Kraft’s cultural anthropological model. Both models strive for a thick description of a context. Browning’s visionary and obligational levels of practical thinking can be compared to Kraft’s worldview level. As visionary and

obligational dimensions are informed by narratives and metaphors of a tradition(s), so are the worldviews as the core of a culture. Kraft's cultural surface structures such as society, economy, politics, religion, etc deal with more concrete cultural areas that address basic human needs and tendencies, environmental and social-systemic constraints, and concrete rules and roles. Just as visional and obligational dimensions affect tendency-need, environmental and social-systemic, and rule-role dimensions, the worldview of culture influences surface structures such as society, economy, religion, politics, etc.

3.3.2.4 God, culture, and humans

The Christian sociologist H Richard Niebuhr (1951) presents several different positions of relationship between God and culture: (1) God is the product of culture; (2) God is against culture; (3) God endorses a culture or subculture; (4) God is above culture and unconcerned; (4) God is above culture and working through it. Kraft (1996:91) argues for yet another position saying that God exists apart from culture, relates to and interacts with human beings in terms of the cultural waters within which humans are immersed. Therefore, in line with Kraft's position and in order to study spirituality, the study of culture is crucial since the reality and perception of God is transmitted through the medium of culture. I argue that human spirituality is formed as a product of theological (God) and anthropological (culture) reflection.

3.3.2.5 Transformation of culture

Basically, there are two different attitudes towards culture: positive and negative. Lingenfelter (1998:16-22) of Fuller seminary, USA argues for negativity of culture by saying that the gospel contradicts society and worldview and that Jesus' good news brought conflict and change. He views cultures as "prisons" and "cells of disobedience." To him, culture is inextricably infected by sin. While Lingenfelter holds a low view of culture, Kraft of the same institution holds a high view of culture. Separating culture from people/society, Kraft (1996:35) says:

But I contend that *these are people things, not structure things*. The structures are infected, to be sure, but the real problem lies in the people, not the structures. When, in 1 John 2:15-17, John warns us about 'the world,' he is talking about *people* (what I call 'society' below), those within whom there is a sin nature, not about *culture*, the structures within which people operate and which they often manipulate to their advantage. *People* [italics mine] behave in prideful, manipulative ways that are displeasing to God.

Although Lingenfelter and Kraft disagree about the influence of cultural structures on human behaviour, both of them agree on the necessity of transformation. Kraft (1996:440-441) talks about transformational culture change at the worldview level, and Lingenfelter (1998:212) holds the similar view of transformation of preconversion knowledge and worldview. It is the level of worldview on which true transformation occurs that affects the whole area of life.

3.3.2.6 Spirituality in the cultural scheme

In the cultural scheme of Fig 3.1, spirituality seems to have to do with a religious subsystem, but it has implications for the whole area of the diagram. Its characteristics, as we saw earlier in chapter one—living relationship with God, integration of all aspects of human life and experience, transformative, and holistic—is also a characteristic of the cultural diagram above. The following definition reveals these holistic and integrative characteristics of spirituality than when it is just confined within the area of religion. McCarthy (2000:196) says, "Spirituality is broader and more encompassing than any religion. It is an expression of one's deepest values and commitments, one's sense or experience of something larger than and beyond oneself." This definition of spirituality also tells us it has characteristics of worldview since it talks about values and commitments (allegiances). We will discuss worldview more fully later.

Therefore, it can be said that the subject matter of this research, spirituality, has both a theological and anthropological dimension, and that it also has characteristics of both worldview assumptions and traits of the religious

subsystem. Furthermore, it interacts with other cultural subsystems such as social, economic, and political. It is holistic.

3.3.3 Worldview

Recently, anthropologists have focused their attention on the fundamental assumptions that underlie explicit cultural beliefs. Each culture seems to have its own worldview, or fundamental way of looking at things. For example, Africans' view of time is cyclical, whereas westerners view time as linear. For westerners birth is the beginning and death is the end. For Africans, however, life is a cycle. It does not have a beginning or ending. Even if a person dies, he lives as a spirit being, as *living-dead* (Mbiti 2002:25). Life continues. While African society has a supernatural understanding of causation, industrialized society interprets events rather naturally or physically. All these interpretive differences lie in the differences of basic assumptions.

3.3.3.1 Definition

Hiebert (1985:45) defines worldview as “the basic assumptions about reality which lie behind the beliefs and behaviour of a culture.” Kraft's (1996:52) definition is more detailed: worldview is “the culturally structured assumptions, values, and commitments/allegiances underlying a people's perception of reality and their responses to those perceptions.” In another word, worldview is the core of a culture, a grid, in terms of which reality is perceived. It also provides the guidelines for a people's behavioural response to that perception of reality. According to Kearney (1984:168), worldview is an approximation of reality, not an accurate image of it. Worldview is like an undercurrent of a river that flows underneath the surface. It is a deep culture.

3.3.3.2 Characteristics of worldview

Worldview has the following characteristics according to Kraft (1996:55-58).

3.3.3.2.1 Worldview is assumed

Worldview assumptions are not reasoned but assumed to be true without prior proof. They are so deeply imbedded in the culture that they are seldom questioned and people interpret their life experiences in terms of these

assumptions. In rural areas of Kenya some people still believe spirits cause sicknesses and death. When a person dies, therefore, everybody who knows the diseased must show up and attend the funeral to avoid criticism or suspicion that it is he or she who caused his/her death. HIV/AIDS workers also have a hard time when they go to rural villages for HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns because people do not know or think or believe that AIDS is caused by HIV virus.

3.3.3.2.2 Worldview provides a lens

A people's worldview provides them with a lens, model, or map in terms of which REALITY (objective, unfiltered) is perceived and interpreted. According to this worldview map, people engage in habitual behaviors such as willing, emoting, reasoning, motivating, interpreting, evaluating, explaining, relating, adapting, regulating, and integrating. These are called worldview functions (Kraft 1996:58-63). People in the same society and culture will interpret things and events basically in the same way since they all wear a similar lens and use basically the same map. There is a certain degree of harmony and balance because of this.

3.3.3.2.3 Worldview is the most difficult to deal with

Worldview assumptions are the most difficult to deal with when problems arise out of worldview differences. The culture shock that people experience is due to encountering a different worldview. When Christianity was introduced to Africans, including Kikuyu, they faced a worldview that was very different from theirs. These completely different worldview assumptions brought by missionaries caused chaos, conflict, and change of their society and culture.

Before I go further with the discussion of worldview, let me compare Don Browning's five dimensions of practical reason with the culture and worldview concepts discussed so far. Don Browning's visional (metaphysical), obligational (ethical), and tendency-need or anthropological (human nature and needs) levels can be classified as foundational underlying principles called "worldview assumptions." The fourth and fifth levels—environmental-social (constraints) and rule-role (concrete patterns) dimensions can be said

to be on the surface as “cultural subsystems.” When I discuss Kikuyu worldview and culture later in this work, I will be guided by the cultural subsystem rather than five dimensions of practical thinking. Although they are basically the same, cultural subsystem and worldview give me a clearer structure and organisation in describing and interpreting Kikuyu culture.

3.3.3.3 Universals of worldview

Based on Kearney (1984), Kraft (1989:195-205, 1996:63-65) talks about six categories of worldview that are found in every worldview, which are called worldview universals.

3.3.3.3.1 Classification

All people classify, categorize, and think according to the logic of their worldview. Plants or animals, people or things, material objects or social categories, natural or supernatural entities, the visible or the invisible—all are labelled and put into categories together with other items and entities believed to be similar to them. For Westerners, the animate and the inanimate are classified differently, while Africans may think all possess spirits and put them all in the same category.

3.3.3.3.2 Person/group

People are seen basically either as individuals or as groups. In the West people are seen primarily as individuals, but in many other parts of the world people are seen as groups.

3.3.3.3.3 Causality

All people ask, “What force is at work in the universe?” and “What results do they bring about?” The people of the world may all answer differently according to their belief system. God, gods, spirits, demons, luck, fate, chance, and so on would be the answers. There are three main domains where the causality would be treated: (a) natural world causality (weather, electricity, water, and the like); (b) human causality (political, social, and economic systems); and (c) supernatural causality (God, god, and spirits). What needs our attention here is that different societies and cultures put different amounts

of focus on the three areas of spirit, human, and nature. Africans put much, if not all, emphasis on the spirit realm.

3.3.3.3.4 Time/event

All people measure time differently—either as quantity or events. Westerners focus on the quantity of time spent for an event, while Africans are more concerned about the quality of the event that takes place. In the world there are more peoples who are event oriented than time oriented.

3.3.3.3.5 Space/material

All worldviews provide people with guidelines about space. How they arrange buildings in a compound and how they arrange inner space of a building are all derived from worldview assumptions. How they arrange furniture in a church building reflects how they view and organize their worship services. If preaching were primary, the pastor's podium would be raised higher than the platform. If the church were charismatic, they would make a space in the front for ministry purposes. In Africa, in a polygamous marriage the husband had his own hut, and his wives had their own huts. The husband visits his wives' huts for sexual relations. Otherwise, he stays, eats, and sleeps in his own hut.

3.3.3.3.6 Relationship

People need to find various relationships between different categories of a worldview, and a worldview provides guidelines for these relationships. For example, the African classification of all things under spiritual category has something do with causality.

3.3.3.4 Worldview vs rationality

Some characteristics of personal and cultural worldview assumptions share the concept of rationality of postfoundationalism. Rationality is “an awareness of the shared cognitive, pragmatic, and evaluative dimensions.” It is able to give an account, provide a rationale for the way one thinks, chooses, acts, and believes (Van Huyssteen 1997:39). When we compare what Van Huyssteen says with what anthropologists say, there are similarities between worldview and rationality. Hiebert (1985:31) argues that there are three dimensions in worldview: cognitive, affective, and evaluative by saying, “these

three dimensions—ideas, feelings, and values—are important in understanding the nature of human cultures...” Kraft (1996:58) says these three dimensions are what *people* do in relation to worldview and culture since it is *people* who function cognitively, affectively, and evaluatively. Again, the following statement of Van Huysteen (1999:128-177) also sounds like the description of culture: *Rationality* takes many different forms and allows us to integrate our multi-faceted lives, understand ourselves as individuals and communities, and relate to one another within and across complex socio-cultural structures. It is the most important epistemic goal that shapes the way we interact with others. It is constructed on the basis of own experience, but is capable of reaching beyond. It starts with an individual and is extended to community. This rationality is diverse from community to community. Therefore, postfoundational rationality is context-specific and is embedded in tradition; and these two are inseparable. As rationality is context-specific and embedded in tradition, worldview is culture-specific and embedded in tradition. However, there is a difference. While worldview is culture-specific, postfoundational rationality is contextual and reaches beyond one’s specific contexts for interdisciplinary dialogue.

In terms of epistemology, both postfoundationalism and cultural anthropology claim “critical realism” as an alternative way of understanding reality. In theology, critical realism means that what we are provisionally conceptualising in theology really exists (Van Huyssteen 1997:131). In cultural anthropology, it is called objective REALITY. Claiming two realities, objective REALITY and a subjective reality (R versus r), anthropologist Kraft (1996:18) says,

There is a REALITY ‘out there’—the world outside ourselves does exist, it is REAL. But there is also a reality inside our minds. That, too, is REAL. This position believes that *there is both an objective REALITY and a subjective reality...*I only understand R[EALITY] through my picture of it [reality].

3.3.4 Summary of culture and worldview

As was discussed above, the holistic nature of anthropological perspective of culture and worldview would be a good method for the description and interpretation of spirituality, which is also holistic. Before I engage in the

description and interpretation of the main subject, the spirituality of Kikuyu pastors, let me bring in the questions raised in chapter two, and I will try to answer them in the remaining part of this chapter.

Questions raised in chapter two:

- What is the traditional Kikuyu culture with all its components?
- How much of that culture have the research participants retained?
- What is the impact of the early Scottish missionaries on the Kikuyus? What change did Christianity bring to the Kikuyus?
- What is the East African Revival Movement and what legacy did it leave?
- What impact did the Charismatic movement give to the Kenyan church or the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) specifically?
- What is the contribution of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa to the spirituality of the research participants?
- What social-economic constraints gave influence to the spirituality of the research participants?
- What does the spirituality of the research participants look like with all these cultural and religious influences? What are their beliefs and practices?

3.4 KIKUYU WORLDVIEW

The Kikuyu² people are Bantu and came into Kenya during the Bantu migration four centuries ago. Numbering about six and a half million—about 20% of the national population—the Bantu-speaking Kikuyu are the country's largest tribe, as well as one of the most westernised. They live in central highlands of south-central Kenya (Central Province), traditionally from the Aberdare Range and foothills of Mount Kenya in the north, to Nairobi and the Ngong Hills in the south. Many Kikuyus have also moved onto the west side of the Rift Valley into what was traditionally known as Kalenjin territory. There

² There are spelling variations for the tribal name such as Kikuyu, Gikuyu, Gekoyo, Akikuyu, Agikuyu, etc, but in this work the word Kikuyu, the most common term, will be used throughout.

are substantial emigrant populations as well in most Kenyan towns, where they work as traders, businessmen and shopkeepers (Finke 2003).

Currently, the Kikuyu tribe stands at a crossroad of tribal culture and modernization. For them it has been a life of challenge culturally, socially, economically, politically, and spiritually. This challenge and resultant change have affected the whole area of their life. Life has been unstable at least after the change started. However, the Kikuyu adapted to the new circumstances and survived. In this subsection, I will deal with the traditional Kikuyu worldview assumptions, its changes, if any, due to colonization, Christianisation and westernisation, and the current worldview of the research participants.

3.4.1 Kikuyu traditional worldview

As was said previously, worldview is a set of basic assumptions shared by a people of the same culture. It is their knowledge of the world, and does not change easily. Even after Kenya was colonized by the British and western³ civilization and culture was introduced to the people of Kenya including the Kikuyu, most Kikuyus still adhere to traditional worldview assumptions. Kikuyus are not highly change-oriented people (Murikwa 1985:25).

Therefore, it is essential to study traditional Kikuyu worldview first, since spirituality encompasses worldview assumptions, and although my research participants are modernized Kikuyus, my assumption is that they must have retained some or considerable portion of Kikuyu traditional worldview assumptions, which still exert great influence on their spirituality. Another important fact to mention is this: According to Murikwa (1985:15), who studied Kikuyu worldview in comparison with American worldview, Kikuyu worldview assumptions about reality are shared by other Black Africans so one group's assumptions can serve as representation of other groups. What is said about Kikuyus can be true of other African tribes. I would be following Kearney

³ The word "western" is used here to denote European or American.

(1984) and Kraft's (1996) worldview universals in general but more specifically Murikwa's (1985) classification as I present Kikuyu worldview assumptions.

3.4.1.1 Holistic and supernatural perception of reality

Kikuyus tend to view things holistically, and they have no dichotomy between the secular and the sacred, the spiritual and the physical. They perceive all human experiences as parts of a simple integrated whole. Human well-being applies to his physical, psychological, and spiritual realms (Murikwa 1985:127).

Mugambi (2002:116) a prominent African theologian says the following:

In the African heritage the world is viewed as an integrated phenomenon, from which humankind is inseparable, whether physically or intellectually. God, humanity and nature are ontological categories which are inextricably related, even though they are conceptually distinct. Thus God is spatially immanent, but ontologically transcendent. Animals, plants and inanimate things are an integral part of nature, deserving as much attention and respect as human beings.

For example, traditionally, they did not even distinguish between work and play. Both work and play were considered as an occasion for socializing. As long as the workers enjoyed the company of one another, work was perceived as fun (Murikwa 1985:135-137).

In Kikuyu's holistic system, religion plays a major role as in other African traditional societies. According to Kraft's (1996:54) cultural subsystems, Kikuyus have a religious focus, or it could be that religion surrounds the worldview and affects the whole cultural subsystems. That is to say that they have supernatural causality (Magesa 1998:46). So when someone is healed, they do not argue whether it was God or medicine that healed him. It is God who directly or indirectly heals. In regards to the dominant position of religion in Kikuyu society, Kenyatta (1978:214, 316) says, "Religion is integrated with the whole of Kikuyu life," and also "religion is interwoven with traditions and social customs of the people." When Kikuyus are stricken by disasters such as drought, outbreaks of an epidemic, or a serious illness, they turn to God and offer sacrifice. They also believe that illnesses are carried to the people

by evil spirits (Kenyatta 1978:260, 239). Kenyatta (1978:242) further said that in the Kikuyu society the church and the state were one.

Regarding African religion, Mbiti's remark conveys a clear message of religion as having the central place in an African man's life: "Religion is the strongest element in traditional background, and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned." In the conception of African religion, the universe is viewed as a composite of divine, spirit, human, animate and inanimate elements, hierarchically perceived but directly related, and always interacting with each other (Magesa 1998:44). This is what Kikuyus believe as well.

3.4.1.2 Group identity

In African worldview, God and community are placed above individual interests. An individual can also be identified only in terms of the community he belongs to (Mugambi 2002:117). In Kikuyu culture man has a group identity called kinship. Kinship involves extended family, the lineage (sub-clan), and the clan. A clan is made up of all the descendants of one legendary, remote ancestor; Kikuyus have nine clans. A lineage consists of all the descendants of a known ancestor. There are two kinds of lineages, patrilineal and matrilineal. Patrilineal societies trace their ancestors through the father and his relatives, and matrilineal societies through the mother and her relatives. Kikuyus are patrilineal. The extended family includes a man and his wife(s), their children, and grandchildren, and Kikuyus find their self-identity in this kinship system (Murikwa 1985:35-41).

About the essential organizing fabric of kinship, Mbiti (2002:104) writes:

The deep sense of kinship, with all it implies, has been one of the strongest forces in traditional Africa. Kinship is reckoned through blood and betrothal (engagement and marriage). It is kinship which controls social relationships between people in a given community: it governs marital customs and regulations, it determines the behavior of one individual towards another. Indeed, this sense of kinship binds together the entire life of the 'tribe', and is even extended to cover animals, plants and non-living objects....Almost all the

concepts connected with human relationship can be understood and interpreted through the kinship system. This it is which largely governs the behavior, thinking and the whole life of the individual in the society of which he is a member.

What is interesting in Kikuyu, and other African tribes, is that the African kinship system includes the spirits of dead relatives and those relatives yet to be born in the extended family. Those relatives who are dead are called “living-dead.” The living-dead is a person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life. So the act of pouring out libation (of beer, milk or water), or giving portions of food to the living-dead, are all symbols of communion and fellowship with and remembrance of them (Mbiti 2002:25-26).

Kinship provides social support and physical, psychological, and economic security to its members. Children are taught the duties and privileges of being a kinship member early in life. Marriage is not an individual matter but a group business (Murikwa 1985:42-43). Even religions are not “primarily for the individual, but for his community of which he is part” (Mbiti 2002:2). Individualism is considered evil and individual uniqueness is only secondary, while his group identity and social obligation is considered primary (Kenyatta 1978:309-310). The personal pronoun “I” was rarely used in public assemblies, and the collective spirit was so much infused in the mind of the people that eating, drinking, working and sleeping were also done collectively (Kenyatta 1978:195). Mbiti states this primary aspect of African group identity as follows: “Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: ‘I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am’” (Mbiti 2002:108-109). This is true of Kikuyus.

Before I proceed to the next worldview assumption, I would like to introduce an interesting oral narrative that teaches Kikuyus the value of individual sacrifice for the good of the whole society. Here the setting is a severe drought, and the individual, the family, and even the clan have to sacrifice to save the whole society. The narrative shows that, although a single human life

is precious and no price is too great, they chose the loss of the individual life instead of the total destruction of the whole community (Kabira and Mutahi 1988:13). The narrative is as follows:

*The daughter of Kararu
(by Wambui wa wambugu)*

*And my own mother do you say that I should get finished?
My own father do you say that I should get finished?
My junior mother do you say that I should get finished?
My junior father do you say that I should get finished?
Kararu's daughter, I am condemned by fate.
The rain will fall and I will get finished.*

She started to sink into the ground. She sang again.

(Omission)

*My own brother (of the same mother) do you say that I should get finished?
My brother (of a different mother) do you say that I should get finished?
My brothers and sisters (community) do you say that I should get finished?
The rains will fall and I will get finished.*

She sank up to the knees.

(Omission)

*Our community do you say that I should get finished?
And my own father do you say that I should get finished?
Kararu's daughters, I am condemned by fate.
The rains will fall and I will get finished.*

Now she got swallowed by the earth and covered. Then the rain fell and the people, goats and cattle all got enough to eat because Kararu's daughter was sacrificed in the middle of the field. And the place where she was swallowed up by the earth became an everlasting lake (Kabira and Mutahi 1988:14-16).

3.4.1.3 Past-oriented and cyclical time

Coming from a western/eastern cultural background as a Korean-American, I have to admit that this worldview assumption is difficult to fully understand. There are four components to the Kikuyu concept of time: (1) past orientation; (2) cyclical; (3) quality of time; (4) event orientation rather than time orientation.

Firstly, Africans including Kikuyus focus on the past. Time is composed of long past, a present and virtually no future. The future is not *actual* time but only *potential* time. The actual time is only present and past. Therefore, in Africa, time moves backward. People's minds are not on what is going to take place but what has taken place (Mbiti 2002:17). Mbiti's concept of time in terms of *Sasa* vs. *Zamani*⁴ is an excellent explanation of this African time concept. He explains:

Sasa is really an experiential extension of the Now-moment stretched into the short future and into the unlimited past (or Zamani)...Sasa feeds or disappears into Zamani.... Zamani is the graveyard of time, the period of termination, the dimension in which everything finds its halting point (Mbiti 2002:22-23).

So people set their minds on the past since time is always moving from *Sasa* to *Zamani*. For Kikuyus, the future is uncertain and unknowable (Murikwa 1985:154). This is an "ontological rhythm" (Mbiti 2002:24).

Secondly, this ontological rhythm is cyclical. Kikuyus do not perceive time as moving from a beginning to an ending. Events just keep on repeating. The sun rises and sets, and seasons come and go. Both people and animals are born, age, and die. Life is cyclical. According to Mugambi (2002:123),

Life is continuous, so that there is no beginning and no end. It is interesting to observe that most traditional African stories and myths begin with the expression 'A long time ago...' and end with the expression 'And that is how the situation continues to be until this day.'

Thirdly, Kikuyus tend to value the quality of time more than the quantity of time. Labourers were paid according to the quality of their work not how many hours they worked on the farm (Murikwa 1985:155). To westerners who would view time quantitatively, time is "wasted" if they wait for a long time in vain. However, to Africans who would view time qualitatively, "time has to be created or produced. Man is not a slave of time; he 'makes' as much time as he wants" (Mbiti 2002:19). Therefore, in worshipping God, traditional Kikuyu

⁴ *Sasa* and *zamani* are Kiswahili words. *Sasa* denotes now and *zamani* past.

worldview values the quality of worship more than the mere quantity of time they spend for worship.

Lastly, for Kikuyus time is measured by events such as sunrise, midday, and sunset. The sun can rise either at 6 o'clock or 8 o'clock. It does not matter to them. It is also irrelevant to calculate the number of days in a year. One year has such events as the rain season, planting, harvesting, dry season, rain season again, planting again, and so on. Each year comes and goes that way. Likewise, a person's life is viewed in terms of important events such as birth, circumcision, marriage, and death (Murikwa 1985:157).

3.4.1.4 Human relationship as primary

In traditional Kikuyu culture wealth is viewed in terms of people and the relationship among them. Kinship, sociability, relationship, participation, and sharing are all imperatives for human existence (Magesa 1998:65-76). This is a very different perception from that of westerners, who measure wealth in terms of material possession. Whereas, in the western value system, productivity, efficiency, and monetary profit are the final indicators of economic success, in the traditional African worldview, human relations and service take a priority (Mugambi 2002:117). Since Kikuyus consider human relationships primary, those who have lots of children, wives, relatives, and friends are considered wealthy, but a person who lacks such human resources is considered poor. When in business, making a profit is secondary to providing for the needs of people. Charging interest was inconceivable since you cannot charge interest to a needy person. When relatives visit a Kikuyu, he is expected to host them even to the exhaustion of his resources (Murikwa 1985:106-107).

It should be noted here, however, that a man was called rich when he owned cattle. While every Kikuyu family owned a number of sheep and goats, only a small minority owned cattle. Therefore, the first sign of being a wealthy man was to own a cow or two (Kenyatta 1978:64). Nevertheless, human relationship took a priority over material possession, and children were so taught from childhood (Murikwa 1985:107). It was said, "To live with others is

to share and to have mercy for one another,” and “It is witch-doctors who live and eat alone” (Kenyatta 1978:179). It was this spirit of valuing human beings that pervaded Kikuyu culture, although it has been greatly challenged by western influence. Kenyatta (1978:311) concludes, “Gikuyu outlook is essentially social.”

3.4.1.5 Age as a sign of wisdom

Kikuyus value age since the aged are viewed as having wisdom and knowledge. They are community and religious leaders. Wisdom is more precious than youthful strength and beauty. From early childhood, children are taught to respect their parents and grandparents. Younger children are also expected to respect and obey their elders. When someone calls the elders of the community, he does not use their first names but the eldest child’s name like “Baba (father) so-and so,” or “Mama (mother) so-and-so.” As a man got older, he became junior elder, and then finally senior elder, who had the privilege of administering religious and judicial duties of the community. These elders were chosen from all the members of the community who had reached the age of eldership and retired from warriorhood. In the case of women as well, when a woman reached the stage of motherhood, high respect was ascribed to her by all the members of the community (Kenyatta 1978:9-10, 188).

In polygamous marriages, the head wife did not have superior authority over the other wives, but was only respected for her seniority in age, as long as she deserved (Kenyatta 1978:10). In workplaces, the younger manager respected an older employee, and not the other way around. Age took a priority over status (Murikwa 1985:85). Before Europeans came to Kikuyu and introduced a *chief* system—Kikuyus did not have chiefs as their rulers—the governing body was a council of elders (Leakey 1952:35).

As shown above, Kikuyus live in an age-oriented culture. The old are perceived as more valuable than the youth in the society. They are regarded as having accumulated wisdom and knowledge, and, therefore, they are leaders both at home and in the community. What needs to be noted,

however, is that age did not bring automatic leadership. Leadership was conferred to those who proved that they had such quality (Leakey 1952:28).

3.4.1.6 Cooperation for survival

Since life is an integrated and continuous process in time and space, it is essential to co-exist with other creatures, human and non-human, and depend on each other. Thus cooperation is valued and competition is discouraged. From childhood, they are taught to view competition as an enemy of community life, and cooperation in the same kinship group is necessary for survival. In economic matters, family obligations and cooperation have priority over making profits (Murikwa 1985:62-63). When children reach a certain age, they learn various skills from their parents—boys from the father and girls from the mother—and share chores with them. In polygamous situations as well, the relationship between wives is that of a partnership. The wives address each other as “my partner” or “co-wife” as “co-owner” of their husband (Kenyatta 1978:10).

On the community level, every Kikuyu feels that he or she has a unique contribution to make for the welfare of the whole community in such areas as hunting, farming, herding cattle, building homes, and harvesting crops. When cooperating, they offer free labour. The concept of paid labour was introduced only after Europeans came. The only thing asked for in return was feeding the workers while they worked for the beneficiary. They felt that it was their privilege and duty to help others and also to be helped. Since they were taught from childhood to view humans as needy, they were not ashamed of asking for help. The pervasive feeling is hospitality (Murikwa 1985:66-67).

This attitude is carried over to the natural world as well. Kikuyus view nature as something to cooperate with rather than something to conquer. To them the universe is a living thing. It is inhabited with many living beings, visible and invisible, and all these beings, human and non-human, visible and invisible, have their rights to exist. Spirits, humans, animals, trees, rocks, rivers, and mountains all share the universe with man. Thus they value natural resources, and do not exploit the natural world (Murikwa 1985:69-70). The greatest

traditional African value is to live in harmony with all these basic ontological categories. A person cannot be at peace with himself when this harmony is broken. Harmony with God is not enough when harmony with other beings are violated (Mugambi 2002:137).

3.4.1.7 Summary

As I conclude the traditional Kikuyu worldview section, I would like to compare these traditional Kikuyu worldview assumptions with those of western worldview on the basis of foregoing discussions. Although I am not going to present a complete worldview contrast chart here, it will be helpful to compare some worldview assumptions.

The Perspective

Kikuyu (African) Worldview	Western (American) Worldview
1. Holistic perception of reality	Categorization
2. God- or spirit-centred universe	Human-centred universe
3. Group identity (kinship) of self	Individualism
4. Past orientation	Future orientation
5. Cyclical time	Linear time
6. Relationship valued	Material valued
7. Age respected	Youth desired
8. Cooperation good	Competition good

Fig 3.2 Worldview contrast

Before I conclude this section, I would like to mention one more thing. The Hebrews who wrote the Scriptures had similar worldview paradigms as Africans or Kikuyus. Therefore, when Kikuyus heard the gospel and converted to Christianity, their worldview assumptions might not have changed greatly but remained the same. However, the western missionaries might have misunderstood that their conversion was total when actually their traditional

worldview remained rather intact. Although it is premature to make a conclusion about the worldview of my research participants at this point, I presume that their worldview may have components coming from (1) traditional Kikuyu worldview assumptions, (2) western cultural assumptions, (3) and biblical normative paradigms.

3.4.2 Worldview change

Worldview lies at the centre of a culture, and consists of paradigmatic assumptions, valuations, and allegiances that underlie the culture. It provides people with patterns for willing, reasoning, and structuring motivations and predispositions. However, when a people are pressured, their worldviews change. According to Kraft (1996:65, 435), solid culture change is a matter of changes in the worldview of a culture. When a people face a crisis because of some radical challenges to their steady state, they develop new ways of coping with the new circumstances—resulting in new assumptions, valuations, and allegiances. When basic worldview assumptions change, it sends ripples to the rest of the culture. Conversely, when changes are made in an area of a culture, the relevant worldview assumptions of that area are also affected and tend to change. What is noteworthy is that, although people accept new worldviews, old ones still linger.

Kraft (1996:437-439) argues that there are four patterns of worldview change: submersion, conversion, demoralization, and revitalization. Submersion is that traditional worldview configurations survive, although submerged under a new form, hiding behind the change. It has often occurred in reaction to colonialism. Kikuyu worldview change would fall in this category. Conversion means any conversion of the worldview of a society. In case of conversion, social structures remain pretty much intact, but people's worldview changes. Here conversion means cultural conversion and not conversion to Christianity necessarily, and the cultural conversion typically occurs with "people movement" when an entire society decides to become Christians. What is worth mentioning here is that people bring their social structures with them instead of becoming westernised. It is the most positive and constructive form of worldview changes. It can be compared to heart-transplant. Both

conversion and submersion occur when a people are pressured for worldview change, but, in both cases, the cultural structures and a large portion of worldview remain intact. Demoralization is experienced when ethnic cohesion is so broken and the worldview of a culture so damaged that people lose their will to survive. In this case the people show the attitude of “we are lost.” The psychological effect of this spreads to the entire society and the result is either extinction or revitalization. Extinction occurs when a demoralized people do not regain its cohesion, but if there is a conscious effort of the people to rebuild a more satisfying cultural system, revitalization can occur. It is a response to pressures from within to revive a society. Most revitalization movements reformulate people’s way of life around a religious idea.

3.4.3 Retention and modification of Kikuyu traditional worldview

The traditional Kikuyu worldview assumptions presented in figure 3.2 are as follows: (1) holistic perception of reality; (2) God- or spirit-centred universe; (3) group identity (kinship) of self; (4) past orientation; (5) cyclical time; (6) relationship valued; (7) age respected; (8) cooperation good.

Among the eight categories of worldview above, the worldviews that my research participants confirmed they have are holistic perception of reality and God-centred or spirit-centred universe. These two worldview assumptions seem to be more foundational and fundamental than other assumptions since they have remained intact through generations than other assumptions. For example, one of my research participants shared with me what was happening at his farm. He had two cows, and one night they were stolen. Some time later a group of robbers broke in to his farm again and stole some household items. His initial understanding of the incidents was that he was being “attacked” and asked for prayer. Although he found out later that the incidents were caused by someone who wanted him to leave his farm because of some land dispute, my research participant interpreted it, first of all, as spiritual harassment. However, this God-centred or spirit-centred universe couldn’t help being changed as well. Another research participant shared with me that it was both God and medicine that would heal her when she got sick. Traditionally, it was the medicine man, and whatever herb he used, it brought

healing to the sick. Now due to education, medical knowledge, and Christian faith, people believe in the efficacy of medicine and also the power of God. It is still God-centred universe but with modification due to western civilization and the introduction of Christianity.

The categories of worldview that underwent some changes are those of social values: the group identity of self, value of relationship, respect of old age, and the value of cooperation. All of my research participants have shifted more towards the western worldview paradigm, but they are not completely changed. Although they still value group identity strongly, they came to embrace individualism too—in Kikuyu culture individuals were not ignored traditionally anyway (Kibicho 1972:39). Human relationship and material value share equal importance now. Age is still respected, but only when it comes with responsibility. This was true in the past, and now the young are regarded as important as the old. Cooperation is still important, but positive competition is encouraged. These social values are all interrelated. For example, since individualism crept in to their society and individuals are not cared for by the group anymore, they have to fend for themselves by accumulating wealth. Traditionally, individuals would have been cared for by the group. Since the value of group identity has shifted to individualism somewhat, competition is also accepted. Despite all these social changes, the research participants have retained the virtues of generosity, hospitality, and respect for people. These values are all about relationship, and are still strong in them testifying that the research participants are still Kikuyus—the identity that cannot be denied.

Most changes occurred in the area of time. My research participants showed both future and linear time orientation, and they are also conscious of quantity of time. It seems that this area reflects more western influence than other worldview areas. To modern Kikuyus, time is not just an event anymore, but something that is calculated. Particularly, city-dwellers are most conscious of time. Nevertheless, the old paradigm still lingers even with the changes. It is true that they have moved to modern time consciousness, but they still show flexibility. Once when I was conducting an interview with one of my research

participants at his church office, one of his lay leaders came by. She had made an appointment with him at that time. I became a little bit anxious, but my research participant did not mind and continued to spend another hour with me while she was waiting outside his office! In regards to the orientation of time, there is one Kikuyu social custom which is still observed. The naming practice shows the Kikuyus are not completely out of the cyclical time-orientation. Children are still named after their grandparents. This is a reminder of cyclical time orientation; the older generation still survives through their grandchildren. Life continues. The past is not completely forgotten.

Worldview assumptions are tenacious and resist changes, as Kraft (1996:436) argues. He says:

Even radical paradigm shifts, such as accompany...the introduction of Christianity into previously unevangelized societies, permit a large measure of continuity with antecedent worldview assumptions and the strategies built on them....[M]any features of the old will continue on, often in modified form, into the new.

As explained above, all basic worldview assumptions still exist in the minds of Kikuyus either intact or modified. This means the retention of Kikuyu social structures in some degree and the preservation of religious orientation of the universe with Christian adaptation. Modified time orientation reveals that Kikuyu's outlook of life has become progressive and futuristic due to the introduction of western education and Christianity.

Most retained	Somewhat changed	Most changed
Holistic perception of reality, God centred universe	Social values: the group identity of self, value of relationship, respect of old age, and the value of cooperation	Time orientation

Fig 3.3 Kikuyu worldview change

In the case of Kikuyu worldview changes, they may fall somewhere in between submersion and conversion according to Kraft's (1996:437-439) worldview change patterns. It is called submersion when traditional worldview

configurations survive under a new form. This means that old forms have been replaced with the new, but the underlying assumptions are the same. It is called conversion when worldviews change with social structures pretty much intact. This means that surface forms are the same, but that deep assumptions have changed. In the case of the Kikuyus, their social structures have changed, and their worldview assumptions have been modified too. These changes and modifications are due to colonization, westernisation, and Christianisation, which happened all at the same time. The impact of these forces on the African continent including the Kikuyu tribe was irreversible and colossal. The introduction of these new forces will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

3.5 KIKUYU RELIGION

Kraft's cultural model (Figure 3.1) puts worldview at the core of culture, and the worldview is surrounded by different categories of culture called subsystems. The worldview affects each subsystem which also affects the worldview. Among the elements of the subsystem, each category affects each other since the whole thing is integrated as a whole. I will begin this section with the brief presentation of the origin of the Kikuyu tribe followed by the discussion of religious subsystem.

3.5.1 Kikuyu tribal origin

The Kikuyu people are an amalgam of different groups, a genetic and cultural product of a gradual process of intermingling over an extended period of time. The language, ritual practices, and observances reveal the fusion and assimilation of different cultures that the emerging Kikuyu encountered. The consolidation of the Kikuyu as a distinct people was also symbolized by the legend of Kikuyu (Gikuyu) and Mumbi (Fedders and Salvadori 1979:117-118).

The Kikuyu tribal legend says that, in the beginning, a man named Kikuyu, the founder of the tribe, was called by *Ngai*, the Lord of the Nature, and was given the land with ravines, rivers, forests, game, and all the gifts that the Lord of the Nature made. *Ngai* then took Kikuyu to the top of a big mountain called *Kere-nyaga*, Mount Kenya, and showed him all the beautiful country he had

given him. He then gave Kikuyu a beautiful wife, whom he named Mumbi. They lived happily, and had nine daughters but no sons. Kikuyu told Ngai about the situation, and he told Kikuyu to sacrifice one lamb and one kid under a big fig tree. Later, when he went back to the sacred fig tree, Kikuyu found nine handsome young men, who agreed to marry his nine daughters under a matriarchal system. Thus started the following nine clans of the Kikuyu tribe: (1) Acheera; (2) Agachiko; (3) Airimo; (4) Amboi; (5) Angare; (6) Anjiro; (7) Angoi; (8) Ethaga; (9) Aitherando (Kenyatta 1978: 1-6).

Women continued to be the heads of their families and clans for some generations. They were said to be domineering and ruthless fighters. Polyandry was practiced, and men were put to death for committing adultery. Men were also subjected to humiliation and injustice. Men planned to revolt, and since women were stronger than men in those days, it was decided that the best time to overcome the women was when the majority of them were pregnant, especially their leaders. Their revolt was successful, since women had become relatively paralysed after six months of pregnancy. Men took over the leadership in the community, and became the heads of their families and clans. From then on, the system changed from matriarchal to patriarchal. Polyandry stopped, and polygamy was established. The father became the ruler of the homestead and the owner and custodian of the family property (Kenyatta 1978: 6-9).

3.5.2 Kikuyu traditional religion

What is most noticeable about Kikuyu surface culture is that religion plays a prominent role. "Religion is integrated with the whole of Kikuyu life" (Kenyatta 1978:316). "The Kikuyu were a deeply religious people for whom life without religion was unthinkable" (Leakey 1952:44). Therefore, although it is classified as a category of subsystem by Kraft, religion seems to be a middle stratum between the underlying worldview and the surface subsystem. It looks like the following (compare this with Kraft's model Fig 3.1).

As I discuss the Kikuyu traditional religion, I will be presenting general characteristics of African Traditional Religion (ATR) since they share main

basic tenets, and an understanding of African Traditional Religion is essential to understanding the past on which the present stands.

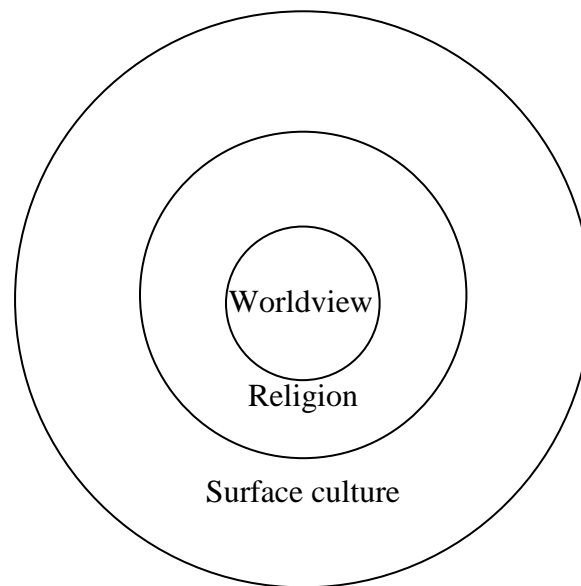


Fig 3.4 Kikuyu culture

3.5.2.1 African Traditional Religion (ATR)

It is almost imperative to mention African Traditional Religion (ATR) since religion permeates all areas of life in Africa. According to Mbiti (2002:1), Africans are “notoriously religious.” Before missionaries brought Christianity to Africa, each tribe had its own religious beliefs and practices, which are collectively called African Traditional Religion. Mbiti (2002:1) further argues:

To ignore these traditional beliefs, attitudes and practices can only lead to a lack of understanding African behavior and problems. Religion is the strongest element in traditional background, and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned.

Whether we consider ATR as singular or plural, in recent times, most African scholars, including Mbiti, who studied African religion as an insider, agree that they are one in essence (Magesa 1998:26). Although their religious expressions may be different from tribe to tribe, the underlying philosophy is one (Mbiti 2002:1). Maquest (1972:16) explains that this unity of sub-Saharan

African culture is due to similar adaptation to the natural environment and the diffusion of cultural traits.

Regarding the basic characteristics of ATR, it is primarily holistic. In ATR there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular. ATR permeates all areas of life (Mbiti 2002:2). “For Africans religion is quite literally life and life is a religion” (Magesa 1998:33). They do not know how to exist without religion, and “religion is in their whole system of being” (Mbiti 2002:2-3). That is why religion is a middle stratum between worldview and cultural subsystems as shown in Fig 3.4 above. Secondly, ATR is communal. It is not for the individual primarily but for the community (Mbiti 2002:2). Sociability, relationship, participation, and sharing are the central moral imperatives of African religion, and the unity of community is the paramount good (Magesa 1998:65-67). The role of a religious leader is also to protect and prolong the life of the family and the community (Magesa 1998:68). Thirdly, ATR is pragmatic or human-centred. According to Mbiti (1967:4), “To live here and now is the most important concern of African religious activities and beliefs.” He further explains:

There is no messianic hope or apocalyptic vision with God stepping in at some future moment to bring about a radical reversal of man’s normal life. God is not pictured in an ethical-spiritual relationship with man. Man’s acts of worship and turning to God are pragmatic and utilitarian rather than spiritual or mystical (Mbiti 2002:5)

Magesa (1998:69) shares the same line of thought, saying:

The primary purpose of acts of worship and reverence is neither God nor the ancestors, but the well-being of the person or community concerned. African religion is human-centered, even overtly utilitarian in the communal rather than the individualistic sense.

The beliefs of ATR can be classified into three basic components: belief in the Supreme Being, the spirit world, and mystical powers (Gehman 1989:9), the order of which I will follow generally for discussion below. Although I will

include general characteristics of ATR in the discussion of Kikuyu traditional religion, my focus is mainly on Kikuyu traditional religion.

One thing I want to point out before proceeding is the apparent discrepancy between the supernatural worldview assumption and the human-centeredness of African Traditional Religion. Although their understanding of the universe is supernatural or God- or spirit-centred, the function of their religion was for the sake of humans. These two aspects co-exist in African Traditional Religion.

3.5.2.2. The concept of God

3.5.2.2.1 The attributes of God

In all societies of Africa, people have a notion of God as the Supreme Being, and this concept has been strongly influenced by the historical, geographical, social, and cultural background or environment. Thus the basic understanding of African God is that he is both transcendent and immanent (Mbiti 2002:29-30). He is a distant Being, and takes little interest in people's daily affairs, and yet, at the crises of their lives, he can be called upon (Kenyatta 1978:234). This notion of God is a reflection of the sociological structure of the African community where chiefs and kings were distant from people—beyond personal fellowship or communication (Gehman 1989:230). "God is in relationship, or even better, in communion, with humanity and the entire world" (Magesa 1998:46). However, "God should only be approached in case of a major problem" (Kirwen 2005:13).

The common name of the Kikuyu God is called *Ngai*. The name signifies that God is the creator and ruler of all things, and he distributes everything to his children everywhere (Kibicho 1972:59). He is also addressed by the Kikuyu as *MweneNyaga* (possessor of brightness). He is associated with *Kere-Nyaga* (Mount Kenya), which means "that which possesses brightness or mountain of brightness." Kikuyus believed that *Kere-Nyaga* (Mount Kenya) was *Ngai's* official resting place (Kenyatta 1978:234). Another name for God, which was used especially in public prayers, is *Githuri* (Great Elder), which emphasises God's wisdom, love, care of his children, and approachableness in confidence

without fear. Still another name that Kikuyus use is *Murungu* that suggests his mystery, power, and otherness. *Murungu* was commonly used in combination with *Ngai* as in *Ngai-Murungu* (Kibicho 1972:58-59). According to Kikuyus, “God lives in heaven and he is everywhere.” “God is great.” “God ultimately prevails” (Kibicho 1972:11). According to Mbiti (1967:34), the Kikuyu believed that God has

*No father nor mother, nor wife nor children;
He is alone.
He is neither a child nor an old man;
He is the same today as He was yesterday.*

Mbiti goes on to explain that “God is self-sufficient, self-supporting and self-containing, just as He is self-originating....He is truly self-dependent, absolutely unchangeable and unchanging” (Mbiti 1967:34).

As we have seen above, the Kikuyu God *Ngai* is both transcendent and immanent. Kibicho (1972:61) summarizes the character of Kikuyu God as follows:

The Kikuyu has a clear conception of God as the creator and sustainer of all things. Although transcendent in all ways, yet he is immanent with and for his children, and they can approach him with confidence and trust. He helps men through the talents he has given them if they are used in the proper way. He is the God of justice and mercy above everything else and demands of all men that they pursue the same for the enhancement of life and the welfare of all his children.

3.5.2.2.2 Worship of God

Kibicho (1972:39), who examined the concept of the Kikuyu God, treated their communication with God in three categories: individual; family; and public in regards to prayer, worship, and sacrifice.

(a) Individual. First of all, it needs to be clarified that Kikuyus emphasize the welfare of family and community more than individuals. However, individuals are not ignored. Actually they are the ultimate objects of concern. In religious matters, it is the same. Although communal approach to God is more

emphasized, individuals can approach God alone in prayers when they feel such need (Kibicho 1972:39). Leakey (1952:40) says that those individual prayers are usually short, and a good Kikuyu adult would say such short prayers daily: “God keep me through this night,” and “God you have kept me through this night.”

(b) Family. In traditional African culture, family means extended family including the living and the dead, and it is the most important worshipping unit in Kikuyu culture. Kikuyus identify four important occasions in life, that is, birth, initiation, marriage, and death. According to Kenyatta (1978:234-235), in all these occasions communication with God is established, and it is done by the family group. “No individual may directly supplicate the Almighty,” and “although the crises are in the life of the individual, he may not make supplication on his own behalf; his whole family group must pledge their interest in his life.” Other events where the family is involved for communication with and supplication to God, besides the four main events mentioned above, are disease in the family or domestic animals, adoption ceremony of a man from a different tribe, and various cleansing and purification ceremonies (Kibicho 1972:45). Again, the following words of Kikuyus describe the importance of family as a basic religious unit.

God lives in the heavens and he does not bother with the work or affairs of one man alone. He looks after the affairs of a whole people or a homestead group. There is no one man's religion or sacrifice.

(Kenyatta 1978:236)

(c) Public. In every region of Kikuyu land there is one big fig tree set aside as a special place of communal worship of and sacrifice to God. Other subsidiary fig trees grow around the main one to form a “sacred grove” (Leakey 1952:40). This one big fig tree symbolizes Mount Kenya and four other minor sacred mountains of Kikuyu. Under these sacred trees Kikuyus worship, pray and make their sacrifices to God. In the Christian sense, it is like the “House of God” (Kenyatta 1978:236).

The following public prayer was offered to God in all public assemblies in the Kikuyu land. An elder leads and the assembly responds.

Elder: *Say ye, the elders may have wisdom and speak with one voice.*

People: *Praise ye Ngai. Peace be with us.*

Elder: *Say ye that the country may have tranquility and the people may continue to increase.*

People: *Praise ye Ngai. Peace be with us.*

Elder: *Say ye that the people and the flocks and the herbs may prosper and be free from illness.*

People: *Praise ye Ngai. Peace be with us.*

Elder: *Say ye the fields may bear much fruit and the land may continue to be fertile.*

People: *Peace be with us.*

(Kenyatta 1978:238-239)

Kenyatta (1978:239-242) goes on to say that no sacrifice was involved in these kinds of prayers. Kikuyus offered sacrifices to God only in such serious matters as drought, outbreak of an epidemic, and great distress as with a serious illness. In such occasions, elders took up the duty of officiating the sacrifices to God. According to Mbiti (2002:59), Kikuyus made sacrifices on great occasions such as at the rites of passage, planting time, before crops ripen, and at the harvest of the first fruits, and, in the case of a severe drought, they even sacrificed a child whom they buried alive in a shrine.⁵

What is noteworthy in Kikuyu traditional religion is that elders were leaders of the community including religious matters and that there was no class called “priests.” Religion is so closely interwoven with traditions, social customs of the people that all the members were considered to have acquired necessary knowledge about their religion and customs (Kenyatta 1978:241).

⁵ There is a verbal tradition that talks about this, *the daughter of Kararu*, which was presented in 3.4.1 under group identity of Kikuyu worldview.

3.5.2.3 Spirit world

3.5.2.3.1 Ancestors and the living-dead

It is impossible to grasp the meaning of the religious foundations of Africa without going through the “thought-area” occupied by the ancestors (Parrinder 1976:57). According to Leakey (1952:41), the worship and placating of the departed ancestral spirits is a major religious concern.

There are two categories of ancestral spirits according to Mbiti (2002:78-85): those whose names and identities have been forgotten, and those who have died recently up to five generations ago. The first category is called just, spirits, and the second, living-dead. He argues that ancestors or ancestral spirits are misleading since there are spirits of children, brothers and sisters, barren wives, and other members of the family who were not necessarily the “ancestors.” Since spirits have sunken into *Zamani* (Swahili meaning past), they have no family or personal ties with human beings, and are no longer living-dead. On the other hand, the living-dead are still in *Sasa* (Swahili meaning now) period, and their process of dying has not been completed yet. It is these living-dead that Africans are most concerned about. Mbiti (2002:83) says the following:

It is through the living-dead that the spirit world becomes personal to men. They are still part of their human families, and people have personal memories of them...The living-dead are still ‘people’, and have not yet become ‘things’, ‘spirits’ or ‘its’. They return to their human families from time to time, and share meals with them, however symbolically....They are the guardians of family affairs, traditions, ethics and activities...Because they are still ‘people’, the living-dead are therefore the best group of intermediaries between men and God.

Research shows African people’s understanding of the role of the living-dead as follows: The living-dead intercede for the living, influence the decisions of the living, apportion blessings and property, and act as a link between the living, the dead, and the spiritual world. They are the guardians and protectors of the living and also cultural guardians. They give solutions to crises in life, and control personal, social, and communal life (Kirwen 1996:39).

Magesa's definition of ancestors is a little bit different. While Mbiti makes a distinction of ancestors in terms of how long ago they passed away, Magesa (1998:51) puts emphasis on ancestorship that is ascribed to the founders of the clan who "originated the lineage, clan or ethnic group and who provided the people with their name(s)". The dead of the tribe following the order of primogeniture are also included. The ancestors maintain the norms of social action as authority figures and cause trouble when these are not obeyed (Kuukure 1985:67). They are present and continue to influence earthly life, although they can be scolded if there are evidences of jealousy or unjust behaviours on their part. When the living feel that the ancestors are behaving unjustly, they say to them in a ritualistic way, "Why are you doing this to us? What have we done? What have we not given you that was our duty to give?" (Magesa 1998:52-53).

Whether it is the living-dead or ancestors, the dominant viewpoint of ATR toward them is fear and interdependence (Gehman 1989:136, 140). Mbiti's (2002:84) remark also conveys this ambient attitude of Africans towards their ancestors

"The food and libation given to the living-dead are paradoxically acts of hospitality and welcome, yet of informing the living-dead to move away. The living-dead are wanted and yet not wanted.

3.5.2.3.2 Other spirits

Besides ancestors, there are other spirits in the African spiritual world. First, there are human spirits or ghosts (Magesa 1998:56), termed "ghost-spirits by Idowu (1973:175)." The human spirits are the spirits of children who died without proper initiation or without children of their own, or people who did not receive a proper burial upon death. Other human spirits include those who died an unhappy death by hanging, drowning, being struck by lightning, or in pregnancy, or those who were accursed while living. These ghost-spirits were not accepted to ancestorship but wander aimlessly in the forests, mountains, and rivers—molesting and harming people. Secondly, there are non-human

created spirits that inhabit the woods, forest, rivers, rocks, and mountains. They can also inhabit animals and birds. (Idowu 1973:174-175)

Regarding the omnipresence of spirits in African religion, Idowu (1973:174) says, spirits are “ubiquitous; there is no area of the earth, no object or creature, which has not a spirit of its own or which cannot be inhabited by a spirit”.

3.5.2.3.3 Kikuyu communion with ancestors

Kenyatta (1978:231-268) argues that while Kikuyus worshiped God *Ngai*, they did not worship ancestors on the same plane. Rather, they had communion with ancestors. Although the Kikuyu word *Kuruta magongona*, “sacred offerings” was applied to both God and ancestors, they worshiped God (*guthaithaya Ngai*) but had communion with ancestors (*guitangera ngoma njohi*—to pour out or to sprinkle beer for spirits), which was carried out constantly through ceremonies. These ceremonies brought back the memory and glory of an ancestor and pleased ancestral spirits to whom the same honour and courtesy were due as to living members of the community.

There are three main groups of ancestral spirits: (1) the spirits of the father and mother, which communicates directly with the living children with advice or reproach the same way they did during their lifetime; (2) clan spirits, which act collectively for the welfare and prosperity of the clan according to the behaviour of the clan or its members; (3) age-group spirits, also known as tribal spirits, which have interests in particular age-groups and enter into tribal affairs (Kenya 1978:266-267).

While Kenya claims that Kikuyus do not worship ancestors but have communion with them, Idowu (1973:182) argues that human psychology makes it difficult to distinguish between ancestor worship and veneration [respect mingled with awe] of them because of the delicate emotional make-up of the human mind. Emotional pressure or spiritual climate at the moment could easily lead a person to give undue homage to ancestors.

3.5.2.4 Specialists and mystical powers

3.5.2.4.1 Specialists

Specialists are those who connect the physical world to the spiritual world. They are the symbols of African religious universe. Without them, African religious phenomena lose meaning. In other words, African religiosity requires their presence, and appreciates their functions. Although their functions may overlap, there are several specialists that are recognised.

(a) Medicine men. In African societies there are religious specialists called medicine men. The medicine men are also called herbalists, traditional doctors, or *waganga* in Kiswahili, and they are the most useful religious person. They are also wrongly called witch doctors. They go through formal or informal training to prepare to serve as medicine men. The main duty of the medicine man is to deal with sickness, disease, and misfortune religiously, psychologically, and physically. Since African people view suffering, misfortune, disease, and accident as being caused mystically, it requires a religious approach to deal with those issues. Psychological help is as vital to comforting the people as physical help (Mbiti 2002:166-169). Mbiti (2002:170) further clarifies the people's dependence on medicine men, which Kraft (1996:453) calls *dual allegiance* in the case of a Christian.

Modern hospitals may deal with the physical side of diseases, but there is the religious dimension of suffering which they do not handle, and for that purpose a great number of patients will resort to both hospitals and medicine-men, without a feeling of contradiction, although if they are Christian or 'educated' they might only go secretly to the medicine-man or follow his treatment.

Another important duty of the medicine man is that they take preventive measures against magic, witchcraft, sorcery, "evil-eye," or bad words. Having access to the force of nature and other forms of knowledge unknown or little known to the public, medicine men purge witches, detect sorcery, remove curses, and control the spirits and the living-dead. Essentially, as pastors, psychiatrists, and doctors of traditional African communities, they are the hope of society and are likely to continue exerting their influence since people's

belief in the practice of medicine-men goes deep in their belief system (Mbiti 2002:170-171).

(b) Mediums and diviners. The main duty of mediums is to link humans with the living-dead and the spirits. They function as mediums only when they are “possessed” by a spirit. Otherwise, they are normal people without special abilities. Diviners are chiefly concerned with acts of divination interpreting the message and instruction received from spirits or divinities through mediums or acts of divination. Thus diviners function as intermediaries between the human and spiritual world for the benefit of the community (Mbiti 2002:171-178). Diviners provide the reasons and causes of suffering, illness, anger, discord, floods, drought, poverty, barrenness, impotence, and all kinds of loss and death. They provide not only this deep knowledge but also power to eliminate or neutralize them. However, in many African societies, although diviners are publicly known, they are not distinguished from the rest of society except during actual performance. (Magesa 1998:215).

(c) Priests. Priests are religious servants performing their duties in temples, shrines, sacred groves, or elsewhere. Although there is an overlap, diviners are mainly called to restore the disturbed relations with supernatural powers through spells and material objects, but priests are generally expected to influence gods through prayers and rituals (Von Furer-Haimendorf 1997:87-88). However, the priest may also function as a medium and contact the spiritual world. While the duties of priest are mainly religious—Africans do not separate religion from other areas of life—they also serve as political heads, judges, and ritual experts in some contexts. It is often the priests who officiate at sacrifices, offerings, and ceremonies. In Kikuyu, they are called *muthingiri*. On a national level the priest is a chief intermediary between God and humans. In each community elders function as priests, and in a household the head of family functions as a ritual leader in making family offerings, libation, and prayers (Mbiti 2002:188-189).

(d) Rainmakers. Rainmakers are some of the most important individuals in most African societies, especially where rain is sparse. Although both people

and rainmakers know that only God can “make” rain, rainmakers study the sky and the signs of weather and intercede for people. In rainmaking rituals, rainmakers make sacrifices, offerings, and prayers to God directly or through the living dead or other spiritual agents. They also use magical chants and materials (Mbiti 2002:179-181; Gehman 1989:77).

All these specialists—medicine-men, mediums, diviners, priests, and rainmakers—are mediators between God and men in traditional African religion.

3.5.2.4.2 Mystical powers

Traditional Africans have a belief in mystical power. To them it is not fiction, but a reality that they have to deal with in every life. This mystical power is particularly manifested as magic, sorcery, and witchcraft.

(a) Good magic, also known as “white magic.” Good magic is beneficial to society. It is used in treating diseases, counteracting misfortunes, and warding off or destroying evil power or witchcraft by medicine-men, diviners, and rainmakers. The diviner or the medicine-man uses charms, amulets, powder, rags, feathers, figures, special incantations, or cuttings on the body for the protection of homesteads, families, fields, cattle, and other property as well as for bringing health, fortune, or prosperity. For Africans, spiritual power functions through physical means, and both the physical and the spiritual world are one universe (Mbiti 2002:198-199). Mbiti (2002:199) goes on further to say,

These objects represent and symbolize power which comes from God. This power may directly be supplied by God, or it may be through the spirits, the living-dead or as part of the invisible force of nature in the universe. At this point religion and the magic merge, and there is no clear way of separating them, any more than magic has been separated from Christianity or Islam at certain points.... The older a person is, and the higher his social status is, the more he is thought or expected to have this mystical power, either in himself or through the possession of the necessary objects in which it may be stored

(b) Evil magic, also called “black magic” or sorcery. It involves using mystical power to harm humans and their property. In this magical practice, mystical power is used maliciously against the welfare of society. Therefore, sorcerers are the most feared and hated people in the community, along with witches, since African people feel and believe that they use mystical power to cause illnesses, misfortune, accidents, tragedies, sorrows, and dangers. To counteract the evil use of mystical force, people turn to medicine-men and diviners to supply them with objects of protection and cure, and to perform cleansing rituals of people and homestead (Mbiti 2002:199-201; Gehman 1989:69-72). Although this is not scientifically explained, for majority of Africans, this mystical experience of deeply religious nature is a reality.

(c) Witchcraft. Witchcraft is the most popular term used to describe all kinds of evil use of mystical power in a secret way. It is an integral part of traditional African belief systems along with sorcery and magic (Lehmann and Myers 1997:189). While sorcery is a skill to be learned, witchcraft is an inherent power residing in witches. According to anthropologists, African society does not make such academic distinctions between witchcraft, sorcery, evil magic, evil eye, and other ways of employing mystical power to harm people and their properties (Mbiti 2002:202). The Kiswahili term for witchcraft *uchawi* includes a wide variety of such practices that involves harmful employment of mystical power in all its different manifestations. While Mbiti (2002:202) argues that “African peoples believe there are individuals who have access to mystical power which they employ for destructive purposes,” according to Magesa (1998:167), “the power of witchcraft is not a prerogative of only certain individuals,” but “every human being is potentially witch.” Regarding witchcraft and sorcery, Magesa (1998:175) explains:

Witchcraft is not only a symptom of the diminishment of the power of life (as wrongdoing and illness may be perceived to be), it is also seen to be the very embodiment of evil in the world...In a very particular way, then, it is essential that witches and witchcraft be detected and dealt with if life in the community is to continue and flourish.

The ubiquitous presence of mystical power, permeating all areas of life and being manifested through magic, sorcery, and witchcraft, reveals the religious understanding of African people of the universe. It is part of the religious corpus of beliefs. This understanding permeates all dimensions of their life such as social, political, psychological, and economic (Mbiti 2002:203).

(d) Prayers, sacrifices, and offerings. Mystical powers, whatever they are, can be also implored through prayers, sacrifices, and offerings, which are prominent features of African Traditional Religion. Prayer emphasizes dependence on God and ancestors. Apart from individual prayers, all the other prayers accompany rituals, that is, sacrifice or offering. Sacrifices are usually bloody, whereas offerings are bloodless. Through sacrifices and offerings, unity and balance are restored to human life (Magesa 1998:177-208). Magesa (1998:211) further states the importance of rituals, “In this sense, rituals are symbolic re-enactments of the primordial relationship between human life and the mystical sources of life.”

3.5.2.4.3 Kikuyu practice

In Kikuyu land there is a magician “who has acquired the profession hereditarily and has gone through long years of training, at the end of which he has been initiated into the cult through payment of some sheep and goats or a cow...” (Kenyatta 1978:281). This magician is called the “medicine man” or *mundu mugo* in the Kikuyu language (Leakey 1953:47). Leakey (1953:47) defines the role of the medicine man:

His role in tribal organization was a composite one; he was the doctor who diagnosed and treated diseases and ailments, sometimes by herbal remedies, sometimes by magic rites and purification ceremonies and sometimes by a combination of both. He was also the seer who was consulted as to whether the occasion was propitious for marriage, for a long journey, or for the holding of an initiation ceremony, and he was the person whose help was sought against the workers in black magic or witchcraft who tried to destroy people and property and who were known as *murogi*.

Although medicine men were not given any special rights otherwise, they were accorded with honour and opportunities to officiate in important religious ceremonies because of their wisdom and outstanding abilities. They were specialists in such areas as herbs, diagnosis of illnesses due to spiritual causes, or protective magic. Kikuyus' belief in the power of the medicine man was so absolute that if there was a failure on the part of a medicine man, it was not his fault but some superior force which was at work against his magic (Leakey 1953:47-49).

While the medicine man worked in broad daylight openly, the worker in black magic or witchcraft, the *murogi*, worked usually by night secretly. He prepares evil charms for the victim and hides them in or near the victim's abode, or uses something that belongs to the victim to cast an evil spell over them causing fear in the victim. Besides white (good) or black (evil) magic, there is also an implicit belief that harmful magic may emanate from ordinary people such as "evil eye" (Leakey 1953:49-51). According to Maloney (1976:v-viii), evil eye means "someone can project harm by looking at another's property or person." It is a belief that power emanates from the eye or mouth and strikes an object or person, and the destruction or injury is sudden. Envy is considered a factor.

Anthropologists who study African culture and religion normally do not differentiate religion and magic since these two overlap and the distinction is thin. Kikuyus are not an exception either. According to Kenyatta (1978:280), Kikuyus do not separate magic from religion especially when they deal with good magic. Leakey (1953:47) comments in the same way as follows: "It is not easy to draw a dividing line between religion and magic in Kikuyu society, nor between white magic which is beneficial and black magic or witchcraft which is anti-social."

In his book *Facing Mount Kenya*, Kenyatta (1978:280-181) enumerates eleven different Kikuyu magical practices: (1) charms or protective magic—the majority of Kikuyus carry a charm against a particular danger he wants to be protected from; (2) hate or despising magic—used to destroy friendship

between individuals or between a group of people; (3) love magic—intended to seek the love of one or many; (4) defensive magic—used in court cases or other disputes with hypnotic power; (5) destructive magic, witchcraft—an anti-social practice; (6) healing magic—through connection with supernatural power or ancestral spirits, psychological influence; (7) enticing and attracting magic; (8) silencing and surprising magic; (9) fertilizing magic; (10) wealth and agricultural magic; (11) purifying magic. As seen above, Kikuyus used magic for many different purposes, and their practice was based on the fear of the absolute power of magic.

3.5.2.5 African morality

Morality depends on religion. While religious beliefs are internal factors, morality deals with conducts (Mbiti 1991:174). In African traditional societies, morals are God-given (Mwikamba 2003:87) and preserved in customs, regulations, taboos, proverbs, myths, signs, and symbols (Ansah 1989:241). Morals guide people in doing what is right and good for their own sake and for their community. It is morals, customs, laws, and traditions that keep society harmonious and keep it from disintegration. Among these the main pillar is morals. Something that does not feel right will not readily become a custom or law (Mbiti 1991:177). Regarding the centrality of morals in human society, Mbiti (1991:179) says, “African religious beliefs, values, rituals and practices are directed towards strengthening the moral life of each society. Morals are the food and drink which keep society alive, healthy and happy.”

Kinoti (2003:76-78), who studied Kikuyu traditional morality, argues that the role of morality is to keep the fundamental unity among the different realms of the African cosmos, that is, supernatural and spiritual realities, the human society, animals, and plants and all other realities. For example, the totemic relationship of animals and plants with the human kinship system restrained the African society from plundering nature indiscriminately. Taboos exist to keep the moral structure of the universe for the good of humanity

In traditional African thought, if man and nature are intertwined as above, human beings belonged to each other more. Louis Leakey (quoted by Kinoti

2003:78), who lived and studied the Kikuyu in the mid-1930s, explains the perception of human relationships in the Kikuyu society:

A man and his sisters and half-sisters were really one and the same person except that they differed in sex...a woman was part of her husband, being merely a female part of him. Therefore, fundamentally, a person's mother and mother's brothers were one person, her brothers being male mothers to her children.

This realisation of relationship between the individual and the community is the central moral and ethical imperative of African Traditional Religion. Thus participation and sharing are essential principles for human existence in African Religion (Magesa 1998:65-67). Speaking about this communal aspect of African traditional morality, Mbon (1991:102) says, "In African traditional society, one person's 'sin' could have serious socio-economic consequences for the entire society." Individual members of the society, therefore, did not go about behaving as if it was only they who lived in the community. They had to be careful not to do anything that would bring suffering to other members of the society (Mbon 1991:105). Evil is that which conflicts with the interests of the community (Gehman 254). Sin is an offence against one's neighbour and punishable here and now (Adeyemo 1979:70). From this perspective, it is understood why witchcraft is viewed as the greatest wrong by virtue of its antisocial connotation. It is the ultimate enemy of life on earth (Magesa 1998:69).

Another important aspect of African morality is its religious basis. Kinoti (2003:79) says, "Traditionally African peoples have held a strong belief that spiritual powers are deeply concerned about the moral conduct of individuals and communities alike." God is thought to be the ultimate guardian of human morality. God gave humans laws and rules, and humans were accountable not only to the society but also to supernatural powers, who were believed to intervene when natural order or justice were violated (Kinoti 2003:79-80). However, it is not God but the patriarchs, ancestors, elders, priests, even spirits who are the guardians of human morality on a daily basis (Mbiti 2002:213). More precisely, "the principal moral actors are the living; by their

behavior they determine what is to befall them and the universe” (Magesa 1998:67).

There is still another element that is noteworthy in African morality. In the African moral system, man is not innately good or bad, but judged in terms of what he does or does not do (Mbiti 2002:214). This behaviour-oriented African morality is not only passive restraining of evil behaviours but active pursuing of righteous actions (Magessa 2002:155). Thus African morality actively seeks such virtues as honesty, reliability, sharing, participation, generosity, temperance, humility, and justice. African morality is socio-religious involving the whole spectrum of social, economic, and political life, and spiritual entities in purely utilitarian and anthropocentric senses in order to maintain balance and harmony in the universe.

3.5.2.6 Spirituality of Kikuyu traditional religion

Kikuyu Traditional Religion is not much different from general African Traditional Religion. They share common beliefs and expressions. The spirituality informed and practiced by Kikuyu Traditional Religion is as follows:

3.5.2.6.1 The intrinsically spiritual world.

To the Kikuyu, God (*Ngai*) is both transcendent and immanent (Mbiti 2002:29-30). God lives in heaven and he is everywhere (Kibicho 1972:11). He is the creator and sustainer of all things and is the God of justice and mercy (Kibicho 1972:61). He is worshiped primarily by the family, the most important worshiping unit, which includes the living and the dead. Traditionally, Kikuyus offered sacrifices to God on such serious occasions as drought, outbreak of an epidemic, and in times of great distress as with a serious illness (Kenyatta 1978:239-242). They also prayed to *Ngai*. However, it was ancestors who were more involved in people’s daily lives. Their attitude towards ancestors was both fear and interdependence (Geman 1989:136, 140). Although Kenyatta (1978:231-268) claims the Kikuyu did not worship ancestors but had communion with them, Idowu (1973:182) argues that the spiritual climate at the time could easily lead a person to worship ancestors.

Kikuyus also believed in spiritual/mystical power so they depended on various religious rituals and magic to achieve different purposes. They did not differentiate religion from magic especially good magic (Kenyatta 1978:280). They were one and the same to them. They had a medicine man called *mundu mugo*, who was a doctor and a seer, and their belief in the medicine man was supreme (Leakey 1953:47-49). In African Traditional Religion, spirits were ubiquitous (Idowu 1973:174) and the world in which the traditional Kikuyu lived was a spiritual world.

As far as my research participants are concerned, none of them had a formal relationship with African Traditional Religion. None of them participated in Kikuyu traditional rituals, they said. Since they had an early Christian background, they were separated from traditional religion—missionaries condemned African culture and religion. Although it must have been unavoidable for them to be influenced by Kikuyu traditional culture in which religion played a central role, their early affiliation with Christianity through one of the mainline denominations—other than African Independent Church—gave them a solid Christian foundation. Nonetheless, the elements of African (Kikuyu) Traditional Religion’s legacy stay with my research participants in their attitudes and perspectives.

As the most fundamental human assumptions the worldview affects religion and vice versa. Traditionally, their worldview was God-centred or spirit-centred as seen in the worldview section, and this worldview is still maintained despite all the changes the Kikuyu went through after colonisation. My research participants do not believe in spirits under every spreading tree or rock. They do not believe that ancestors can bring misfortune upon them. The configuration of their spiritual world is not traditional religion but Christianity as seen in the definition of spirituality by research participants (2.3). They believe in evil spirits who can attack them and they pray to the God of the Bible for protection. They do not pray to *Ngai* (Kikuyu God) who resides on top of Mt. Kenya. When asked, one research participant replied that Mt Kenya is a tourist attraction or source of life that provides water, timber, fresh air, etc. There was no sacred meaning attached to Mt Kenya. Again when asked, all of

the research participants said cautiously that Yahweh of the Bible is the same as *Ngai* of the Kikuyu. They did not answer my question immediately but hesitated and pondered for a while. Although the character of the Kikuyu God *Ngai* is not identical with Yahweh of the Bible, my research participants said they had similar characters.

Regarding medicine men, my research participants reported that they never visited one. One of my research participants said that whenever she or her family member became sick, her mother prayed for them. But they are aware of medicine men. Another research participant observed that in the city they have businesses as herbalists. None of my research participants were exposed to Kikuyu traditional rituals or sacrifices while growing up. They had Christian (four research participants) or non-Christian parents (one research participant) who prohibited or protected them from traditional Kikuyu practices such as rituals or sacrifices. One research participant said that her father did not allow her to participate or even watch any harmful Kikuyu cultural (also religious) practices such as beer drinking, Kikuyu cultural dances, traditional cleansing ceremonies, and protective measures (charms).

The African Traditional Religion's influence on the spirituality of my research participants as described above seems restricted in the case of concrete traditional practices. However, they continue to use the term *Ngai* for the God of the Bible, and as seen in the worldview analysis and here, their outlook is still positively spiritual with a modified configuration of its components.

3.5.2.6.2 Communal spirituality

African spirituality, including the Kikuyu, is fundamentally communal spirituality. Religion is not for the individual but for the community (Mbiti 2002:2). Sociability, relationship, participation, and sharing are the central imperatives of African Traditional Religion, and the unity of community is the paramount good (Magesa 1998:65-67). Although individuals prayed a short prayer to God, communal approach to God was more emphasised (Kibicho 1972:39). When approaching God, no individual Kikuyu was to supplicate the Almighty, but his whole extended family must pledge their interest in his affair

(Kenyatta 1978:234-235). Since the community's interest was placed before that of the individual, a person had to be careful not to make other members of the community suffer (Mbon 1991:105). As for the leading of religious matters, elders of the community played the role of religious leaders, and there was no separate class called "priests" among the Kikuyu (Kenyatta 1978:241).

In the case of my research participants, communal spirituality continues in the areas of worldview. The dominant worldview of the Kikuyu is still group identity over individual interest. However, this is not absolute any longer, but relative due to the changes that have occurred. In regards to communal religious practices such as sacrifices and rituals, these are not found in the lives of my research participants since they were never exposed to them. An example of communal spirituality of the Kikuyu Traditional Religion is the circumcision ceremony that has significant religious and social implications. In the case of male circumcision, my research participants all went through it individually at the hospital without a ritual. There was no religious or social meaning (age-grades) attached to the circumcision. For the research participants, circumcision meant just an identity as a Kikuyu.

3.5.2.6.3 Pragmatic spirituality

To live here and now is the most important concern of African Traditional Religion (Mbiti 1967:4). The primary purpose of worship and reverence is neither God nor ancestors, but the well-being of the person or community concerned. Therefore, African religion is human-centred and explicitly utilitarian (Magesa 1998:69). Sin as an offence committed against neighbours is punishable here and now (Adeyemo 1979:70). Man is neither good nor bad by nature, but judged by what he does or does not do (Mbiti 2002:214). Seeking such social virtues as generosity, humility, and justice, the morality of African Traditional Religion entails socio-economic-political-spiritual dimensions of life, and it is purely utilitarian and anthropocentric for the sake of balance and harmony in the universe. To the Kikuyu the idea of religion was useful for serving the needs of the community, material prosperity, and protection from harm.

As seen in the definition of spirituality offered by research participants (2.3), their spiritual outlook is not utilitarian. They have a deep love for God and want to serve him. Their outlook seems theocentric rather than anthropocentric. If anything, the social virtues of the Kikuyu Traditional Religion such as hospitality, generosity, and humility are found in them.

3.5.2.6.4 Summary

I wanted to find some evidences of African Traditional Religion in the research participants, but as seen above traces have been found only in attitudes and perspective. As Gehman (1989:259) claims, the virtues and values of the traditional culture and religion formed the bedrock of Christianity in Africa, and remained as such. Since all my research participants are living in Kikuyu culture albeit modified, they cannot escape the general influence of African or Kikuyu cultural milieu. Hiebert's (1985:189) statement makes sense, "All Christians live with two traditions, cultural and Christian." With that notion I would like to turn to the next section of the description of the context, the influx of Christianity and its subsequent development in Kenya and their influence on the spirituality of the research participants.

Certainly, I do not endorse African Traditional Religion, but as I conclude this section of African Traditional Religion, I cannot resist the temptation to quote an early evangelical missionary's statement about African Traditional Religion.

No matter how strange this may sound, I have frequently found God in the soul of the African Bantu [Kikuyu is Bantu]. Certainly, it is not the full revelation of the Father. But nevertheless, God Himself is the One who lies hidden behind a curtain as a shadowy figure, but the main outline is visible. A surprising and glorious experience! And when I experienced the moment that a soul surrenders, I understand the Master had been there earlier.

(Barvinck 1948:227)

Spirituality of Kikuyu Traditional Religion	Research Participants
Intrinsically spiritual world	Still spiritual world with modified configuration
Communal spirituality	Relatively communal
Pragmatic spirituality	God-centred

Fig 3.5 Kikuyu Traditional Religion and research participants

The attention now needs to be turned to the influx of Christianity to Kenya in general and the Kikuyu in particular. As seen in the previous section and also in the narratives in chapter two, Kikuyu traditional religion did not play a major role in forming the spirituality of my research participants. Rather, their spirituality was heavily influenced by mission Christianity, the affiliation with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the East African Revival Movement, and the recent Charismatic movement. Thus follows the discussion of these religious topics as crucial elements of their spirituality.

3.5.3 Influx of Christianity: powerful invasion

3.5.3.1 Early Catholic (1498-1889) and Protestant (1844-1890) missions

Early Catholic missions started in 1498 with the arrival of several Roman Catholic missionaries to the Kenyan coast. They travelled with Vasco da Gama the Portuguese explorer. Subsequent attempts by the Catholics left some converts on the coast, but by the time Protestant missions began in the late 19th century, there were only a handful of Catholics left. Except for Fort Jesus and some remnant church buildings erected by the Portuguese, there remain no significant traces of the earlier Christian period (Barrett et al 1973:29-30).

The modern Protestant mission to Kenya began with a German Lutheran preacher named Johann Ludwig Krapf in 1844. He was employed by the Church Missionary Society of London and landed at Mombasa, and hence the modern era of Christianity in East Africa began (Barrett et al 1973:30). The main source of this missionary movement in Britain was the Evangelical Revival which had resulted from the work of John and Charles Wesley and

George Whitefield in the eighteenth century. Their work challenged the churches to reach out to the people of the world who had never heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Although the mainstream churches were reluctant to accept the challenge, those who accepted the challenge formed missionary societies within their membership, and the Church Missionary Society was one of those missionary societies (Wilkinson 1994:1).

Krapf's main contribution was the translation of the whole New Testament into Swahili and the compilation of a grammar and Swahili dictionary in two years. In June 1846, he was joined by another Lutheran pastor from Germany, Johan Rebman (Wilkinson 1994:2). Being optimistic, Krapf explored the interior and thought that the mission could flourish there under healthier conditions, but Rebman opposed this plan. Krapf left the Church Missionary Society in 1853, and returned to Europe (Nthamburi 1991:8). Although Krapf left active missionary work in 1853, his influence was still felt broadly in East Africa. He wrote about his experiences in a book, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours in East Africa*, published in 1860. This book impacted the United Methodist Free Churches in England, and he persuaded the Methodists to start a mission in East Africa (Anderson 1977:6). Then Krapf returned to Mombasa in 1862 in order to help Thomas Wakefield, the first missionary of the United Methodists Free Church, to establish a mission station at Ribe (Nthamburi 1991:8-9). The mission among the coastal Mijikenda was considered "as the first link in an equatorial chain of missions which would stretch right across the African continent from east to west" (Wilkinson 1994:3).

Then Sir Bartle Frere, who was a governor of Bombay in India and a convinced evangelical Christian, brought a new vision of missionary work to Kenya. Frere visited Kenya to sign a treaty ending the slave-trade, and recommended that missions should take an active part in opposing slavery and the slave-trade (Barrett 1973:30-31). Frere objected to the merely "evangelical" mission of the Church Missionary Society and Methodists. He wanted more emphasis placed on the civilizing effects of Christianity. "I regard," he wrote, "the spread of Christianity as practically the same thing as

the extinction of both slave-trade and slavery.” Frere did not object to preaching the gospel, but he wanted it in conjunction with “civilizing” (Anderson 1977:9). Within Freretown and other ex-slave communities, Kenya’s first schools were established producing the first African teachers and evangelists, and, in 1885, Kenya witnessed their first ordained ministers. By 1890 there were about 2,000 baptised Anglicans and a few Methodists—Kenya’s first form of organised and enduring Christianity (Barrett 1973:31).

3.5.3.2 The proliferation of Protestant missions (1890-1940)

Although the beginning of the colonial era did not bring a large number of missions to Kenya immediately, it changed the missionary movement in Kenya radically, especially when the new Uganda railway came to Nairobi and reached Lake Victoria in 1901 (Anderson 1977:62; Barrett 1973:33). Missionary societies also tended to follow their national flags for the sake of protection after the Berlin Conference (1885) partitioned African countries to British and German spheres (Barrett 1973:22; Nthamburi 1991:10). One prominent characteristic of the Protestant missions in Kenya was that they were denominational missions. The Methodist represented the Methodist Church in Britain; the Church of Scotland Mission was the official mission of the Church of Scotland; the Church Missionary Society started with the evangelical wing of the Church of England; the Friends Africa Mission was the mission organised by evangelical Friends in the United States; the Church of God began their work in 1905 in western Kenya by missionaries from the United States; the Salvation Army started their work in 1921; the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada also began their ministry in 1921; the Southern Baptists started later in 1956 but spread quickly to many areas due to the large number of their missionaries (Nthamburi 1991:11-13; Anderson 1977:63)

At the same time, a number of independent “faith” missions arrived. The major faith missions are the African Inland Mission, the Gospel Missionary Society (Pentecostal wing of the African Inland Mission) among the Kikuyu, the World Gospel Mission at Kericho, and the Pentecostal Missions (Anderson 1977:63-64).

As for the Catholic Church, the Holy Ghost Fathers reached Mombasa in 1890. By 1899 they established headquarters at St Austin's near Nairobi, which became a centre for industrial training. The Mt Kenya area, however, was assigned to Italian Consolata Fathers. In western Kenya, Mill Hill Fathers came in from Uganda (Anderson 1977:63).

3.5.3.3 Missions to the Kikuyu

The Kikuyus are one of the tribes who received missionaries in the early stage, and central Kenya became one of the areas of missionary expansion. Macpherson (1970:12), the second moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa from 1957-1961, describes the situation of the Kikuyu when missionaries came to their land:

Several centuries of virtually undisturbed occupation of a rich agricultural habitat, a bracing upland climate and the colonising genius of the Bantu-speaking peoples had together provided the conditions for developing a strong and closely integrated social structure, an expanding subsistence economy and a very strongly held sense of tribal identity and mission. These were maintained at every point by powerful religious sanctions, firmly anthropocentric in character. Such were the main characteristics of the Gikuyu way of life at the turn of this century when the completion of the Uganda Railway broke through its protective ring and exposed it for the first time to a head-on confrontation with the western world.

Several missionary societies started their work among the Kikuyu. The Gospel Missionary Society was the earliest group into the region, while the Church of Scotland Mission and Church Missionary Society settled near Nairobi, at Thogoto and Kabete respectively. As was stated earlier, the Holy Ghost Fathers began work at St Austin's and the Consolata Fathers spread to Nyeri, Meru, and into Embu. The Church Missionary Society also spread to Murang'a, Kirinyaga, and Embu as the Church of Scotland made a centre at Tumutumu in Nyeri (Anderson 1977:66-67).

From early on, Protestant missions divided the Kikuyu area into different mission areas with a comity agreement. However, as different missions found

they had similar perspectives and purposes, they decided to organise and establish a united, self-governing, self-supporting, and self-extending native church. They came up with the idea of a “Federation of Missions” with the idea that each mission would be responsible for its own area but fully recognise the Christians from other areas. The federation would be comprised of the Church of Scotland Mission, the Africa Inland Mission, the Gospel Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, and the Methodists. However, doctrinal and ecclesial issues frustrated the creation of the federation, and in 1918 the “Alliance of Protestant Missions” was formed instead. The Alliance sought to start an Alliance Medical Training Centre, an Alliance High School, and Alliance Theological College. It was desirable that the missions should cooperate in the areas of theological training, education, medical work, and general evangelistic outreach (Anderson 1977:72; Nthamburi 1991:22). The prominent Alliance High School (1926) and St Paul’s United Theological College (1954) are the products of this alliance (Barrett 1973:24, 26). However, Anderson (1972:72) points out, “One obvious defect of alliance effort was that in the whole quest for unity in Kenya, at the conference of 1913 and 1918, no single African Christian attended.”

3.5.3.4 Missionary methods

From the beginning, missionaries were involved in many other activities than simply preaching the Gospel. Roman Catholics believed in the mission of the Church as the source of all true civilisations. They saw the “mission of civilisation” as a necessary part of the preaching of the gospel. Presbyterians and Moravians believed, perhaps even more intensely, in creating Christian communities which were economically self-supporting. They tried to instil in their members the spiritual values of skilled and honest labour of the hands (Welbourn 1965:80). Welbourn (1965:79) states with a decisive tone, “The Christian mission must...be directed towards the whole man *in his total environment*.” It is a well-known fact that “Christians made a unique contribution to education and medicine” (Anderson 1977:87), and “both these

fields of public service in the name of Christ, [that is] education and medicine were early mainstays of the Christian Council of Kenya” (Beetham 1973:150).⁶ During the period between 1920 and 1945, there developed a distinctive form of Christianity called *kusoma* (to read) Christianity, in which literacy was considered as the cornerstone. Christians used to say *kusoma* when they went to church rather than *kusali* (to pray). Missionaries helped to shape Christianity in the areas of prayers, forms of worship, translations of the Bible, and introduction of hymns. The *kusoma* Christianity spread through the pattern of school-dispensary-church. The Kikuyu independent churches, when they broke away from the missionary churches, and many other independent churches, used the same pattern of *kusoma* Christianity (Anderson 1977:111).

Except in the relatively small areas of Muslim influence, Christianity became the religion associated with respectability. Boys and girls tended to accept it that accorded them with superior status as literates. Indeed, it became a common practice, even for those who had not been baptized, to adopt a “Christian” name or to seek baptism for no other purpose than to acquire one (Welbourn 1965:89). Although many were persuaded by the goodness of the Christian religion, there were always a few nominal Christians who did not approve or believe in it at heart. For them, it was the “password to learning the arts of reading and writing” (Leakey 1952:59-60).

3.5.3.5 Missionary attitudes towards African culture

The first missionaries came to a society that condoned the slave trade. Even Africans themselves were making good profits out of selling their fellow Africans to the Arabs. The society in which missionaries found themselves was polygamous by conviction; where bride-wealth, commonly known as dowry, determined the stability of marriage; where women’s status was generally low although they were as much valued as men; and women not only looked after their children but also did all the cooking and almost all the cultivation, while men devoted themselves to hunting and to war. A man’s importance was measured by the number of wives he had as well as the

⁶ The Kenya Missionary Council, originally formed in 1924, which comprised all Protestant missions, changed its name to the Christian Council of Kenya in 1943 (Barrett 1973:24-25).

number of cattle he owned. Marriage was not an individual but a family and community matter. Dances were an essential part of their tribal life, but were viewed by missionaries as potentially leading to sexual promiscuity to let out the stress from being bound by rigid social rules. Missionaries found that in some tribes, male circumcision, with all its accompanying pagan rituals, was the only way of entry into adult tribal membership. At the same time, female circumcision, also known as clitoridectomy, was practiced in varying degrees to signify entrance into adulthood (Welbourn 1965:104).

It is not surprising, however, that the missionaries disapproved of what they saw since, according to Welbourn (1965:104),

The first Protestant missionaries had been reared in the strictly puritanical surroundings of nineteenth century English middle-class society....They have tended to identify Christian morality with the accepted behaviour of their particular section of western society. Anything African, which conflicted with that behaviour, was by definition, of the devil.

Mbiti (2002:237), following Welbourn, says, “the Protestant and Roman Catholic forms of Christianity have meant separating Africans from their society and putting them on the side of Europeans—evidenced by taking European names, joining mission Churches, receiving literary education and hoping for promotion in the mission....” Since Christianity came to Africa clothed in the cultural values of missionaries, conflicts with African religion and culture were unavoidable, although the Roman Catholics were probably less disturbed and High Anglicans less rigid than other Christians (Welbourn 1965:106). The negative attitude of the missionaries of the Church of Scotland Mission towards traditional customs was evident when they made little attempt to understand the significance of African customs, let alone preserve it (Macpherson 1970:105).

Macpherson (1970:105) and Wilkinson (1994:65-66) state further that the Kikuyu customs were categorized into three groups: (1) Beliefs and customs regarded as being at variance with Christian principles but not necessarily actively opposed to them, and therefore allowed to die out of their own accord.

These included deference to ancestral spirits, the traditional sacrificial system, and the practice of magic; (2) Customs regarded as incompatible with Christian principles and therefore unacceptable in a practising Christian community, such as polygyny and the sexually motivated dance; (3) Customs regarded as medically or hygienically undesirable and therefore to be actively taught against, such as exposure to the dead and the controversial female circumcision.

Missionaries could accept polygyny before conversion, and did not immediately consider it as a barrier to membership of the Christian community; but reversion to polygyny after conversion led to automatic expulsion. The practice of tribal dances faded out. Traditional circumcision rites in the case of boys decreased as western education gained popularity, and circumcision in hospital was accepted as a substitute for the traditional operation. In the case of the circumcision of girls, however, there was a strong resistance to its elimination (Macpherson 1970:105).

An African theologian, Mugambi, asks rhetorically, “The identification of the Christian missionary enterprise with imperialism was the evidence of its betrayal of the Gospel! How could God who liberates peoples condone imperialism, alienation of land by foreign settlers; and cultural indoctrination to make people hate their own history and culture?”

Missionaries tended to beautify or legitimise what they did to Africans in terms of culture although they claimed that they accepted blame where necessary. Compared to missionaries’ writing, African’s perception is quite different. According to Githii (1992:16-17), the present moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, missionaries totally rejected the Kikuyu religion and their culture, and they thought, “The African customs were a real obstacle to evangelisation.” Githii (1992:17-29) continues:

They [missionaries] thought the “superior” western culture could be used to civilise the “inferior” African cultures. They therefore endeavoured to rescue the depraved African souls from eternal fire by uprooting the African from his culture by

shattering his traditions and trampling on his institutions....Missionaries like Scott and Arthur of the Scottish Presbyterian Church and others of their time believed that Africans could not be redeemed unless evils within their social systems were first destroyed....They did not even take the initiative of trying to understand why the African way of life was the way it was and what the Western way of life could contribute to it. Thus, the missionary told the polygamist to give up all his wives apart from one so that he could become a Christian. Wives and children were to be driven away. This was totally confusing to an African who looked upon motherhood as a religious duty and the children as owned by the clan. Where was the love that the missionary preached to them? How could one love God and one's neighbour and drive away wives and children who had become part of one's life? This made the Africans despise the Gospel, making evangelisation even more difficult

3.5.3.6 Mission church and colonial government

The missionaries who brought Christianity to Kenya were of the same race, and in many instances, of the same nationality as the colonisers. However, missionaries preceded colonialists, and thus were the first Europeans to come into contact with Africans. The missionaries in some instances greatly helped the colonisation process at its initial stage as administrators when there were no government agents. In fact, the missionaries in the nineteenth century believed that European powers were the benefactors of Africa. They did not fully realise what the colonial movement, which they welcomed, would become. Domination by European settlers, forced labour, colour bar, and assault on the African culture were yet to be seen (Nthamburi 1991:27).

For a long time, missionaries represented Africans in the Legislative Council of the colonial government. They also depended on government aid for their schools. Missionaries were considered as the intermediary between the Africans and the government, and consequently enjoyed a position of prestige as well. Given their relatively comfortable position, missionaries were unlikely to speak out on social change (Nthamburi 1991:28). The missions' alliance with the colonial governments overshadowed any conflict of interest with the moral problems of imperialism. Missionary styles of life and work became more colonial as well (Anderson 1977:88). Kibicho (1972:135) says along the

same line, “The fact that the missionaries belonged to the invader-colonising race had an inhibiting effect on their perception and evaluation of African humanity and religion, on the one hand, and of their own Western humanity and religion, on the other.” When the Mau Mau movement erupted, missionaries condemned it vehemently. At the time, most Europeans, including missionaries, were not prepared to admit that the fierce and prolonged struggle of the Kikuyu that led to the Mau Mau Revolt was due to deep embitterment of Kikuyu peasants who were desperately short of land. By attacking the Mau Mau, the church established its position as wanting to maintain the status quo (Nthamburi 1991:28).

Even by 1930, long before the Mau Mau, many Kikuyus considered most missions to be anti-African (Barrett 1973:35). In the 1930s, distrust of Europeans and missionaries had grown so intense that the Kikuyu made the proverb, *Gutiri mubea na muthungu*—“there is no difference between the priest and the settler.” Githii (1992:29) narrates the proverb as follows:

They [missionaries and white settlers] both needed the land. The missionary approached the chief humbly holding the Bible with one hand and asking for a small piece of land to which to build the mission station. Sooner or later, an agreement was made between the chief and the British governor who became his protector and friend. This was later followed by a treaty whereby the chief agreed to the seizure of a large piece of land that belonged to the tribe. This is why it is a common saying among the Africans that “*Gutiri mubea na muthungu*” (There is no difference between a missionary and a settler).

This represented a change in the attitude of the Kikuyu to missions. There was a time when the agenda of a priest and settler were quite distinct, but this saying implies that both missionaries and settlers took land from the Kikuyu.

The presence, influence, and activity of missionaries was a stabilising factor in the colonial period through their access to African opinions and aspirations on one hand, and through their access to the Colonial Office via their overseas parent churches and the International Missionary Council in London on the other (Macpherson 1970:56-57). Anderson (1977:104) argues against the

suggestion that missionaries were part of a conspiracy to take away African land and limit the natives' freedom by saying, "It is much more accurate to say that while Africans became progressively more critical and rebellious over colonial rule, missions became less critical and more comfortable in it."

Despite the argument presented above which casts missionaries' actions in a negative light, there were arguably many positive missionary actions for African interests. When colonialism became oppressive in Kenya after World War I, the settlers were pressing for a policy of forced labour in order to obtain cheap and abundant labour. When Governor Northey promulgated the policy of forced labour in 1919, the Alliance of Protestant Missions criticised it as being cruel to the Africans. The Secretary of the Conference of British Missionary Societies, Dr J H Oldham, also protested to the British government on behalf of Africans in Kenya resulting in the issuance of the Devonshire White Paper in 1923, which declared that the interests of the Africans must be considered paramount (Nthamburi 1991:27). During the early stages of Kenya's colonial history, on any question of exploitation of African labour or ignorance, missions consistently and openly advocated the rights of Africans. In 1913 Barlow of the Church of Scotland Mission wrote in the *Kikuyu News*, "We believe that the moral and spiritual development of the children of the soil is of as much importance as the financial prosperity of their conquerors" (Anderson 1977:105).

Missionary advocacy efforts continued for many years. In 1923, Dr Arthur, the senior Church of Scotland missionary, entered the Legislative Council to represent African interests. On 17 November 1922, Arthur had written to Kenya's Chief Native Commissioner about the feelings of Africans against British rule. Arthur asserted that Africans needed to know the laws, to have their interests safeguarded by laws, to receive much more education, and have more tax-money spent on their welfare. In short, he said, they need "a right native policy." He explained: "This naturally embraces steps to be taken towards self-government and control of their own affairs under central authority, increasing with their sense of responsibility." In the Council, Dr

Arthur was an effective spokesman who secured the first large government support for African education (Anderson 1977:107).

3.5.3.7 Legacy of mission Christianity and its influence on the spirituality of the research participants

Macpherson (1970:93-100) describes the missionary legacy. According to him, missions to Kikuyu were embedded in the Western culture and its impact on the Kikuyu was comprehensive. The effect of European settlement in Kenya was to gradually obliterate the traditional way of life by forcefully setting western cultural examples and by imposing living conditions which made the ancient tribal practices and sanctions insignificant and obsolete.

My research participants are the products of the legacy of mission Christianity. Except for one participant, they are all either the second or third generation of mission Christianity. They received their primary education at mission schools, went to mission hospitals, did not have any association or relationship with the Kikuyu traditional religion, but were taught the Christian God. Although they keep African or Kikuyu worldviews as seen before (3.4.3), they have changed due to the powerful influx or invasion of mission Christianity which undermined their age-old Kikuyu traditional society.

3.5.3.7.1 Demise of traditional structure

First, the most far-reaching conditions imposed on the Kikuyu by the Westerners was halting the Kikuyu expansion into virgin forests, which made the old economy useless by creating tension and insecurity about existing land. The failure to provide land to every family member subsequently weakened family bonds, and also prohibited the setting up of new family groups thereby undermining the very foundation of Kikuyu life. At the same time, large-scale farming and industrial enterprise by the newcomers demanded a good supply of labour and an efficient economic system, that is, money system together with the collection of taxes for public administration. These economic factors and urbanisation took men and women away from their traditional settings weakening further the already jeopardised traditional structure (Macpherson 1970:94). Macpherson (1970:95-96) continues, “The

part of the missionaries in the economic changes brought about by the European occupation was negligible, but in producing conditions which undermined the social and religious foundations of Kikuyu society, they had a leading role.”

One research participant’s family moved to the Rift Valley from Kikuyu land when she was young because of economic reasons, and she grew up in a mixed tribal setting. She was distanced from the authentic Kikuyu culture and spent her formative years in a cosmopolitan setting. Another research participant grew up in the city of Nairobi with his parents. Still another research participant spent some years with a host family who took care of him during the turbulent time of the Mau Mau Revolt. These research participants personally experienced the impact of the changing Kikuyu social structure. Kithinji’s (2005:275) comment is to the point, “The rural urban movement has compounded the change in the family. Changes in occupation and work among family members and the introduction of the money economy have had a great impact on the African family also.”

3.5.3.7.2 Introduction of western education and medicine

Secondly, it was the systematic western schooling of children that caused the Kikuyu society to be profoundly altered. The Western education that missionaries introduced to the Kikuyu was incompatible with the traditional education system, which was based on prolonged exposure of the young to the pressures of family and group life—culminating in circumcision and initiation thus incorporating the initiates into an age-group and members of the whole tribal society. However, the introduction of the Western education replaced tribal education creating social and economic class stratification. In addition, the very education the missionaries placed in the hands of Africans provided them with means of resistance to colonial rule. When educated, they began to argue with their foreign rulers on equal terms, formed political parties and trade boycotts, and were able to take their case to the United Nations (Welbourn 1965:154).

Missionaries also built hospitals and dispensaries, and introduced Western medicine and hygiene to the Kikuyu, which spread scientific causation to the Kikuyu. Ancestral spirits and ritual contamination as the main causes of disease were devalued, and tribal sanctions became ineffective.

As seen before (3.5.3.4), a distinctive form of Christianity called *kusoma* Christianity was developed from 1920 to 1945 (Anderson 1977:111). With its main emphasis on literacy, schools were built, and education was emphasised. My research participants received the benefit of this legacy. I once asked one research participant whether the Kikuyu emphasise education. He safely answered that some Kikuyus do and others don't. I accepted his answer with some reservation since he personally holds a master's degree and is planning to pursue a doctoral degree. He has a strong drive for higher education which would bring more income and status. Generally, the Kikuyu tribe is the most educated of all the tribes in Kenya. Except for one elderly research participant, I noticed that all the other younger research participants desire higher education, and their denomination facilitates it by giving their pastors study leaves. It seems that *kusoma* Christianity has impacted them.

3.5.3.7.3 Introduction of new religious ideas

Thirdly, missionaries brought in new religious ideas. Macpherson (1979:96) says, "By their teaching on the nature of God and his relationship to men, they drove a wedge into Kikuyu life at the very grass-roots of religious belief and thereby turned the Kikuyu world upside-down." According to Kikuyu traditional religion, as seen in the African Traditional Religion section (3.5.2.2), *Ngai* (God) was a remote, transcendent being, and was only accessible by the whole group on occasions of emergency. However, the missionaries taught that God is accessible through prayer individually, any time, anywhere through Christ. In traditional religion, the after-life was a shadowy existence fading into an unending past, *zamani* in Mbiti's (2002) term, but missionaries gave a new meaning to life, a future fulfilment contrary to the habitual focus on the present life as sanctioned by customary law. New morality was introduced as well. Since God is a loving God and is concerned with the welfare of every individual, each individual is now faced with a choice of either reciprocating

his love and living properly according to his expectation or not reciprocating his love and being held personally responsible for his or her decision. This personal divine-human relationship was totally new to the Kikuyu. But Christian Kikuyus claim that missionaries did not bring God to them but explained him more fully to them!

My research participants went to church from early childhood. They went through catechism and were baptised. One research participant had a Catholic background from his grandmother, and he admitted that his grandmother gave him a very powerful influence on his prayer life. He also learned the word of God from the African Inland Church (AIC), a rather conservative denomination. Another research participant said, “When one joins the church, he becomes a Christian and he leaves the tradition.” She abandoned the issues of tradition completely and followed what missionaries brought to her, that is, Christianity. All of my research participants were affiliated with some form of mission Christianity from childhood, and were taught Christianity. It appears that this early exposure to mission Christianity laid the foundation for their spirituality.

3.5.3.7.4 A new status of woman

Fourthly, missions raised the status of women. Traditionally, men were hunters and warriors, and women took care of household matters. In the past, more wives meant the possibility of more land. They were considered as assets. However, with increasing shortage of land and introduction of a cash economy, multiple wives and children became an economic liability. The status of women was also seriously but implicitly questioned by the female circumcision issue, which will be discussed later (3.5.4.3). Women did not have a voice even in matters directly related to them. Although their value as the source of life was acknowledged, their status in the traditional Kikuyu society was low. Women’s status as well as their roles has changed as a result of the introduction of Christianity. Through education women were viewed as partners of men and were able to find employment, mainly as teachers and nurses, which made them economically independent (Welbourn 1965:123-128).

The wives of my male research participants have jobs: one as a teacher and another as an office staff member of a non-governmental organisation. The wife of the third male research participant stays home as a housewife. My female research participants are pastors. Both of their husbands work: one as a pastor and another as a government employee. These women are educated and have status as a pastor in their community. More women enrol in theological schools, and they are active in the church. One male research participant surmised that a new pastor would not stay long in the new parish if he does not get along with the woman's guild of the church. A female research participant commented that women pastors are more in demand nowadays because of their hard work and less demanding nature than male pastors. In the general Kenyan society, there are prominent women religious and political leaders as well.

Regarding gender roles, two of my young male research participants are not afraid of going into the kitchen to help their wives—it is considered shameful if a man goes into the kitchen in the traditional Kikuyu culture. It seems that these men pastors do not follow traditional gender roles. A female research participant said that the traditional gender role has been replaced by the Christian virtue of the husband-wife team helping each other and sharing the burden of family work. Her mother used to say that all work was for everybody. In her own family, her husband is also willing to help her with housework even with cooking sometimes, although she does not insist that he help. However, another female research participant said that the Kikuyu society is still patriarchal, and that a woman is subordinate to her husband. She seems to follow the traditional Kikuyu culture in regards to gender roles, and she apparently enjoys the patriarchal nature of Kikuyu home. These examples imply that the Kikuyu society is in the process of changing, and my research participants experience that. It can be said that this change in the status of women in the Kikuyu society is a result of the introduction of Christianity.

3.5.3.7.5 Denominational Christianity

Lastly, missionaries brought in denominationalism to Kenya. Every major Christian tradition is represented in Kenya: Roman Catholics, Anglicans,

Orthodox, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, Seventh-day Adventists, and Independents. The list is exhaustive. Mbiti (1973:147) criticises the legacy of denominationalism as follows:

Denominationalism and its proliferation...are the product of human selfishness and weakness. Our church leaders in Kenya, present and past, African and expatriate, have made a mess of the church through inheriting and agreeing to accept divisions, through multiplying divisions, and through perpetuating divisions....[However,] [t]he essentials of the Christian faith have remained intact, so that the causes and the fact of denominational division are fundamentally peripheral to, and not an essential of, the Christian faith which otherwise is grounded on Jesus Christ who Himself is unchangeable and indivisible. Perhaps Kenya is learning to live above denominationalism and to reap the benefits of the Christian faith in spite of the divided churches on its soil; yet the nettle's sting of denominationalism remains, and as long as it is there no Christian can rest comfortably.

As seen in this section (3.5.3.2), Protestant missions proliferated from the early stage. They even made a comity, divided up the land, and assigned a certain portion to a certain denomination. That is why one denomination is more prevalent in one area and less popular in another area. My research participants all went to the Presbyterian Church for at least some, if not all, of their lives because the Presbyterian Church of East Africa was strong in the Kikuyu land. They attended their denominational or denomination-affiliated theological schools for basic theological education. Although my research participants were exposed to other religious groups or denominations, they all became Presbyterians. Their affiliation with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa seems strong, and they would not change it for something else since it is their identity. Except for one research participant whose outlook is multi-denominational, the others are more or less confined to the Presbyterian denomination. They associate mainly with other Presbyterian pastors and churches for pulpit exchange and fellowship. The Inter-denominational perspective is lacking, and denominational boundaries are still high in Kenya, and it seems that it has been inherited from mission Christianity.

3.5.3.8 Summary

The interpretation of the effects of mission Christianity by missionaries is rather biased. They tended to amplify their successes while diminishing their failures. However, the interpretation by Africans is quite critical. Africans feel grateful for mission Christianity for their contribution to civilisation, but they resent colonialism, which is almost inseparable from mission Christianity. Mission Christianity, both Catholics and Protestants, is still strong in Kenyan religious milieu, and they are well established in the Kenyan society and gives influence to society and politics. They still have a large number of followers. However, it is just one of many forms and expressions of Kenyan Christianity, which include the Orthodox, African Initiated (Independent, Instituted) Church, and the Charismatic and Pentecostal Church. Mission Christianity brought to Africa the gospel clothed in Western attire and under the colonial regime, and Africans did not have much choice but to follow the instructions and examples shown to them by their colonial masters. Perhaps it is time for leaders of mission churches to readjust their theology to address the real needs and deep desires of Africans for continuous survival and meaningful existence in the African continent.

Contribution of mission Christianity	
•	Demise of traditional socio-economic-religious structure
•	<i>Kusoma</i> spirituality (education, health, civilisation)
•	Basic Christian spiritual formation
•	New status of women
•	Denominational Christianity

Fig 3.6 Contribution of mission Christianity

3.5.4 The Presbyterian Church of East Africa

Now I turn to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the denomination of my research participants. Two streams of missionary enterprise converged to produce the Presbyterian Church of East Africa—one Scottish Presbyterian in origin, the other American Baptist (Macpherson 1979:21).

3.5.4.1 The Church of Scotland Mission

Sir William Mackinnon, the chairman of the Imperial British East Africa Company, was a staunch member of the Free Church of Scotland, a body which had been separated from the Church of Scotland on the issue of state interference in church affairs in 1843. Mackinnon formed a small committee of directors for their own independent mission called the East African Scottish Mission. In 1891 they approached the Free Church of Scotland to request the service of Rev Dr James Stewart, the principal of the Lovedale Missionary Institution in South Africa. Their request was granted, and Stewart launched a pioneer missionary expedition to Kenya on 19 September 1891. They arrived in Kibwezi in Ukambani about two hundred miles from Mombasa. The area turned out to be unhealthy with a sparse population so it became clear that Kibwezi could not be the permanent site of the mission. Thomas Watson moved the mission to Dagoretti, and finally to a place called Thogoto, which became better known as Kikuyu after the name of the people living there. Upon the death of Watson, the directors of the East African Scottish Mission approached the Church of Scotland to request the takeover of the mission. In May 1901, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland agreed to accept this request, and, on 1 January 1903, the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee assumed responsibility for the Kikuyu mission. The Church of Scotland Mission followed the direction set by the missionaries at Lovedale, Livingstonia, and Blantyre, that is, the combination of religious, educational, medical, and industrial activity (Wilkinson 1994:4-8).

In the history of the Church of Scotland Mission, there are several noteworthy figures. The first is Clement Scott, the superintendent of the new Kikuyu mission. He saw Kikuyu as the main bastion of a chain of mission stations stretching northwards to the Abyssinian border and beyond, each ultimately to be self-supported by agricultural or industrial work. He is known for acquiring the Kikuyu mission estate and its subsequent development agriculturally. Upon his death, he was succeeded by Rev Dr Henry Scott, who promoted cooperation between various mission societies working among the Kikuyu. He and Dr Arthur obtained a new mission station near Nyeri called Tumutumu, and posted A R Barlow there entrusting him to develop the station along the

same evangelistic, educational, and industrial lines (Macpherson 1970:33-46). Macpherson (1970:47) generously commends Henry Scott's work:

In his three years' service at Kikuyu, Henry Scott made a contribution of immeasurable value to the life and witness of the emerging Christian Church in East Africa. In his own mission, he had given shape and reality to the dreams of his predecessor, and established the evangelistic and educational pattern for the rest of the missionary period. It was a rigorous pattern. Scott expected everyone under his care to conform to the standards of self-discipline, hard work and responsibility he set for himself.

Dr Arthur was the next leader of the Church of Scotland Mission, under whose leadership another mission station began in Chogoria. The Chogoria mission was handed over to the Church of Scotland Mission by the Church Missionary Society in 1915 (Muita 2003:13). Dr Arthur took a leading role in all the key developments of the mission. He set up the first boarding school and hospital. He presided over the setting up of the first statutory church organisations, a presbytery and Kirk sessions in 1920. Dr Arthur ordained the first African ministers in March 1926. He was also a prominent figure in the inception of Kenya's political movement as a strong advocate of higher education, land reform, and the preservation of cultural identity, that eventually led to independence. He also played a significant role in the female circumcision issue in the early 1930s (Muita 2003:32; Macpherson 1970:57-58). In 1926, Dr Arthur lived to see the publication of the first Kikuyu translation of the New Testament and the beginning of Alliance High School in Kikuyu, the work of the Alliance of Protestant Missions (Muita 2003:125).

3.5.4.2 The Gospel Missionary Society

The Gospel Missionary Society was a product of the Moody and Sankey revival campaigns in the United States in the 1870s and 1880s. The revival was to reclaim men from the power of evil by faith in Christ through evangelistic preaching and gospel hymn singing. They drew support from Baptist congregations and revivalist groups in the States especially from the north. The society began its work in Kenya in 1895 with the arrival of a group of missionaries from the States which included Peter Scott, the founder of the

Africa Inland Mission, and Rev and Mrs Kreiger, who represented the Gospel Missionary Society. They maintained a close link with the Africa Inland Mission working under its general direction until they were able to become independent sometime between 1911 and 1913 (Macpherson 1970:84-85).

Macpherson (1970:88-89) explains the reasons for the success of the Gospel Missionary Society in Kenya which lay partly in the character and quality of their missionaries, such as William Knapp, and the open attitude of the leading families of central Kiambu. As a missionary, William Knapp's conviction was that his role was secondary only to the power of the gospel itself, and Mrs Knapp's hospitality was appreciated by the Kikuyu. Despite weakness in education and informal organisation structure as a missionary society, Knapp was an excellent evangelist and advisor. At the same time, Kikuyu leaders in Kiambu were unusually progressive and open to new ideas especially after six years of natural disasters had swept through their region.

The Kambui mission station of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa began under the Gospel Missionary Society. They remained in close contact with the Presbyterians despite some differences in doctrinal issues. In 1946 the Gospel Missionary Society was united with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa to form a third presbytery, the Presbytery of Chania (Muita 2003:13, 127). Previously in 1943, the synod of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa was formed with the Kikuyu and Tumutumu Presbyteries. In 1956 the Overseas Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, Kenya and the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa were amalgamated to form the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and it was the new beginning of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa as a new Protestant denomination in East Africa.

3.5.4.3 The issue of female circumcision and schism

Female circumcision is an age-old custom practiced by the Kikuyu symbolically similar to male circumcision. The ritual initiates Kikuyu girls into full membership of the tribe. Without circumcision, a girl was considered as a child regardless of her age. When missionaries came, they were shocked by

this practice, and one missionary in Kikuyu called it “sexual mutilation.” The official term of this practice by the World Health Organization (2000) is “female genital mutilation.” It is often referred to as “female circumcision,” and comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs—whether for cultural, religious, or other non-therapeutic reasons. In the case of the Kikuyu, the purpose of female circumcision is sociological, that is, for identification with the cultural tradition, initiation of girls into adulthood, social integration, and the maintenance of social cohesion (WHO 2000).

The Church of Scotland Mission had doctors and hospital facilities, and were conscious of the serious medical risks of this practice. In Kikuyu they started teaching girls and their parents about the risks of female circumcision even before 1910. Over the next twenty years before the crisis occurred in 1929, there were many debates and discussions between missionaries and African Christians of different missions, and among African Christians themselves of both sexes, the majority of which was against the practice (Wilkinson 1994:67). For example, a group of African Christians from Kiambu declared, “We find it our duty to take up our stand on the matter and show that it is not the Europeans that make the law against circumcision of women but we Kikuyu ourselves.” However, in September 1926 Kiambu Native Council adopted a resolution that the operation may be performed by skilled women authorised by the Council, and that it should be minimal. Githii (1993:139) quotes from the Church of Scotland Mission Memorandum that reveals the ethos of the Kikuyu in those days:

Great importance is attached to it by conservative natives and it will take many years to get native public opinion to view the practice with the disfavour with which Europeans regard it. Its devotees firmly believe that it is a serious disgrace for an uncircumcised girl to give birth to a child, and the operation is thus in their eyes an essential precedent to marriage, and the girls in most cases insistently demand it.

In 1920 the Church of Scotland Mission made it a rule that baptised church members undergoing the operation or allowing their daughters to undergo it

ought to be disciplined by being suspended from church membership (Strayer 1978:137). Thus, the campaign of the Church of Scotland Mission against female circumcision had been built up steadily until the young church had a head-on collision with the Kikuyu Central Association in 1929. In March 1929 in Tumatumu, a “United Native Conference” of African representatives from all the Protestant missions in Kikuyuland was held. They voted unanimously that female circumcision was “evil and should be abandoned by all Christians” (Strayer 1978:138). On 28 September 1929 at Chogoria, one of the mission stations of the Church of Scotland Mission headed by Dr Irvine and his leaders prepared a paper that contained a promise for people to sign if they agreed to it. The promise read as follows: “I promise to have done with everything connected with the circumcision of women, because it is not in agreement with the things of God, and to have done with the Kikuyu Central Association because it aims at destroying the Church of God.” The “Chogoria Oath,” as it was called, spread quickly through Kikuyuland (Wilkinson 1994:71). Leakey (1952:89) explains the response of the Kikuyu as follows:

The majority of the Kikuyu took this to be a violent attack on an age-old custom which was considered essential to the welfare of the tribe, since, without initiation, girls could not become full members of the tribe, nor, by Kikuyu custom, were they eligible for marriage. A wave of fury swept through Kikuyu country and the K.C.A. [Kikuyu Central Association] were not slow to take advantage of this in order to point out how greatly the white man, and particularly the missionary, was an enemy of the people. They said, in effect, ‘First the land has been taken from us’... ‘and now they attack our most sacred customs; what will they do next?’

Around this time the dance-song called *Muthirigu* also spread throughout Kikuyuland defaming missionaries, administrators, loyal church elders, and Kiambu chiefs (Strayer 1978:139). It was used as a medium of resistance to combat all forms of foreign domination during the colonial period, even after the song was legally banned in 1929. The Kikuyus used the song to campaign against the colonial administration and missionaries’ efforts to distort, erase, and totally change the Kikuyu way of life in order to make them more effective servants of the white man. (Kabira and Mutahi 1988:23-24). Kabira and Mutahi (1988:23-24) present three verses in their book with interpretations:

Agikuyu you are fools (x2)

You abandoned your *gika* (the base wood) because of the match box
Gika and *ririndi* (the stick used to rub against the base wood to make
fire) (x2)

were passed on to us by *Iregi* generation (the rebel generation)

An uncircumcised church girl is foolish.

When sent to work in the garden she goes to climb the castor trees.

An uncircumcised girl is foolish.

You know, she is because when a child gets choked by bananas she
bursts into laughter.

Rwenji and ndangwa were passed on to us by Iregi generation (x2).

In the first verse the artist rebukes the people for their blind acceptance of the white man's ways while forsaking their own which were handed down by their ancestors. In the second verse the artist despises an uncircumcised girl by depicting her as a small child who is immature and irresponsible. The third verse emphasises further the weakness of immature girls who do not know how to take care of a baby.

For most missionaries in Kikuyuland, female circumcision was simply abhorrent; but for Kikuyu girls, the issue at stake was whether they had the right to refuse the brutal practice and other marriage related rituals that were not morally acceptable to believers. However, for the Kikuyu Central Association and the politically minded Kikuyu leaders, the issue was the unity of the Kikuyu. They argued that if the right of girls to refuse circumcision were granted, this would divide the tribe at a time when the Kikuyu politicians wanted to unite the people in order to demand the redress of their land, labour, and political grievances arising from European settlement in the Kenya Highlands as effectively as possible (Wilkinson 1994:69). Through the clash with the Kikuyu Central Association, the only African political party in existence at that time, the missionaries were able to understand the anxiety felt by the Kikuyu about security of land tenure (Macpherson 1970:114). Missionaries had failed to see the deep cultural and religious values associated with the initiation ceremonies and circumcision rituals (Nthamburi 1991:18). In all this, the colonial government refused to support the

missionaries in their campaign to suppress the practice of the circumcision of women (Githii 1993:138). Strayer (1978:138) writes:

The noticeable reluctance of the government fully to support mission efforts for wholesale suppression of female circumcision was in large measure responsible for limiting the political impact of the crisis, though it opened up a considerable breach between the more conservative missions and colonial authorities.

The importance of this episode was that it led to the start of many Kikuyu separatist churches and independent schools' organisations away from mission Christianity. The two main separatist churches were the Kikuyu Orthodox Church and the Kikuyu Independent Pentecostal Church, which came out of the Kikuyu Karing'a (tribal unity and purity) Schools Association and the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association respectively. These new churches and organisations were closely affiliated with the Kikuyu Central Association, and became more and more the training ground for nationalist and anti-white sentiments even becoming the recruiting ground for hundreds of Mau Mau adherents later (Leakey 1952:89-91; Nthamburi 1991:18-19). Githii (1993:169) also says the female circumcision issue led to the awakening of Kenyan nationalism among the Kikuyu.

The Church of Scotland Mission experienced a temporary setback due to the crisis, but regained the previous level of church and school attendance within a few years and continued to increase steadily throughout the colonial period. It was the mission communities that provided Kenyans with cultural and material benefits such as respectability, employment opportunities, and the most advanced education available in the colony (Strayer 1978:157-158).

3.5.4.4 Development

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa continued to grow. They had many church-sponsored schools, community projects, and the three hospitals missionaries established. With the achievement of full independence in 1956 the Presbyterian Church of East Africa entered a new phase of its existence. All of its work fell under the authority of the individual General Assembly,

which met every three years, with its General Administration Committee meeting annually in between years. The church put great emphasis on training its leaders because of increased membership after the end of the Mau Mau emergency. In 1956, they joined the Anglican and Methodists to set up a joint theological college in the name of St Paul's United Theological College. Future ministers would be sent to this college for training before ordination. They also established the Lay Training Centre at Kikuyu in 1962 to provide training for elders and church members at large (Wilkinson 1994:140-141).

The Presbyterian Church also agreed to ordain women for the ministry of the church in 1976. Two of my research participants are women, and they are the product of this resolution. Another important event in the growth of the Presbyterian Church is the establishment of the Church School. Although Sunday Schools existed from early on in the Church of Scotland Mission, it was not until 1964 that the first Church School Committee was formed in Chogoria Presbytery and found its secure place within the Church. Especially, with the removal of the management of the primary schools out of the hands of the Church by the Education Act of 1968, the importance of these Church Schools was more recognised for religious education (Wilkinson 1994:157). All of my research participants attended and were benefited by the Church School as they grew up. They are the living legacy of this great programme.

In 1968, when the Presbyterian Church celebrated its seventieth anniversary, they adopted a new emphasis on mission called *NENDENI* (go ye...), which is a mission area outside of the normal boundary of the Presbytery. Muita (2003:77) explains:

Up to this time, the PCEA [Presbyterian Church of East Africa] had been basically a church for people around Mt Kenya and the Agikuyu in the Rift Valley working on the white settlers' farms, although there was some work going on among the Maasai at Ngong. The language used in the programmes of outreach up to that time was largely Kikuyu. The church decided to extend its mission outreach beyond the Gikuyu-Meru borders in order to fulfil Christ's command in Matthew 28:19-20....The General Assembly decided that the whole

church should be involved in mission work as the primary objective of the calling from God.

From this point on, the Presbyterian Church expanded its work to other tribal areas in Kenya and to Uganda and Tanzania. Another ministry that is worth mentioning is the Woman's Guild. This body was set up originally in 1887 in Scotland and became a national movement united in its service and support of the church. In Kenya the Woman's Guild was started by Mrs Minnie Watson in 1922 and has become an important part of the work and witness of the Presbyterian Church (Wilkinson 1994:178). Muita (2003:62) describes the activities of the Woman's Guild:

The Guild continues to give life to the church in worship, fellowship and church development. Today, there are many women deacons and elders in the church who grew into leadership through the Guild. Woman's Guild members do significant charitable work in the country nationally, as well as in their local parishes. They also reach beyond the borders of Kenya.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa has developed the "Practice and Procedure Manual," which was first published in 1969, incorporating materials from the past manuals of 1935 and 1956 and from various Acts and Resolutions on procedural matters approved by the General Assemblies of 1958, 1961, 1964, and 1967. The current edition was published in 1998 (Muita 2003:74). One research participant attributed the orderliness of the Presbyterian Church to the "Practice and Procedure Manual."

To encourage the search for self-identity the Presbyterian Church's Secretary General, Rev John Gatu, issued a moratorium in 1971 arguing that the "time has come for the withdrawal of foreign missionaries from many parts of the third world, that the churches of the third world must be allowed to find their own identity, and the continuation of the present missionary movement is a hindrance to this self-hood of the church." (Muita 2003:81). Muita (2003:81) continues that the Presbyterian Church of East Africa took up the challenge to do its work using local resources and the concept of *JITEGEMEA* was adopted. *JITEGEMEA* literally means "to stand on your own feet," but as a

concept it means “movement toward self reliance” (Moffatt 1974:1-2). In 1973 the *JITEGEMEA* motto became the working philosophy of the Presbyterian Church towards self-reliance, and it was included in the Church’s logo. With this concept of self-support and self-determination the Presbyterian Church moved forward, and every individual and congregation realised that the Church now must be supported financially by the local people (Muita 2003:82).

3.5.4.5 Current issues

The present moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa is Rev Dr David Githii. According to Anaya (2007), “He is known for his boldness and firm stand in what he believes in...[and] he can be defined as an icon in political, social and economical emancipation of Kenyan people.” He disclosed “satanic symbols” and images in the Kenyan Parliament, such as “blazing star,” charging bull and rhino, snake, tortoise, frog, witchcraft, and idolatry, and termed them as satanic and the cause of Kenya’s woes. He then pointed out other symbols at St Andrews Church in Nairobi, which were removed with much controversy and disagreement (Anaya 2007). He was elected to be the moderator in 2003 and re-elected in 2006. Under his leadership the Presbyterian Church grew to be forty-four presbyteries from twenty-eight in 2001. He has also initiated many other reforms. One is the change of logo and basic philosophy of the denomination. In 2006 the 18th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa adopted a new logo that has a fresh message of faith, hope, and love. For almost thirty years, the logo of the Presbyterian Church had a cross in a circle and the word *JITEGEMEA* printed over the cross. It showed the denomination was isolated from other denominations, as the word *JITEGEMEA* implies. However, the new logo includes a plain cross at the centre, a dove as a sign of peace, two torches, a burning flame that surrounds all these, the bible, and the words—faith, hope, and love on the bottom of the flame. Githii is charismatic, although he is a Presbyterian, and has been fighting for the reform of the denomination all these years. According to one of my research participants, Githii was threatened and opposed for his charismatic stance, but the charismatic influence within the denomination is gaining more adherents.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa is going through reforms. One research participant revealed that the denomination is being decentralised. For example, from 2003 ministers' salary was paid from the presbytery they belonged to and not from the head office. This was a problem since some presbyteries had a surplus while others had a lack. Their worship service is also being transformed. The Presbyterian Church lost many of their young people in the past due to the inherited rigid or dull worship service. Thus they introduced "praise and worship" during Sunday worship when the congregation is allowed to praise with freedom and pray aloud even in tongues. Officially, they also changed the language used in worship. Since the Presbyterian Church is made of mainly Kikuyus, they usually used Kikuyu language. However, they are changing to Kiswahili and English services to accommodate people of other tribes. It is not easy since old people feel more comfortable with the Kikuyu language, even ministers themselves. The one problem that all the research participants voiced was their frustration with the slow implementation or procedure because of the many steps an issue had to go through to reach the General Assembly.

3.5.4.6 The spirituality of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Research participants

3.5.4.6.1 Scottish Reformed and American evangelical traditions

Scottish missionaries laid a foundation for the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and some elderly pastors are staunch adherents of the Church of Scotland traditions. At the same time they have an evangelical tradition coming from Moody Revival in America. These two traditions provided for the spirituality of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. The theology of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa is basically Reformed theology, and they are conservative. This conservative stance in ministry caused the exodus of many young people who desire more vibrant worship and ministry experiences. The evangelical perspective moves the Presbyterian Church forward to evangelism and missions. They have local outreaches in different places of Kenya and do missions in Uganda and Tanzania.

My research participants are all trained in Presbyterian or Presbyterian-related theological schools, and were taught Reformed theology and learned Scottish Presbyterian religiosity. They may wear a robe on Sunday to minister, and sing hymns transmitted from Scottish missionaries. They may also choose to wear a clergy collar. Sunday worship service follows a set program. These days, however, there is more freedom than before, and people can clap while singing and pray aloud during the praise and worship time. A wave of reform has been set in motion.

3.5.4.6.2 Strengths and weaknesses

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa has many positive aspects and some weaknesses.

One research participant praised the church for its orderliness and development mindedness. Another participant said that he liked the governance and the freedom that the Presbyterian Church gave him. The third commended its orderliness, teachings, care for people, and advanced politics (Practice and Procedure). The fourth mentioned transfers and the “we-system.” He said, “There is no absolute authority in the PCEA.” As I interacted with Presbyterian pastors, even the moderator, I sensed the freedom that ministers had. It seems that the leaders of the denomination are not distant and authoritative, but approachable. The Presbyterian Church of East Africa is more egalitarian than hierarchical.

All the research participants were in agreement that slow procedure is its weakness. A slow decision-making process and slow implementation process seem to be most frustrating to them. But even here one research participant acknowledged, “They are slow but sure.”

As a predominantly Kikuyu denomination, they have an advantage of bringing the Kikuyu together and enhancing or retaining the culture. This cohesiveness is a real strength for their development. The disadvantages are tribalism and pride. One research participant said that recently a non-Kikuyu pastor lost a position at a Presbyterian Church in Nairobi, and that no Presbyterian Church

was interested in him since he was not a Kikuyu. This partiality may hinder their desire to expand their ministry to other tribes.

3.5.4.6.3 Reforming spirituality

One research participant said, “The PCEA is Reformed and yet is reforming.” According to him, the reform movement started with the present moderator David Githii when he was elected as moderator of the denomination in 2003. But the struggle for reform started over 10 years ago. Under Githii’s leadership the Presbyterian Church grew from 24 to 42 presbyteries. Another research participant said that the PCEA needed to change and improve especially to meet the needs of this generation at this time. He also expressed that charismatic pastors were still a minority, but that they had been fighting for more open attitude or posture of the PCEA. Still another research participant said, “We are moving from a place to another one. It is a transition period.” She said that the PCEA is a reforming church. The fourth participant said, “There are a lot of good things in the Presbyterian Church....We are always reforming.” One example he gave was the change in stewardship from a pledging system to tithing. People used to make a pledge and give to the church according to their pledge regardless of their income. But now they are taught to tithe. He said, “That one [tithing] is creating a great impact in the church...and they grew very much.” The fifth mentioned the transfer system of pastors from one parish to another now that the PCEA has started implementing the five-year term instead of three. He also said that the present moderator encouraged PCEA churches to keep district Sunday when people worship in their districts without having to go to church. One more reform effort of the PCEA is the elimination of Kikuyu service in favour of Kiswahili and English services in urban areas.

These are some of the reform efforts that the Presbyterian Church of East Africa put forward to bring their denomination to the next level to meet the needs of the people. As long as they keep moving forward, I believe that the Presbyterian Church of East Africa has a future.

3.5.4.7 Summary

The Church of Scotland Mission established roots in the Kikuyu, and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa is also Kikuyu-dominant. My research participants have a strong relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Africa. Their association with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa is not just membership. It is their identity and is meaningful to them. Sometimes, they are disciplined, and there are some things they do not like. Nonetheless, the PCEA is their community and sphere of influence. One research participant said, "I like PCEA...even my blood, my everything. It is the PCEA and I would not like to change." The cohesiveness of the Kikuyu tribe along with the religious identity of the Presbyterian Church is their spirituality. It seems that this tradition would not be likely to change in the near future.

The spirituality of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa	
•	Church of Scotland tradition
•	Moody evangelical tradition
•	Organised yet flexible
•	Tribal
•	Reforming

Fig 3.7 The spirituality of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa

The next two subjects, the East Africa Revival Movement and the Charismatic movement in Kenya, added other invaluable components to the spiritual makeup of my research participants, to which I will now turn.

3.5.5 East Africa Revival Movement

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa experienced a setback and a chaos due to the controversial issue of circumcision of women before the Rwanda revivalists came to Kenya. The young church was confused and shaken up over the dispute over female circumcision, as well as the general disintegration of African traditional society and its culture. Many Christians went back to their former way of life; church membership decreased; spirituality and morality also declined (Githii 1992:42). In this context the

spread of the East Africa Revival Movement to Kenya was essential and deeply comforting to the Presbyterian Church which was the most affected by the circumcision issue. All of my research participants were also positively influenced by the Revival movement, which became another important tradition that affected their spirituality.

3.5.5.1 History

The Ruanda (Rwanda) general and medical mission was an independent auxiliary of the Church Missionary Society in Rwanda. Its first mission station was built at Gahini at the eastern shore of Lake Muhazi in July 1925. At Gahini, medical work was begun early, and a hospital of seventy-five beds was finished in 1928. It was among the staff at this hospital that the East Africa Revival Movement began in December 1933 (Smith 1946:57). It is said that the East Africa Revival Movement was influenced by the Keswick Conventions of England because of Joe Church, who arrived in Rwanda with a clear conviction of Keswick experience (Wanyoike 1974:151; Ward 1991:113). In 1937, the first team of Revival leaders from Ruanda travelled to Kenya and spoke at meetings in Nairobi, Kabete, Weithaga, and elsewhere. A small group of Christians including a prominent Anglican clergyman experienced salvation in a deep sense. In 1938, another revival group visited Kenya and held successful revival campaigns at the Pumwani Church of the Church Missionary Society in Nairobi. A number of Christians including more Anglican clergy experienced renewal, or were “saved,” along with many other prominent laymen who graduated from Alliance High School in Kikuyu (Githii 1992:42; Wilkinson 1994:100; Mambo 1973:111).

The members of the Revival movement were called *balokole* (the saved ones) in the Luganda term. When the movement reached the Kikuyu, their name was *ahonoku* (the saved one) or *gakundi* (the little group or company) (Wilkinson 1994:100). However, the members of the Revival called themselves “Brethren” (Mambo 1973:110). Although the Revival leadership was European missionaries in the beginning, soon the African leadership took over the movement, and it became a truly indigenous movement (Wilkinson 1994:100). After World War II, the Revival movement developed rapidly in

Kenya, and the membership increased greatly, especially in the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches and gained confidence of those churches because of its dynamic evangelistic influences (Mambo 1973:112).

3.5.5.2 Organisation

The organisation of the Revival was quite different from the structures of mission churches. They had no officials, no executives, no salaried workers, no headquarters, no offices, no paperwork, no minutes, no budgets, no membership list, and no annual subscription fees (Mambo 1973:113). Nevertheless, the Revival Movement was not totally without structure. They had a main body called “Team meeting” which is a loose framework of planning at various levels, that is, national, provincial, district, and divisional. It was comprised of a representative group of Brethren who regularly met to discuss matters related to mutual spiritual interests and to coordinate the activities of the Revival in different parts of Kenya. At the provincial and national levels teams organized conventions, while at the district and divisional levels teams provided for monthly or fortnightly Fellowship gatherings or open-air evangelistic meetings. A unique feature of the team meeting was that all decisions were made unanimously, and majority voting was not practised (Mambo 1973:113-115). The main team in Kenya was known as *wandugu wa mzigo* (those who carry the burden), and they were held in high esteem like the elders in traditional society (Githii 1992:47).

Revival Brethren met regularly. At the local village level, they held small group meetings at private homes, under trees and in church buildings every one or two weeks. These small group Fellowship meetings were an important feature of the Revival since they provided opportunities for testimony, open confession of sins, mutual encouragement, prayer, Bible reading, and frequent singing of the Revival chorus *Tukutendereza* (We praise Thee, Jesus) (Wilkinson 1994:101; Mambo 1973:112-113). Besides these small group Fellowship meetings, they also held provincial, national or regional (East African) conventions, which played a significant role in raising African Christian leadership.

3.5.5.3 Conventions

Local conventions were held in Kenya from 1937, but it was in 1947 that the Revival made a break-through at Kahuhia convention in Kikuyuland. Up to Kahuhia convention, missionaries planned and organised large conventions, but at Kahuhia African leadership took complete charge, which turned out to be crucial to the success of the Revival (Anderson 1977:128). Anderson (1977:128) says about this convention:

With missionary organizers only a few hundred could have attended. But Africans did not count beds—they cleared classrooms and laid down banana leaves, so that visitors could sleep wall-to-wall. They organized great kitchens, collected food and cooks, dug latrines, and took in three to four thousand people. The convention reached five to ten times as many people as a missionary-organized one could have reached.

Following Kahuhia convention, there were three other powerful conventions from 1948 to 1950. Especially, the huge conventions at Kabete in 1949 and Thogoto in 1950 reached a climax to the spread of the Revival movement in Central Kenya. Besides these large conventions, other smaller conventions in parishes and congregations spread the Revival to the Gospel Missionary Society churches (Anderson 1977:128-129). The large-scale conventions must have been phenomenal. Wilkinson (1994:101) quotes *Kikuyu News*:

No one who has been to such a convention can forget it—the spontaneous praise, the joy, the orderly way in which physical needs are cared for, and the simplicity which is sufficient. Usually a short verse became a motto for the convention, and a message to take back at its end.

These major conventions contributed to the emergence of nation-wide African leadership. They also brought about great spiritual inspiration and awakening to both clergy and laypeople and challenged the mainstream churches to re-emphasise their evangelistic effort and missionary concern (Mambo 1973:112). Githii (1992:57) further explains that during these conventions a sense of universality of the Fellowship was developed as members of different denominations were converted and joined the Fellowship. Among those

converted were a few Roman Catholics, illiterates, semi-Christianised drunkards, businessmen, and even Protestant ministers.

3.5.5.4 Characteristics

The main characteristic of the Revival was that it was closely related to major mission churches, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist. It was a movement within them. Nevertheless, they had certain distinct elements: the emphasis on repentance through open confession, the necessity of being born again, that is, experience (acceptance) of Jesus as personal Lord and Saviour, the breaking down of barriers of race, tribe or clan, and the awareness of a new equality between Europeans and Africans (Ward 1991:116). They desired a deep religious experience similar to St Paul's conversion. The prominent symbols in the minds of the Brethren were the crucifixion and the shed blood of Jesus (Mambo 1973:116). When the Revival Movement was established, they emphasised what was known as "walking in the light" because the Brethren needed to live in a continuous renewal process. This emphasis was a process of constant cleansing in the blood of Jesus through continuous confession of their sins to each other (Githii 1992:49). The individual transformation of the Revival Brethren was so dramatic that it invited opposition from some church members and leaders. Wilkinson (1994:104-105) writes:

There was a greater honesty reflected in the restitution of stolen property. There was a greater faithfulness in daily work including a marked responsibility in the use of time. There was a greater readiness to admit to wrongdoing and a new sensitivity to the difference between right and wrong. There was an absence of any racial bitterness and a new feeling of fellowship between the races. Finally, there was a new keenness for Christian things; for Bible teaching, for the conversion of non-Christian, for fellowship with other Christians, and for responsible financial support of the church and Christian activities.

The Revival Fellowship also enforced strong community norms on its members in such areas as clothes, fashions, hairstyles, drinking, smoking, and relations with the opposite sex. The Fellowship saw itself as a new clan. One of my research participants said she left the Revival Fellowship when

they started acting like a new clan trying to take over her wedding. The Revival gave women a new status such that the traditional society had not given them thus allowing women to preach, testify, and hold important offices as men did. Although the Revivalists tended to follow the African community structure with leaders and members making sort of an extended family, they avoided African traditional rituals. Generally speaking, the Revival encouraged education and modern living but discouraged involvement with politics to avoid being soiled by earthly dealings (Nthamburi 2004:79).

3.5.5.5 Response of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa

When the Revival Movement reached Kenya, the initial response of the missions and churches was hostile. The tendency of the Brethren to judge other people's spiritual condition and to separate themselves from normal church activities for the sake of revival activities incurred criticism upon themselves. It was a common practice for the Brethren to gather together after a normal church service to hold a Fellowship meeting with testimonies and singing of the Revival chorus *Tukutendereza* (Wilkinson 1994:104).

The response of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa was basically the same as that of other churches. On one hand there was acceptance, and on the other hand there was opposition. Chogoria mission centre was the first one to accept the Revival movement especially with the encouragement of Dr Irvine. Kikuyu and Kambui were not so sure in the beginning, but they also accepted it by 1949. Tumutumu Presbytery remained hostile, and their refusal to continue to sponsor three of their ministers-in-training who were involved in the Revival movement caused a crisis and a subsequent setting up of a committee of enquiry to probe the situation (Wilkinson 1994:105). The committee of enquiry listed twenty-two criticisms of the Revival movement, which can be categorised into two main headings, that is, exclusiveness and subjectivism. Some of the criticisms included the holding of separate meetings after church, collecting of funds for the Revival Movement, the emphasis on their subjective experience over the Scriptures, and the putting down of the ordained ministry and church authorities. The positive aspects that the committee found were the great zeal for the gospel, emphasis on the need for

repentance, commitment to upright living, and ability to rouse the church (Macpherson 1970:127-128; Wilkinson 1994:105). The recommendation of the committee was that the church should not oppose the Revival Movement. The chairman of the committee, Kareri, explained:

Revival cannot survive except within the church for its function is to revive the church and that function cannot be fulfilled if it is outside the church. The church also stands in great need of the help which God gives it through revival. Our committee therefore urges that all our members, of whatever persuasion, should strive always to live together in peace and in charity towards all.

(Macpherson 1970:128)

Dr Arthur of the Presbyterian Church also strongly advocated the Revival Movement advising Christians to welcome the voice of the Revival since it is the voice of God (Wanyoike 1974:161).

3.5.5.6 Contribution and spirituality of the Revival movement

3.5.5.6.1 East African expression of Christian faith

The first and foremost contribution of the East African Revival Movement to the Kenyan church is that it gave the church indigenous root. The Revival put in the heart of East Africans including Kenyans a strong desire for East African forms of worship, discipline, and organisation. Through the Revival Movement African evangelists and ministers were produced along with lay leadership, and they were proven effective.

3.5.5.6.2 Personal and direct encounter with Christ

Secondly, it brought a new and deeper grasp of Christian truth and revelation through direct spiritual encounter with Christ himself and a new sense of responsibility to holy and upright living. It is in this area that the spirituality of my research participants was affected directly by the Revival Movement.

One of my research participants accepted Jesus Christ as his personal saviour and started growing spiritually when he was a youth because of his benefactors who were involved in the Revival. Another research participant

met the Revival people of the PCEA—the Revivalists were members of the mainline churches—and was taken care of by them. They laid a spiritual foundation and nourished her. Still another research participant heard the gospel and was saved at a church district prayer meeting. It was the Revivalists who led her to Christ. They nurtured her spiritually teaching her the word of God and Christian morals. She was a part of the Revival Movement until she got married. In the lives of these three pastors the Revival Movement became a crucial element of their spirituality. Perhaps the definition of spirituality by these three pastors—whole *engagement with God*, growing to be *godlier*, how you are *going with your God* throughout the life—reflects the influence of the Revival Movement upon their lives and the formation of their spirituality. The remaining two research participants seemed not directly involved in it, but they were well aware of the effects and contribution of the Revival Movement to the Presbyterian Church. They talked about the impact of the Revival Movement in general terms.

3.5.5.6.3 New ecumenical sense of fellowship

Thirdly, the Revival created a new ecumenical sense of fellowship that transcends family, tribal, national, racial, and denominational boundaries. It was in line with the efforts of the missionary churches in the Kikuyuland to form a united church that would foster the common welfare of the Kikuyu. One of my research participants said that at the Revival Fellowship Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians all gathered together, and people there did not care about that. He said it was good!

3.5.5.6.4 Strength to withstand the Mau Mau rebellion

Fourthly, the Revival prepared the church in Kenya, especially in the Kikuyuland, to face and withstand the attack of the Mau Mau movement in the 1950s (Wilkinson 1994:121). The Mau Mau warriors attacked the church, missionaries, and national Christians. It was a time of trial and the church needed strength and faith to overcome the trial. The faith and boldness that the East African Revival Movement supplied to the church was timely and the church turned out to be strong enough to defeat the attacks of the Mau Mau.

The spirituality of the East African Revival Movement	
•	East African expression of Christian faith
•	Personal and direct encounter with Christ (most relevant to the research participants)
•	New ecumenical sense of fellowship
•	Strength to overcome the trial of Mau Mau

Fig 3.8 The spirituality of the East African Revival Movement

3.5.5.7 Summary

The East African Revival Movement is the first major renewal movement within the mission churches including the Presbyterian Church. It was a movement within the church and renewed the church as purposed by God. The effects of the Revival Movement on the Presbyterian Church are invaluable. Although the Presbyterian Church was opposed to the Revival at first, they embraced the Movement only to the benefit of further development and establishment. Its implications are not only theological but sociological in that the Revival brought to the Presbyterian Church not only the keen sense of the need for personal salvation experience and holiness but also the idea of oneness and Christian community among brethren across tribal and denominational lines. It only benefited the Presbyterian Church, despite some oppositions and misunderstandings.

Macpherson (1970:128) explained the effect of the Revival Movement as follows:

The revival brought an entirely new possibility into the situation, that of direct spiritual encounter with Christ himself in a contemporary African setting. It was as if, up to that point, a grafting of Christianity had been made into African life but, although the graft had not been rejected, it had also not yet fully grown into the life of the African host. And the coming of the Revival was as if the graft had now fully “taken” and was able to derive full sustenance from truly African roots.

However, the Revival Movement experienced divisions afterwards because of the issues of financial organisation and leadership struggles between the young and the old. According to Githii (1992:99-100), this stiffness of the old

generation toward the younger generation caused stagnation of the Movement and opened a loophole for the Pentecostal churches. The Revival Movement was also reluctant to be open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit and did not emphasise or practice healing through prayers unlike the Independent or Pentecostal churches in Kenya.

The next movement, the charismatic and Pentecostal movement, is another refreshing influence on Kenyan Christianity. If the East African Revival Movement provided for African leadership and expression, the following Charismatic movement's contribution to African spirituality far surpasses that. The Pentecostal and Charismatic movement in Africa could be considered as a defining moment in the history of Christianity in Africa.

3.5.6 Charismatic and Pentecostal movement

In Kenya, Pentecostal missionaries began their work from as early as 1912. According to one record, in 1912 a Finnish missionary Emil Danielsson came to Kenya before any organised missions began. Then Otto and Marion Keller started their work at Nyang'ori near Kisumu on Lake Victoria in 1918. They built a church, school, and a workshop, and their work was affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in 1924. Afterwards, other Pentecostal missionaries arrived from Finland, Canada, Sweden, Norway, and the USA forming local Pentecostal denominations such as Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa, the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya, the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya, the Kenya Assemblies of God, Elim Pentecostal Church of Kenya, and the New Testament Church of God. Later, with the breakup of the East African Federation (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika), the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada changed its name to the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (Garrard 2003:150-155).

3.5.6.1 African Independent Churches

In discussing Kenyan Pentecostal and charismatic movements, it is almost impossible not to talk about the rise of African Independent (Initiated, Indigenous, Instituted) Churches, many of whom are Pentecostal and charismatic. These African Independent Churches are distinguished from

mission churches and can be categorised into three distinct groups: (1) nationalist or secessionist churches; (2) spirit churches; (3) newer Pentecostal or charismatic churches (Mwaura 2004:103).

3.5.6.1.1 Nationalist/secessionist churches

First of all, nationalist or secessionist churches are those who broke away from the established mission churches. The first of these is African Independent Pentecostal Church, which began in 1929 over the issue of female circumcision. This church accepted polygamy and female circumcision, but theologically did not greatly differ from the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches from which they came. Then the African Orthodox Church started in 1932 over the same issue. These two churches started as a result of dissatisfaction over the type of education at mission and government schools, anxiety over land, and resentment of missionaries' attempt to change traditional customs such as female circumcision and polygamy. In 1945 African Brotherhood Church came out of Africa Inland Church in Kamba land, and from the same Africa Inland Church, African Christian Churches and Schools started in Kikuyuland mainly as a result of dispute over educational policy. The rise of these churches is related to African nationalism (Mwaura 2004:104; Murray 1973:129-130).

3.5.6.1.2 Spirit churches

Secondly, there are churches called "Spirit churches." These churches were founded by prophets who also parted ways with mission churches for cultural and nationalistic reasons but primarily due to theological reasons, that is, the manifestation of spiritual gifts of prophecy, healing, speaking in tongues, etc (Mwaura 2004:105-106). According to Anderson (2004:112), "The *Roho* (Spirit) movement was one of the earliest African Pentecostal movement, and it started among the Luo people of western Kenya" and spread to neighbouring Luhya people. Among the Kikuyu, these churches were known as *Akurinu*, *Aroti* (dreamers), *Anabii* (prophets), or *Andu a Iremba* (Turban people). The colonial government called them *Watu wa Mungu* (People of God or Men of God) and persecuted them. Rejecting Western medicine, education, clothing, and other amenities, they sought guidance from the Bible

and the Holy Spirit and mixed Christian tradition with African rituals and beliefs (Murray 1973:131-133). The Kikuyu *Akurinu* was formed with little or no contact with mission churches or other spirit churches, and its significance lies in their conscious attempt to establish African form of Christianity (Anderson 2004:113). Some examples of this type of church are Akorino churches in Central, Rift Valley, and Nairobi Provinces, Africa Church of the Holy Spirit, Africa Divine Church, Roho Ruwe Church, Holy Spirit Church of East Africa, Nabii Christian Church of Kenya, True Pentecostal Church, and Jerusalem Church of Christ (Mwaura 2004:105-106).

There is still another kind of church that is similar to the spirit church. They emerged at different times in different circumstances but have similar characteristics. They practice baptism by immersion and believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and in charismatic gifts. Perhaps the first of its kind in Kikuyuland is *Dini ya Kaggia* after Bildad Kaggia who was one of its most prominent leaders. They are also officially known as *Arata a Roho Mutheru* (Friends of the Holy Spirit). This church sprang up during the East African Revival Movement in 1940s because of revivalists' rejection of charismatic gifts (Murray 1973:130-131).

These independent churches described so far have some common characteristics. First of all, they were founded by concerned laymen who left their mother churches, and thus naturally adopted a traditional African worldview. Prayer took the central place in the life of the church to confront spiritual powers with the power of Almighty God. Healing and prophecy were practiced, and dreams and visions were important to them. Another common characteristic was a vigorous community life. The church assumed the role of a new kinship group providing a sense of identity to her members where a traditional extended family system broke down. Their worship service is lively and the role of women in the church is prominent. Interestingly, these churches have a deep devotion to the Bible reading and study although some rejected the Bible in their early years. They see the Bible providing similar worldviews to their own without complication by theology (Okite 1973:122).

What these African Independent Churches desired to achieve was “African expression of Christianity.” It was brought forth by a clash of cultures between the African and the European. The ethos of the African Independent Church is described by Ndiokwere (1981:275) as follows:

It is a well-known fact that in religion the African feels God, experiences him, before reflecting meaningfully about him. He does not begin with contemplation or meditation. He rather responds to a religious impulse whose reality he has already experienced. That is why in his religion he likes to feel God, he likes to feel religion.

3.5.6.1.3 Charismatic churches

The third kind of the African Independent Church is very different from the aforementioned churches and is the main discussion here. They are more affiliated with North and South American Pentecostals and charismatics and are not related with the early Pentecostal movement. They also oppose the other African Independent Churches because of their “pagan” practices (Mwaura 2004:107). This third type of independent churches and the charismatic movement that was introduced to Kenya in the 1970s is the one that mainly affected my research participants and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa although the Pentecostal Assemblies of God and Norwegian and Finnish Pentecostal missions started their work in Kikuyuland in 1960s. (Murray 1973:131).

3.5.6.2 Charismatic movement in 1970s

Synan (2001:381) says of the worldwide Holy Spirit renewal as follows:

The 20th-century Pentecostal/charismatic renewal in the Holy Spirit has not entered the world scene on one single, sudden clear-cut occasion, nor even gradually over a hundred years. It has arrived in three distinct and separate surges or explosions sufficiently distinct and distinctive focus to label them the first wave (the Pentecostal renewal), the second wave (the charismatic renewal), and the third wave (the neo-charismatic renewal). All these waves share the same experience of the infilling power of the Holy Spirit, the Third person of the Triune God. The Spirit has entered and transformed the lives not simply of small numbers of heroic

individuals and scattered communities, but of vast numbers of millions of Christians across the world today.

The first wave, the Pentecostal renewal, is the oldest in its history, experience, and theology of Pentecostalism. The second wave, the charismatic renewal, is nonpentecostal mainline churches experiencing Pentecostal phenomena. The third wave, the neocharismatic renewal, designates Spirit-led independents and Postdenominational churches (Synan 2001:390).

Burgess (2003:928) explains the third wave, neocharismatics as follows:

The so-called third wave should be viewed as part of a broader category, “neocharismatics,” which includes the vast numbers of independent and indigenous churches and groups that cannot be classified as either pentecostal or charismatic. These are Christian bodies with pentecostal-like experiences that have no traditional pentecostal or charismatic denominational connections. Their greatest concentrations of strength are in the prophetic African independent churches, in Asia—especially the house-church movement in China—and in Latin American countries, especially Brazil.

The charismatic renewal that Africa experienced from the 1970s is an African extension of the neocharismatics. Hocken (2003:510) explains:

The new wave of charismatic-type churches that have sprung up in Africa since the 1970s often call themselves pentecostal, but many have no particular relationship with the Pentecostal movement and are in effect an African version of new charismatic churches. These new churches are different in theology, emphases and style from the African Independent Churches, more evangelical in their theology and less liturgical, and hostile to the perceived syncretism of many AICs [African Independent Churches]. Their similarities to Western Pentecostal-charismatic patterns can lead to an overlooking of their more African features. The new African charismatic churches give a major place to ministries of healing and deliverance, taking seriously the power of witch doctors and spiritism in a way that the missionary churches have not.

What needs to be noted about the emergence of these charismatic independent churches in Kenya is a role played by the classical Pentecostals

and the Spirit churches. In other words, the neocharismatic wave in Kenya is not a totally isolated event (Anderson 2004:162). At the same time, there was another factor from overseas. According to Mugambi (2003b:121), Kenya hosted itinerant evangelists such as Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, T L Osborn from the 1960s, and they were followed by other itinerant televangelists such as Reinhart Bonnke, Morris Cerullo, Harry Das, Benny Hinn, and Joyce Meyer. Generally, these evangelists were not affiliated with any specific denomination and claimed to have “spiritual gifts” and charismatic power of preaching and healing. Thus, under the guidance from North America and Europe, dozens of new Pentecostal and charismatic churches were formed since 1963. Some examples of these churches are: Gilbert Deya Ministries; Faith Evangelistic Ministries of Teresia Wairimu; Deliverance Church; God’s Power Church; Redeemed Gospel Church; Jesus Celebration Centre; Chrisco-Fellowship; Jesus is Alive Ministries (Mwaura 2004:107).

Mugambi (2003b:141), however, criticises the evangelistic and charismatic initiatives in post-colonial tropical Africa as having resulted in cultural alienation of the African proselytes and the fragmentation of Christian denominations. He argues that the recent new Pentecostal and charismatic movements held the assumption that the early missionary achievements were not “biblical” enough, and that the older mission churches found it difficult to match these evangelistic and charismatic initiatives. Thus, the exodus of young people from mission churches since 1990 to the new transient, showy, charismatic churches created a serious liability (Mugambi 2003b:123-127).

3.5.6.3 Pentecostal and charismatic spirituality

It is essential to understand Pentecostal and charismatic spirituality since in Africa Pentecostal and charismatic spirituality is spreading powerfully influencing even mainline mission churches. The charismatic movement appeals to African worldview more effectively than older mission churches. Anderson (2004:201) describes African Pentecostal spirituality as liturgically free and spontaneous, and sympathetic to African culture and universal human needs. According to Pentecostal theologian Amos Yong (quoted by Anderson 2004:201), Pentecostalism fosters:

(1) [A] holistic understanding of human religiosity and that the Pentecostal and Charismatic experience “demands interpretation of the experiential dimension of spirituality over and against an emphasis on textuality in religious life.” Pentecostal spiritualities reflect the conviction that Pentecostals experience God through the Spirit and are expressed in liturgies that are primarily oral, narrative and participatory. It is also (2) pneumatocentric spirituality, where the Spirit invades all human life.

In African Pentecostal Churches, the power of the Holy Spirit is more than just “spiritual” significance. It means dignity, authority and power over all types of oppression. The power of the Holy Spirit gives believers liberation. This conscious experience of the Holy Spirit is a fundamental characteristic of Pentecostal and charismatic churches (Anderson 2004:269, 284). Peterson (1996:31, 35) also says that Pentecostalism “affirmed their sense of personal worth and gave them control over their lives by sustaining the individual force to cope with the insecurities of change.”

Pentecostal and charismatic spirituality in Africa is a contextual spirituality. It provides for solutions not only to spiritual problems but also to all other human problems. Its appeal to African worldview gives more satisfaction to its adherents than older mission churches or African Traditional Religion (Anderson 2004:201-202).

Hocken (2003) lists nine constant characteristics that are common at each stage of the charismatic and Pentecostal movement and in all of its different manifestations: (1) Focus on Jesus—“Renewal in the Spirit is everywhere marked by a focus on Jesus Christ”; (2) Praise—“Being filled with the Holy Spirit always issues in the praise of God and of his Son Jesus Christ”; (3) Love of the Bible—“Charismatic renewal has been consistently marked by a great love and thirst for the Scriptures”; (4) God speaks today—“Renewal is characterized by the conviction that God speaks to his people, corporately and personally, as directly and as regularly as in the first Christian century”; (5) Evangelism—“Holy Spirit renewal regularly brings a heightened urgency for evangelism”; (6) Awareness of evil—“Conscious awareness of the Holy Spirit is typically followed by a new awareness of the reality of Satan and the

powers of evil”; (7) Spiritual gifts—“The spiritual gifts listed in 1 Cor 12:8-10 were seen from the start as characteristic features of charismatic renewal”; (8) Eschatological expectation—“The coming of the Spirit is generally accompanied by an increased expectancy and longing for the return of Jesus”; (9) Spiritual power—“Holy Spirit renewal is everywhere concerned with spiritual impact and a concern to transform the condition of a powerless church.”

Spittler (2003) also lists five implicit values of the Pentecostal and charismatic movement: experience, orality, spontaneity, otherworldliness and biblical authority. He says, “The five implicit values...combine variously to yield a constellation of characteristic practices found in pentecostal and/or charismatic spirituality.”

3.5.6.4 Contribution to African spirituality

Traditional African culture did not separate religion and society. A religious leader was a leader in the society as a whole since the society was a religious society. When missionaries came to Africa, however, they presented the Gospel that divided the “sacred” and the “secular.” Missionaries brought a religion divorced from life (Welbourn 1965:189). African theologian Magesa (2003:38) says that the charismatic movements “address the real needs of the people” and “strike a deep religious chord in the heart of African peoples.”

One of the main contributions of the charismatic and Pentecostal movements is the bestowal of pride in African culture back to Africans. Magoti (2003:95) says the following:

Charismatic movements are not ashamed about belonging to a culture that believes in the existence of devils and evil spirits as active forces in the world. Even when they are accused as being primitive and unscientific, they do not abandon that belief. Furthermore, charismatics are not ashamed to belong to a culture that believes in the ancestors as mediators between human life and God, and they are certainly not ashamed to belong to a culture that cherishes the charismas of its members and values prayer as a free and communal

expression of peoples' inner feelings or emotions. To be sure, they value all these elements and take pride in them.

Another contribution is that charismatics provided Africans with a choice. Magoti (2003:96) continues:

For quite a long time the mainline churches have been claiming for themselves the right to authentic interpretation of the Christian message and how to live and express it....In a very real sense, Charismatic movements reject this kind of cultural monism. They do not accept that Christian revelation can only be understood and interpreted from the perspective of only one culture. To many charismatics, cultural monism is not only an insult but also oppressive and dehumanising. They believe that there are various ways of expressing the Christian faith; their way is certainly one of them and should be taken seriously.

Bediako (1995:66) argues for charismatic movements as follows:

The distinction between the historical churches, of missionary origins, and the independent or African instituted churches, have since become less meaningful, as features which were once thought to be characteristics of the latter have been found to be shared also by the former. The significance of the independents, therefore, has been that they pointed to the directions in which broad sections of African Christianity were moving and so they testified to the existence of some generalised trends in the African response to the Christian faith in African terms.

Charismatic renewal is somehow liberation for Africans who have been searching for authentic African Christianity in their milieu. The mainline mission churches have no choice but to adapt themselves to these changing situations of religious atmosphere and adopt charismatic elements in their ethos for the sake of survival and continual influence in their context.

3.5.6.5 Charismatic movement and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa
In Kenya, charismatic groups emerged from mission churches. In 1985, the charismatic movement was a top issue at the General Administrative Committee of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Since the Presbyterian Church was losing its members to independent churches, the committee

allowed people to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their churches. Thus, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa started using the spiritual gifts within its ranks especially in the youth meetings and fellowships and in the parishes where the pastor and Kirk session were in favour of the charismatics (Githii 1992:77-78). From then on, there has been a battle between the charismatics and non-charismatics within the denomination. The present moderator Githii is a proponent of the charismatic movement, and the number of the adherents to the movement has been increasing all along. However, there still remains the old guard of the Scottish Presbyterianism which was inherited from early Scottish missionaries.

3.5.6.6 Charismatic movement and the spirituality of the research participants

All of my research participants are either passionate or supportive of the movement. One research participant's paradigm changed completely from non-charismatic to charismatic, and he compares salvation and his earlier life to a soldier's life in the barracks and his life after the charismatic conversion to the life of an active soldier in battle. He has been fighting for the charismatic movement within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Another research participant experienced the baptism by the Holy Spirit in a Pentecostal sense when he was a college student. Later in his life, his parish ministry became so charismatic that he was disciplined by the Presbyterian Church and kept out of ministry for a year. He finds one of his spiritual identities in charismatic experience by saying, "You can't deny who you are." The other three research participants are not overly charismatic, but they are sympathetic to the movement and supportive of it. One of these three research participants said, "Being charismatic is growing out of the oppression of colonial oppression to the freedom that God is giving us." Another research participant said, "If it's not sin, it's OK." Still another said that younger pastors were more supportive of the charismatic movement.

3.5.6.7 Summary

The charismatic/Pentecostal influence on Africa started as early as mission Christianity. However, the charismatic movement that influenced the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the research participants is the charismatic movement of the 1970s. This influence is growing in Africa as more and more charismatic churches are planted and the number of its adherents grows. The characteristics of the charismatic spirituality that contributes to African spirituality can be summarised as in Fig 3.9.

One last thing that is worth mentioning is that in the case of my research participants, this charismatic influence did not throw them completely to the charismatic camp with its emphasis on experience and orality. They emphasise both the Spirit and the Word of God as two of my charismatic research participants remain committed to their conviction to teach the word of God. The same phenomenon is also observed at charismatic churches in Nairobi that started in 1970s. They also value and teach the word of God seriously.

Characteristics of Charismatic spirituality in Africa	
•	Contextual spirituality (African expression of spirituality)
•	Liberation from oppression
•	Holistic understanding of human religiosity
•	Pneumatocentric spirituality

Fig 3.9 Characteristics of Charismatic spirituality in Africa

3.5.7 Summary of religion

In this section, I examined five main religious traditions that have influenced my research participants' spirituality directly or indirectly. They are Kikuyu Traditional Religion, mission Christianity, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, East Africa Revival Movement, and charismatic movement. These religious traditions comprise the core of their religious world, and their personal combination may differ from individual to individual. However, these traditions can be said to have contributed to the formation and current

configuration of their spirituality to varying degrees. The diagram on the next page (Fig 3.10) shows the religious world of the research participants.

Concluding the religious section, one comment needs to be made regarding current religious phenomenon. Regarding the African expression of faith, my research participants' views were a little negative. One pointed out that "Most of what we have [religious expression] at the moment are more American than African," and another said, "Our young people are totally taken by Americans."

Still another research participant said, "Let's go back to our root." This sentiment reveals the intrusive influence of western Christian spirituality on Africans, and my research participants are aware of this. Truly, the religious field in Africa including Kenya is fluid and changing rapidly. The religious field touches on surface culture, to which I will turn now, and both religion and subsystems of culture together with the worldview interact with one another to create the whole spectrum of culture or holistic spirituality of a society or persons.

3.6 KIKUYU SURFACE CULTURE

Now that I have examined the worldview and the religion of the research participants, I am moving to the surface culture of the Kikuyu tribe. On the surface cultural level, there are several categories such as social customs, economics, and politics. These surface level cultural systems coincide with Don Browning's (1996:71) tendency-need, environmental-social, and rule-role dimensions. These surface dimensions interact with the religious and worldview dimensions influencing and being influenced by one another.

Especially since religion permeates all areas of life in Africa, these socio-economic-political arenas are all bound up together with their religion to form a comprehensive life experience (Mbiti 2002:1). Spirituality is a comprehensive study of the peoples' spiritual/religious experience including all the complexities of life. Surface cultural systems, therefore, are a relevant part of this study that deserves due consideration.

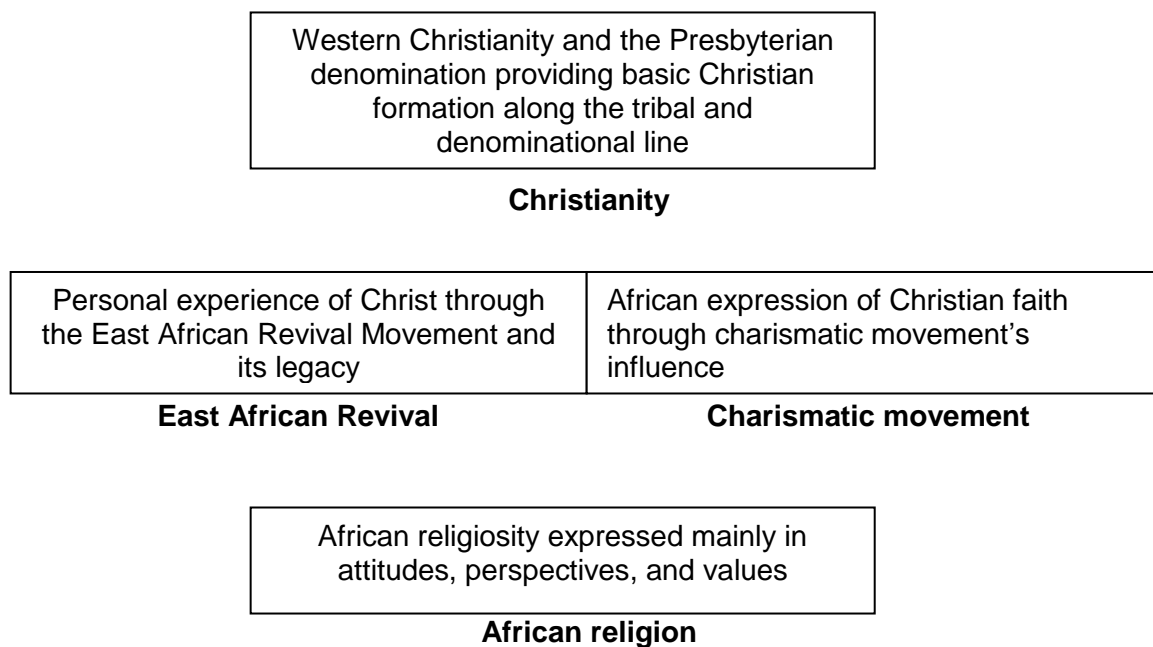


Fig 3.10 Traditions of religion and their influences

3.6.1 Traditional socio-economic-political structure

3.6.1.1 Social organisation

Traditionally, the Kikuyu tribe is organized under the three most important kinship systems: family, clan, and age group. Family is made of grandparents, parents, and children and is a basic societal unit. Clans are made of extended families and meet on such big occasions as marriage and initiation ceremonies. Age groups are the solidifying factor of the whole tribe by acting harmoniously in the political, social, economic, and religious life of the tribe (Kenyatta 1978:2-3). In a sense, the whole tribal relationship is a very closely interwoven framework (Mugo 1982: 5).

Leakey (1952:28-36) observed two distinct patterns in Kikuyu social organisation. On the one hand, there was an organisation founded upon a patriarchal system in which the basic unit was the extended family. This organisation called "sub-clan" or *mbari* was composed of extended family units, which consisted of the head of the family or father and his children and possibly grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. This system, closely

linked with land ownership, consisted of a thousand adults or more and was regarded as a social unit which was bound by complex rules and regulations. The head of a group was chosen by a unanimous decision, and all matters of the sub-clan members such as land, religion, law, etc were the concern of *mbari*. It is worthwhile here to mention Kikuyu family classificatory system. There are three fundamental equations: (1) I and my grandfather are one; (2) I and my brother and my sister are one; (3) I and my wife are one. Thus, it follows that all the brothers, half-brothers and male cousins on the patrilineal side are one person, who is yet many people. The head of family is one but many although the headship rests on the senior living person.

The other social structure, besides sub-clan or *mbari*, is called *rugongo*, which means a ridge. In Kikuyuland there are three main geographical divisions: Murang'a (or Fort Hall), Nyeri, and Kiambu. These three major geographical units are further divided into small territorial units called *rugongo* mentioned above. *Rugongo* or a ridge is simply a territory that lies between two separating streams and extends for about 20 to 30 miles. For all tribal matters such as law, religious worship, warfare, and all else affecting members of the whole tribe irrespective of their sub-clan status, the ridge or *rugongo* was the most important administrative unit. Each ridge was controlled by a council of senior elders. Although the Kikuyu had no chief, the leading member of a council was known as chief, who in a real sense was "spokesman for the senior council." The spokesman was not a chief as the word implies but simply the chairman of the council of nine in whom authority lay. When there were disputes or religious matters that affected persons of more than one ridge, a special *ad hoc* council of nine would convene from all the ridges involved. This social organisation of decentralized control was highly effective in traditional Kikuyu religious, judicial and secular affairs.

3.6.1.2 Initiation and marriage

3.6.1.2.1 Initiation

Initiation is the most important custom among the Kikuyu. It is regarded as imparting on a boy or girl the status of manhood or womanhood. Although it is

taboo for Kikuyus to have sexual relations with someone who has not undergone this operation, what makes the initiation ceremony the most important custom is not the surgical operation itself but the enormous educational, social, moral, psychological, and religious implications of it. Circumcision symbolises the unification of the whole tribe, and with it comes the right to participate in various governing groups in the tribal administration. The whole of circumcision ceremonies are also closely related to communion with ancestors. Through circumcision children are born again not as the children of individual family but of the whole tribe (Kenyatta 1978:132-151).

Therefore, in Kikuyu society no one could claim the benefits of adult status and full membership of the tribe and age-group unless he or she went through the initiation rites. The outward sign of the initiation ceremony is the circumcision of both the male and female. However, the whole ceremony was to extend the education of young people and prepare them for citizenship and responsible adult life. When the ceremonies were over, the boys and girls became full members of an age-group of their own and began to live a corporate life which transcended family and clan obligations and was linked with tribal responsibilities. The young men now had the duty of defending their own tribe and learning how to conduct tribal businesses, and the young girls were subjected to communal labour and began to seek their husbands. After initiation, men pass through different levels of status such as junior warrior, senior warrior, junior elder, and senior elder. Girls pass through the levels of status from girl to married woman, and reach another status at the birth of the first child (Leakey 1952:23-27).

The two primary governing principles of Kikuyu social relationships are the age-group that starts with the circumcision rite and the descent groups such as family or sub-clan (Muriuki 1974:133; Kenyatta 1978:310). Among these two, it is the age-group system that contributed significantly to the egalitarianism prevalent among the Kikuyu (Fedders & Salvadori 1979:119).

3.6.1.2.2 Marriage

Marriage is one of the most powerful means of maintaining the cohesion of Kikuyu society without which kinship system and tribal organisation becomes impossible. Thus, in the Kikuyu society marriage is not viewed as merely a personal matter but a family matter. There are four stages that a boy and a girl need to go through before the marriage ceremony, which are not necessary to be elaborated on here, but suffice it to say that Kikuyu marriage is based on mutual love and the gratification of sexual instinct between two individuals (Kenyatta 1978:163-164).

Traditionally, Kikuyus exercised polygamy. The Kikuyu customary law provides that a man may have as many wives as he can support and that the larger one's family the better it was for him and the tribe. According to Kenyatta (1978:178-179), "The Kikuyu were taught from childhood that to be a man is to be able to love and keep a homestead with as many wives as possible." Kenyatta (1978:271) also asserts that African social structure is based on polygamy. The reasons for polygamy are explained in several ways. One of the strong contributing factors to polygamy is love of children. Africans believe that each individual, male or female, is a channel for the transmission of life, and that it is wrong to interrupt that transmission. Therefore, in Africa one must not only be married but also have children. From this concept come the ideas that a childless marriage is a failure and that polygamy should be forced (Wanjohi 2005:41-42). Kenyatta (1978:13) claims that if a man dies without a male child, his family group comes to an end under the patrilineal system. That is what the Kikuyu fear dreadfully, and it is another reason for polygamous marriages. Leakey (1952:17), on the other hand, explains polygamous marriage in terms of surplus of girls in the Kikuyu society,

There seems to have been always a surplus of girls, and since the social and economic structure of the tribe had no place for unmarried girls once they had passed a certain age, such surplus girls who failed to find a young man who wanted them as first or senior wife had to be content with becoming second or third wives in a polygamous household.

The reasons for polygamy presented above are far from the erroneous misconception that non-Africans may hold that polygamy is the result of man's lust. Leakey (1952:17) goes on to explain that in many cases the second wife is introduced to the husband by his first wife or the would-be second wife's family. In either case, the girl, for some reason, was not able to find a position as a senior wife. Such marriages were by no means unhappy but in a sense accepted because there were no other alternatives.

There is one thing that needs to be mentioned here about marriage. It is called dowry, bride price, or marriage insurance. An agreed number of goats and sheep was handed over to the bride's family as a guarantee of good faith on the part of the groom's family that the young man would make a good husband in accordance with law and custom. On the other hand, the acceptance of the stock by the bride's family was equally a guarantee that they, on their part, believed that the girl would make a good wife. If the marriage was to break down later as a result of the man's failure to behave properly, his family would lose all the marriage insurance and his wife would be allowed to return to her own people. However, if the marriage fails by fault of the woman, her family would have to hand back the stock they received as marriage insurance with all the offspring from the stock. This system of marriage insurance was a great stabilizer of marriage in a society where divorce was strongly discouraged (Leakey 1952:15-16).

The idea of sharing among the Kikuyu was so strong that it extended even to the area of marriage. Kenyatta (1978:181) explains it as follows:

If the visitors come from far away and they are to spend the night in the homestead, the arrangements for their accommodation are made according to the rules and customs governing the social affairs among the age-group. On these occasions the wives exercise their freedom, which amount to something like polyandry. Each wife is free to choose anyone among the age-group and give him accommodation for the night. This is looked upon as purely social intercourse and no feeling of jealousy or evil is attached to it on the part of the husband or wife. This is sort of collective enjoyment.

The husband also enjoyed some measure of freedom in his own hut, but later informed his wives. This freedom given to both men and women in the marriage context gave the Kikuyu a sense of social unity that they are one (Leakey 1952:18).

3.6.1.3 Gender

Gender is a term that has psychological and cultural connotations rather than biological and has to do with learned or socially acquired patterns of behaviour over time (Kaamaara 2005:22). Cultural attitudes towards gender, therefore, do not change easily as El Saadawi (1980:ix) contends “Time and time again, life has proved that, whereas political and economic change can take place rapidly, social and cultural progress tends to lag behind because it is linked to the deep inner motive and psychic processes of the human mind and heart.”

In Africa, gender distinction has remained strong until recently. The man is the sole head of his family and provider of its material needs. He is the decision-maker in the family although the woman is the main food producer. Women as mothers also take the main responsibility for raising children and helping form their character. In regards to position of man and woman in traditional Africa including the Kikuyu, the man was often placed above the woman and had more access to resources, opportunities, decision-making, and other rights. For example, if a woman became widowed, the traditional practice was that the male in-laws assumed the ownership of the dead husband’s land and the wife was denied any access to the land. Men also believed that they owned their wives and had the “right” to discipline them in any way they found fit after the payment of dowry. That explains the prevalent practice of wife-beating in African countries (Chesaina 2005:204-210).

In case of the Kikuyu, their customary law recognised the freedom and independence of every member of the tribe including females. Although their society was patriarchal and patrilineal, female children were looked upon as the connecting-link between one generation and another and one clan and another through marriage, and thus they were valued (Kenyatta 1978:174-

175). Traditionally, boys followed their elder brothers herding the goats and sheep and learning necessary skills while girls accompanied their mothers on the daily household and agricultural duties learning all the skills they would need to become good wives and mothers (Kenyatta 1978:21-22).

When it comes to accepting appropriate gender awareness and behaviours on the part of boys and girls, the initiation process played a crucial role. Kaamaara (2005:23-32) presents an excellent argument about the role and function of initiation rites how they affect the initiates regarding their specific gender roles afterwards. She contends that since initiation occurs typically at the critical psycho-sexual stage of human development, it makes explicit the difference between male and female social and sexual roles. Initiation rites also internalise the masculine and feminine roles in the initiates. In other words, men are the heads of their families and must be authoritative, and women must be submissive. Since the Kikuyu traditionally practiced circumcision for boys and clitoridectomy (removal of clitoris) for girls, these initiation rites promoted male dominance and diminished female power. Kaamaara's following statement explains the point well.

Through the initiation process, the major male gender attribute of dominance and the female gender attribute of subordination are inculcated. The major cultural male gender attributes common to all traditional Kenyan societies were therefore, social and psychological dominance. From a very tender age, for instance, boys were made to feel that men are powerful and authoritative. Within the Kikuyu community male initiation process, boys were expected to dominate and to force girls into desired sexual action...On the other hand, girls were socialized on how to submit to men. Women who deviated or who questioned male authority were ridiculed and punished, while those who were unquestioningly obedient, were praised and rewarded.

(Kaamaara 2005:31-32)

While sex is determined and naturally recognized at birth, initiation confers gender on individuals.

3.6.1.4 Economic subsystem

The traditional Kikuyu society was organized and functioned under the patrilineal system so the father was the supreme ruler of the homestead, owner of everything, and the custodian of the family property. As agriculturalists, the Kikuyu depended entirely on the land, and the soil was honoured especially. In all social, economic, and political life of the tribe, therefore, the most important factor was land tenure. The land did not belong to the community but to those individual founders of the various families who had the full rights of ownership and the control of the land. The boundaries were properly fixed, and everyone respected his neighbour's property. When land disputes arose, the council of elders intervened to solve the problems (Kenya 1978:8-33).

Since land is the most important economic factor as agriculturalists, every Kikuyu had a great desire to own a piece of land on which to build his home and establish his livelihood. Each family consisting of a man, his wife or wives, and their children constituted an economic unit. In the economy of the Kikuyu domestic animals also played an important part. The domestic animals were used not only for food sources but also for marriage insurance and religious rites. Thus, rearing of livestock had social, economic and religious applications. A man was considered rich when he owned a number of cattle (Kenya 1978:53-66).

Besides the issues of land and livestock, the Kikuyu "work-ethic" and economic mindset were the momentum that brought the Kikuyu to their present economic status. They exploited their land to the full production of food far beyond what they needed (Feddens & Salvadori 1979:119).

3.6.1.5 Political subsystem

According to Jomo Kenya (1978:186-189), the Kikuyu system of government prior to the arrival of the Europeans was based on the democratic principles. In order to give an idea of the Kikuyu governing system, I would like to present some rules of the Kikuyu tribal government: (1) People were given freedom to acquire and develop land under a system of family

ownership; (2) People were given universal tribal membership. Every member, after passing through the circumcision ceremony, should take an active part in the government. Males should go through the initiation ceremony between the ages of sixteen and eighteen and females between the ages of ten and fourteen; (3) Socially and politically all circumcised men and women should be equally full members of the tribe; (4) The government should be in the hands of councils of elders chosen from all members of the community, who had reached the age of eldership having retired from warriorhood; (5) All young men between the ages of eighteen and forty should form a warrior class and be ready to defend the country; (6) In times of need, the government should ask the people to contribute in rotation sheep, goats, or cattle for national sacrifices or other ceremonies performed for the welfare of the whole people; (7) To keep democracy the government offices should be based on a rotation system of generations; (8) All men and women must get married and that no man should be allowed to hold a responsible position (other than warrior) or become a member of the council of elders unless he was married and had established his own homestead. And women should be given the same social status as their husbands; (9) Criminal and civil laws were established and procedures were clearly defined.

As seen from the rules of the government mentioned above, the Kikuyu advocated democracy and thus to them submission to a despotic rule of any particular man or a group was the greatest humiliation (Kenyatta 1978:196).

Fedders and Salvadori's (1979:119) comment summarises the economic and political contribution of the Kikuyu to Kenya.

In sum, it may be safe to generalize that in the traditional culture of the Kikuyu people one is able to detect, in microcosm, two features of life which are characteristic of contemporary Kenya: a basically egalitarian, democratic political system; and a productive, expanding free market system of economy. Now, these two features are by no means exclusively Kikuyu. They are shared by most of the cultures of the peoples of Kenya....At present, as the numerically largest group in Kenya, the Kikuyu people are the custodians of both these institutions.

3.6.2 Changes

From the latter half of the nineteenth century, Africa started experiencing changes that would alter their course of life permanently. These changes were encompassing involving the whole areas of their lives: religious, social, economic, and political (Mbiti 2002:216). The Kikuyu were not an exception. Christianity from Western Europe and America not only came with the gospel but also with it brought western culture, technology, medicine, schools, and politics. In case of the Kikuyu, the coming of the British East Africa Company to the Kikuyu land was followed by Christian missions such as the Church of Scotland Mission in Thogoto, the Church Missionary Society in Kabete, and the Catholic White Fathers at St Austin's near Nairobi. Missionaries built schools, hospitals, and dispensaries and taught Kikuyus improved method of agriculture (Leakey 1952:58-59). These schools that missionaries built became the nursery for changes since the students learned not only Christianity but also western culture and civilization, which made them gradually detached from their tribal culture and customs. Changes were inevitable.

3.6.2.1 Social realm

The one area that was most affected by this change is the family. Family used to be the nucleus of individual and corporate existence, but the introduction of formal western education, the new religion, economy, politics, and social structures made permanent changes in the Kenyan family including the Kikuyu. Individuals were not connected to each other as before but lost in the mass, especially in urban settings. The form, structure and function of the family changed. The concept of the family changed from the traditional extended family to the modern immediate family where the parents and their children constitute the family unit (Kithinji 2005:274-275). About urbanisation and its consequences, Mbiti (2002:226) says the following, "One of the most serious problems precipitated by city life in Africa is the situation which forces the men to work in town while their wives and children remain in the country...[T]he wife is both mother and father to the children." Furthermore, when problems arose within the family, it became more difficult since the protective cover under the traditional setting had disappeared. Leakey's

(1952:75) observation and statement made half a century ago still make sense. “Again under the present day condition where young couples are detached from their respective families due to work in urban areas, it became more and more difficult for their families to reach out for them in case of marriage problems and the result is break-up of many marriages.” Because of these changes, the family is no longer that close-knit entity which offered love, security, and a sense of belonging to its members. Traditional roles of men and women have also changed and been mixed up (Kithinji 2005:276).

Mbae (2005:43-49) points out several other social changes in the area of family. According to him, even the concept of immediate family is changing. Family is no longer a man, his wife, and their children. A single mother and her children can constitute a family these days. Furthermore, compared to the traditional role of the father/husband, who took an active role in family affairs making sure that every member of the family performs his/her duty, today’s fathers/husbands are no longer involved in family life. Many fathers are under the illusion that they have done their part as long as they pay their children’s school fees and provide them with their material needs. This absence of father due to employment, drinking, etc, in the context of modernisation and urbanisation where communal aspect of responsibility is gone, all kinds of social problems emerge such as street children, increasing orphanages, delinquent youth, prostitution, and abortion.

Regarding marriage, marriage itself has become individual affairs and the concern of two persons rather than the concern of families and communities. Along with it, the intention of marriage insurance called “dowry” lost its original meaning. Traditionally, marriage insurance was paid in the form of goat, sheep, and cattle, and these animals could not be sold until it was certain that the marriage would not break down. However, since the change occurred, the idea of marriage insurance was retained, but the meaning was lost completely. Nowadays, the marriage insurance is paid in cash. Dowry has become a terrible burden on young people (Leakey 1952:74), and “[t]oday...there is a tendency on the part of some people to be exploitative in this matter, thereby

causing hardships to the newly-married couple” (Kibera 2005:35). Wanjohi and Wanjohi’s (2005:40) following statement reveals the present picture.

Due to the individualism and selfishness which have accompanied modern life, some parents ask too much money as bride price. One very serious result of this is to make nonsense of the original aim of the institution of bride price, making it degenerate into a form of commodity exchange, a wife-buying activity.

Another significant change in the social realm is the disappearance of the traditional meaning of initiation. Traditionally, the purpose of the initiation rites was to extend to the initiates proper citizenship and the responsibilities of adult life. They were linked to the tribal religious beliefs and practices. However, modernisation reduced this most important tribal custom to nothing but a hurried performance of surgical operation without necessary character training. Young men and women were not restrained anymore by the old tradition that discouraged full sexual intercourse until marriage. The consequence was a steady increase of pregnant girls before marriage and the ensuing social problems (Leakey 1952:23, 76).

Under the present condition, young boys and girls get little education in the area of behaviour and character training, which were all part of the organised tribal educational system. Mbiti’s (2002:227) observation regarding this change is presented below:

These schools spend more time teaching young people about dissecting frogs and about colonial history than they ever spend teaching them how to establish happy home and family lives. Unless this structure and system of education is changed, we are heading for tragic social, moral and family chaos whose harvest is not far away...Education is perhaps the greatest cry in Africa today.

Whether the effect of modern-day education is positive or negative, the Kikuyu’s thirst for education is insatiable. It provides them with the keys for better salaries, a higher capacity, and a better chance to satisfy their needs (Leakey 1952:77). Leakey’s claims are still applicable and can be confirmed

by my research participants since they all have great desire to pursue further education, and some are engaged in it currently.

3.6.2.2 Economic realm

Economically speaking, colonisation and westernisation brought a money economy to the continent of Africa. This new economic system also introduced the concept of time as a commodity to be sold and bought (Mbiti 2002:220). However, the most important economic issue was land since the Kikuyu were traditionally attached to land as agriculturalists. Land was vital for their survival and sustenance. Kenyatta's (1978:317) claim makes sense, "When the European comes to the Gikuyu country and robs the people of their land, he is taking away not their livelihood, but the material symbol that holds family and tribe together." Leakey's (1952:64-67) explanation of the land issue between the Kikuyu and the settlers in early 1900s is helpful to understand the continued Kikuyu resistance to the colonialists in the 20th century until independence.

The coming of missionaries and administrators was followed about 1902 by the arrival of the first settlers...These men and their wives wanted land, land which they could call their own, where they could build their homes and rear their families. They saw the nearly empty country, which had once been part of the 'vast garden' described by the early travellers in the previous century...Although these settlers paid for the land they desired, for the Kikuyu these payments did not and could not even rank as purchase of the land; at best they could only rank as payments for the right to cultivate, subject always to the real owner being allowed to evict the occupier at some future date....So from the Kikuyu point of view one of the rights acquired in Kikuyu land by the white settlers, were considered as vesting ownership in the newcomers, while from the point of view of British law, and the country was now administered by the British, the transactions were wholly valid and had been made in absolute good faith....After the First World War the members of Kikuyu land-owning families returned to their land and found out that the European farmers claimed the land as their own property. So in 1922 the first Kikuyu political organization led by a band of young men fired with immense patriotism and armed with a little learning made the first slogan of their party 'We must be given back the lands which the white man has stolen from us.'

Sharing was a virtue among traditional African societies. It provided them with a form of insurance against total impoverishment. When calamity struck, a man who shared his wealth was able to rebuild it again by receiving gifts from his relatives, age-mates, neighbours and friends. Among the Kikuyu, this sharing was evident as well when the owner(s) of land granted farming rights to the less fortunate members of the community as the following Kikuyu proverb indicates, “The land does not benefit the one who clears it but the newcomer/tenant-at-will” (Munene 2005:26-27). However, people have tended to abuse this noble concept of sharing through the practice of *harambee*. *Harambee* literally means "pulling together" in Kiswahili (an official language of Kenya). It is a Kenyan tradition of community self-help events, which have been used as ways to build and maintain communities by pulling resources together for personal and community events. Politicians used *harambee* to gain popularity in their constituencies by donating large sums of money to various *harambee* events. Despite all the positive effects of *harambee*, according to Munene (2005:30), people are getting tired of those who abuse other people's kindness and generosity.

3.6.2.3 Political arena

In the political arena, the changes the Kikuyu experienced together with other tribes in Kenya was also immense. The traditional Kikuyu ruling system of the elder council was replaced by newly appointed chiefs under the colonial government. The Kikuyu had not had one single tribal chief but a council of elders who governed the tribe although there was a spokesperson. The colonial government mistook this spokesperson as the chief and imposed an unfamiliar system on the Kikuyu (Leakey 1952:35).

Kenyan politics cannot be discussed without Kikuyu politics. The Kikuyu tribe is not only the largest tribe in Kenya but also played a major role in bringing Kenya to independence. The first Kikuyu political organisation known as The Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) came into being in 1922 with the catchphrase regarding the recovery of the “lost lands” of the Kikuyu. Later, the Kikuyu Central Association took on the issue of female genital mutilation known as F G M, which the Church of Scotland Mission objected to due to the

familiarity among the young men and women after initiation let alone the practice itself. The Kikuyu Central Association attacked the white man especially missionaries by saying, “First the land has been taken from us—actually only a small part had been taken and that in good faith—and now they attack our most sacred customs; what will they do next?” This episode led to the establishment of many Kikuyu separatist churches and independent schools (Leakey 1952:87-90).

Later, when the Kikuyu Central Association was banned by the colonial government, another political organisation came into being called Kenya African Union (KAU), whose leadership was mainly Kikuyu from the banned Kikuyu Central Association although other tribes were incorporated into the organisation. The resistance of the Kikuyu to the colonial government led by the radical members of the Kenya African Union culminated in the Kikuyu revolt known as Mau Mau (De Jong 2000:60-61) from the late 1940s until the early 1950s. After the Mau Mau revolt, Kenya moved on further to independence and attained freedom in 1963 under the KANU (Kenya African National Union) led by Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of independent Kenya.

It is worthwhile to mention the Mau Mau here. It was the Kikuyu-led revolt against the white man and the colonial government. Welbourn (1965:140) writes:

But Mau, Mau, when it came, was an expression of the determination of almost a whole tribe—even of many who disapproved the form which it took. It was a determination to be rid, once for all, of the ‘new situation’, of the Europeans with whom it has proved impossible to come to terms.

The main issue was land, and they recruited members using secret oath-taking by force. The Kikuyu feared the consequences of breaking the oath, and Mau Mau leaders took advantage of this fear to expand the support base of the revolt. One of the phrases in Mau Mau oath ceremony was “If I do anything to give away this organisation to the enemy, may I be killed by the oath.” After taking such an oath, no ordinary Kikuyu would go to the police

because he would be breaking the oath and calling down supernatural penalties upon himself or his family members. However, according to the Kikuyu traditional law, an oath taken against his will and without the consent of family members was not valid. Knowing this, the Kikuyu Christians who experienced genuine conversion had no fear of supernatural punishment for breaking the heathen oath which they took against their will so they reported the case to the police. The Kikuyu also organised tribe-wide cleansing ceremonies and mass meetings to call upon people to resist and denounce the Mau Mau (Leakey 1952:95-104).

There were several groups among the Kikuyu who refused to take the Mau Mau oath and who were regarded as its enemies by the Mau Mau: these were, first of all, government administrative staff, those who were loyal to the British administration for one reason or another; those who were committed Christians, especially the Revival brethren who knew the superior power of God; and the old guard traditional Kikuyu who did not recognise the Mau Mau oath as a true Kikuyu oath (Wilkinson 1994:133).

The evaluations of the Mau Mau are varied depending on who looks at the event from what perspective. With whatever perspective one looks at the event, either religiously (return to the Kikuyu tribal religion), socio-culturally (cultural alienation), economically (economic depravation), or politically (political oppression), one thing is certain. It affected Kenya and especially the Kikuyu so significantly that it hastened the process of national independence. Furthermore, the role that the religious belief played in the revolt is significant proof again that the Kikuyu are truly religious, whether they are pagan or Christian.

3.6.2.4 Changes in research participants

My research participants are not an exception to all the changes that have taken place. They all have undergone changes to varying degrees. Regarding family, my research participants' families consist of the immediate family. Although their parent(s) visit them, they live with their children most of the time. No research participants practice polygamy. In the case of men, they paid

dowry or marriage insurance when they got married. Two of my male research participants paid a real dowry, and one paid a symbolic dowry. They felt a little uncomfortable when I asked them how much they had paid. One male participant, who has grown-up children, said he did not demand dowry from his son-in-law when his daughter got married. He pointed out that even though he himself had paid a dowry to his father-in-law, he did not demand dowry from his son-in-law thus enjoying a better relationship with him.

Regarding initiation, none of my research participants went through the initiation ceremony. Female research participants did not go through the traditional initiation ceremonies at all. They were brought up with Christianity and were able to avoid the age-old practice. Male participants did go through initiation not in a traditional way but at a clinic or hospital without traditional ceremonies. There was nothing special except that it was a modern-day circumcision. So they do not have age-mates since age-mates or age-grades are the outcome of traditional initiation ceremonies. Actually, age-grades disappeared at the end of the 19th century. Nowadays, there is a movement within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. They started hosting youth meetings in lieu of the traditional initiation ceremonies to teach their youth the importance of purity, the danger of AIDS, biblical morality, and responsibility of adult citizenship, similar to the moral lessons that were given to the Kikuyu.

As far as gender issues are concerned, the research participants all live in sort of a patriarchal setting. However, my observation of their families is that there was more cooperation than authority and more equality than hierarchy. Gender was not their major issue in the social realm. They seemed to accept their role and position in the family without much conflict.

Economically speaking, they were sensitive and very alert in this area. Land was essential to them. All of them have at least one piece of land in the rural area. This confirms the fact that land is indispensable for the Kikuyu. They have a house or plan to build one; and they raise animals, such as chickens, goats, and cattle. Owning a cow or two is considered necessary not only for the sake of status but for practical reasons. Milk can be sold and bring cash to

the family. Two of my research participants own personal vehicles that their parish bought for them. Some research participants struggle financially not in lack of food or life necessities but because of the burden to pay tuition for their children's education. In Kenya primary education is free, but they need to pay tuition for secondary schooling and above. It seems like both husband and wife must work to bring in more income to the family except in one, more fortunate, participant's case.

In Kenya, politics is a major topic. The front page of major newspapers is always about politics. Kenyan politics is so much engrained in the lives of ordinary people that pastors are not an exception. One research participant said, "The church was involved in the inception of this nation." The church has been involved in Kenyan politics from the beginning. My male research participants showed keen interest in politics too. They know what is going on in the political arena. One research participant says the Kenyan politics is tribal; tribal affiliation in politics is primary, and without understanding the spiritual aspect of tribal politics, one cannot understand Kenyan politics. This confirms that spirituality affects politics and vice versa. They are intertwined in traditional mindset.

3.6.3 Contemporary socio-economic-political phenomena

It is worthwhile to mention the current social and cultural milieu of the Kenyan society where my research participants live. Although they may not experience the following stresses directly, surely their spirituality is affected.

3.6.3.1 Urbanisation and poverty

Urbanisation is one of the major sociological trends in Africa from the beginning of the twenty first century. The moral, physical, social, practical, and individual problems associated with it are enormous (O'Donovan 2000:53). In 1920, about 14% of the world's population lived in the city. In 1980 the percentage had increased to 40%. By the turn of the century, half of the world's population was urban. By the year 2025 the projected urban population is 60%. In Africa the urban population comprises around 40%, and its growth rate is twice as much as the population growth rate (O'Donovan

2000:42; Shorter 2002:61). In East Africa where Kenya is located the urbanisation rate is 7%, the world's highest rate (Zanotelli 2002:14).

Urbanisation can be defined either as the proportion of the population living in urban places, the process by which these urban places grow, or the spread of a way of life and values which have come to be associated with such places. In this sense, urbanisation occurs as a result of population growth in the country, as a whole, and associated economic, social, and political factors that draw people to urban areas (Peli and Oyeneye 1998:205-206). A voice from an in-migrant tells it.

We came to towns to look for money/employment and to be near development projects which are not in the rural areas. All sources of employment are to be found in towns, good schools and proper medical attention. Some rural places do not have an in-patient hospital. So we are here not out of choice but out of necessity

(Marenya 2002:57)

As so many people are drawn to cities and towns from the countryside, one great problem they face is unemployment and resultant poverty. Simply, job seekers outnumber job opportunities. Labour becomes cheap while housing costs skyrocket. Housing has become a major problem in cities and towns, which resulted in the growth of slums, squatter villages, and shantytowns. In Nairobi slums hold 60% of the city's population (Shorter 2002:65). Two of my research participants are from slum churches, and the church of another participant is located next to a slum area. The slum is a miniature society where all kinds of human activities, good or bad, are done in a smaller scale, and they form a subculture. Poverty in the slum is dire, and slum living is characterised by complex problems. The World Bank's report on poverty lists the following as the characteristics of ill-being, commonly associated with slum living: material lack, bad social relations (exclusion, rejection, isolation, and loneliness), powerlessness and helplessness, frustration and anger, humiliation (stigma and shame), the politics of infrastructure (feeling of abandonment by their government), and environmental risks (Narayan et al 2000). Slum dwellers are exposed to infectious diseases such as cholera and

typhoid. Inadequate or the absence of running water, inadequate toilet facilities, no sewer system, and no electricity make slum living desperate. Slum dwellers also experience insecurity, immorality and sexual abuse, drug abuse and alcoholism, and domestic violence more frequently than non-slum dwellers because of their environment (Marenya 2002:50-58), which is simply too conducive to such troubles. Urban poverty is more acutely felt than rural poverty since the traditional supporting structure of a community does not exist in the slum. The formation of slums is an ugly adverse effect of African modernisation and urbanisation. Its existence reveals social, economic, environmental, and political constraints of the society.

3.6.3.2 HIV/AIDS

AIDS ends all hope. In the early and mid 1980s HIV/AIDS was largely unknown in Kenya, although as early as 1981 HIV started infecting some Kenyans. A couple of decades later on 25 November 1999, the then president, Daniel Arap Moi declared AIDS a national disaster (Kamaara 2005:50-51). HIV/AIDS is a complex problem that affects all aspects of human life, and the causes of its spread are also complicated. One cannot deny the fact that HIV/AIDS is related to poverty. Urbanisation produced the urban poor and the slum. While men tried to find manual jobs, women either found domestic jobs or were desperately driven to prostitution for survival. Sociologist/theologian Shorter (2002:68) explains the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the slum:

Prostitution of women and children is one of the commonest ways of making a living in the slums. The preponderance of male migrants, the need for female economic independence, the phenomenon of street children and the reality of crowded living conditions all favour it. The absence of normal family relationships and the morally disorienting experience of the shanty towns favour sexual promiscuity. This also means that the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS is high.

Another sociologist Kaamara (2005:63) describes HIV/AIDS ramifications on gender:

HIV/AIDS is a gender issue, but women suffer more from the scourge than men. This is because of the women's physiological make-up and the economic and socio-cultural

factors. Economically, women are more vulnerable to HIV infection than men because most women are disadvantaged as far as access to property and control of resources is concerned

Kamaara (2005:70-76) continues to explain that cultural expectations in traditional Africa was for men to have sexual experiences before marriage unlike women, and that socio-cultural expectations of male dominance and female subordination account for the contemporary youth's sexual behaviour and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Contemporary Kenya experiences changing value systems. While the traditional value of male dominance or patriarchal system still lingers, individuals enjoy freedom of action due to introduction of westernisation. Christian morals are taught but not as much practiced. In this process of social transformation, it is the youth who are greatly affected, and the most productive age group, those between 15-45 years of age, is most affected with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. AIDS related death is a daily Kenyan experience.

3.6.3.3 Tribal politics and corruption

After independence in 1963, the KANU government was both a truly political party and a tribal government (Gachukia 2005:103). However, the evolution of Kenyan politics from 1963 through the late 1970s saw a decline in the importance of the party and an increasing importance of the tribe as the first preoccupation of most political leaders. By the time Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, died, the tribal factor had almost completely overshadowed national considerations in the mind of most politicians, both inside and outside of the government. All sober minded Kenyans of whatever tribe would agree that they have had enough of tribal politics. The concern of politicians is simply to have their turn to commit the same misdeeds as their predecessors and also avenge their suffering—whether real or imagined. Most political leaders today not only talk tribal, but they actually think tribal, which is more dangerous. They are so concerned about their tribe that they have no time to think about the welfare of Kenya (Gachukia 2005: 103-105). Gachukia (2005:106) continues to say that, "Our plight as a country is not due to 'international situation' or 'forces beyond our control.' Our plight is due, first

and foremost, to one factor: politics based on the premise: now it is the turn of my tribe to benefit.” Even Christian loyalty was not able to save politicians and religious leaders from tribalism. As seen before, initially the East African Revival Movement spread crossing tribal barriers, but the faith of the members of the Revival became subject to tribal ideals (Okullu 1974:44).

The church in Kenya has been involved in politics, as the following statement shows: “If you believe in the God of Jesus, the God of life, it is not possible to avoid becoming involved in politics” (Abeledo 2002:115). Religion and politics are closely connected in Africa. At independence, the government of Kenya started out as a single party in 1963, but the government legalised multiparty politics in 1991. In the process the church played a crucial role.

The church not only ignited but also sustained the struggle for multiparty rule. It provided the moral rationale and base from which other movements mobilized. Had the Church not opened the critical political space, Kenya would perhaps to date be a single party state.

(Kamaara 2004:131)

The church continued to give influence to politics. The Ufungamano Initiative, which was led by religious groups for constitutional review, played a significant role in unifying opposition parties to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), which stopped 39 years of rule by the KANU government.

The Kikuyu tribe is at the heart of Kenyan politics. The first president, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta was a Kikuyu. The current president, Hon Mwai Kibaki, is also a Kikuyu. It is a well-known fact that the Kikuyu are hard-working. They had fertile soil and good rains. From early on, they had advantages of contacting the western civilisation. They have fared well politically and economically. They are the most influential group in Kenya. Okullu (1974:46) says the following:

By virtue of this they became more politically conscious, commercially competent and educationally more advanced than any other tribe...But what must be condemned as utterly evil is any attempt to perpetuate that position by using unjust

means because of thinking that that particular community is a 'chosen people.'

One of the research participants showed the same concern about Kikuyu pride telling me that the Kikuyu should share their resources with others.

Besides tribalism, there is another matter that concerns the whole country. This matter has been talked about almost every day in Kenyan newspapers recently. Almost all the countries in Africa are struggling with it. It is the matter of corruption. Corruption can be defined as an anti-social behaviour that confers improper benefits contrary to legal and moral norms and is a widespread phenomenon in Africa (Osoba 1999:371). The dynamics of corruption comes from leaders and civil servants on the one hand and ordinary citizens who need social services on the other. Bureaucratic procedural loopholes, greed, inadequate income, and the erosion of moral standards can fuel corruption (Tarimo 2004:60). Unlike corruption of low-ranking officials for the sake of survival, political corruption involves high-ranking public officials who run the affairs of the state. Their use of illegal and unethical means to exploit their official positions produces quite negative consequences (Gyekye 1997:203). Tarimo (2004:61) enumerates the consequences of corruption as follows:

Political corruption produces negative consequences. Politically, it misuses the power of the state, affects political stability, and hinders administrative development and the formation of a comprehensive socio-political organization. Economically, it stifles personal initiative, creativity, and commitment to the ideals of human rights and social justice. In the long run political corruption degrades the standard of public service, moral responsibility, and the sense of the common good.

Although Machiavelli and Mortenthau accept prudence—the weighing of the consequences of alternative political actions—and opportunism as virtues in politics, politicians must exhibit integrity and honesty because of the far-reaching consequences of the conducts of political leaders (Orwa 2005:113).

3.6.4 Summary of subsystem and its relationship with the spirituality of the research participants

The cultural subsystems that have been examined in this section, that is, society, economy, and politics, are inseparably integrated into the religious/spiritual area in Africa. The comprehensive nature of spirituality encompasses all these subsystems. Thereby, spirituality truly affects all the realms of life. At the same time, all subsystems contribute to the evolution of the spiritual realm by enriching, adding concrete dimensions and flavours, and working sometimes as constraints and other times as facilitators. One research participant's (Sam) comment deserves attention: "For quite some time up to a certain time, maybe five or six years ago, Christianity affected society but now society is affecting the church." It can be construed that the church's role to impact the society is diminishing and that secular society gives more impact to the church.

The concrete expressions of their spirituality in the current socio-economic-political milieu of the Kikuyu society can be enumerated as follows: the desire to be involved in leadership transformation in the society; the slum church's ever-present economic constraint; the ministers' adaptation to the changing social make-up of their congregation and the use of English and Kiswahili over Kikuyu language in worship services; keeping both traditional and Christian gender-roles in their families; pursuit of higher academic degree for advancement in their career; acquisition of a piece(s) of land for the future; and endeavour to build their families on biblical values. My research participants have been affected by their context, but at the same time they strive to make a positive impact.

The following statements can be made regarding the subsystem and the spirituality of the research participant:

- Economic constraints in their context have made all my research participants sensitive to and conscious of their needs for survival and well-being. Their spirituality reflects economic consciousness.

- Social issues of orphans, HIV/AIDS, single mothers, street children, slums, unemployment, etc are realities in Kenya. The churches including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa face enormous challenges, and the research participants are also aware of and feel this. In other words, the society challenges the spirituality of the research participants greatly. However, what they can do in these matters is limited.
- Kenyan politics do not interfere with church matters, and the church's position to politics seems neutral. One of my research participants said that Christians wanted to know the church's position in political matters and that the church needed to clarify its position. Another one said that the church has to be involved in politics since it affects people's lives. My research participants did not criticise their government but were rather supportive. Perhaps it is due to tribal affiliation (the current president, Mwai Kibaki, is a Kikuyu). The spirituality of my research participants seems politically conscious (almost everyone in Kenya) but not seriously involved.

3.7 CONCLUSION OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter I have tried to describe and interpret all the aspects of the spirituality of the research participants as comprehensively as possible from the cultural anthropological framework. First, I discussed the worldview of the research participants. Then, I have examined the various religious traditions that have contributed to the formation of the spirituality of the research participants. As seen in this chapter, these religious traditions are still vital factors in their spirituality. Thirdly, socio-economic-political subsystems were discussed as significant parts of their spirituality.

3.7.1 Summary of traditions

In regards to the Kikuyu traditional worldview, it will continue to go through modification, but will persist since worldviews are hard to change as

discussed in worldview change section (3.4.2). The following shows the worldview of the research participants as underlying values.

- The worldviews that my research participants confirmed are holistic perception of reality and God-centred or spirit-centred universe. These two worldview assumptions seem to be more foundational than other assumptions.
- The categories of worldview that underwent some changes are those of social values: the group identity of self, value of relationship, respect of old age, and the value of cooperation. The fact that social values have changed somewhat reveals the influence of western individualism. The area where changes occurred the most is the area of time. My research participants showed future and linear time orientation, and they are also conscious of quantity of time. Time consciousness was the most susceptible to changes.

Religious traditions supplied the core content of the spirituality of the research participants: Kikuyu Traditional Religion, mission Christianity, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the East African Revival Movement, and the charismatic movement. The following statements summarise each tradition's contribution to the spirituality of the research participants.

- The research participants have retained spiritual world but with modified configuration. That is, their spiritual world appears Christian rather than African traditional. Their spirituality is a mixture of communal and individual spirituality. The pragmatic aspect of the Kikuyu Traditional Religion seems replaced by God-centred spirituality as well.
- Mission Christianity brought about holistic changes in the lives of the Kikuyu, that is, in the socio-economic-religious-political structure. Mission Christianity's main contribution to the Kikuyu is in the area of education, health, and western civilisation through *kusoma* spirituality. It provided basic Christian spiritual formation and the

awareness of a new status of women for Kenyans as well as the research participants.

- As a part of mission Christianity, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa provides religious identity for my research participants. Its organised yet flexible structure makes them feel free to exercise their spirituality. Another area of strength of the Presbyterian Church is its recent effort in reformation in order to be relevant with the times. Being a Kikuyu dominant denomination, the Presbyterian denomination experiences limitation in expansion to other tribes despite its efforts.
- The East African Revival Movement contributed to East African expression of faith along with new ecumenical sense of fellowship across denominational and tribal lines. More profoundly, through personal and direct encounter with Christ, it added a new dimension of spiritual experience to the research participants and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.
- Charismatic movement added yet another important element to the spirituality of the research participants by introducing contextual and holistic understanding of spirituality. African Christians seem to feel liberated through the exercise of this Pneumatocentric spirituality.

Cultural subsystems, the most outlying layer of culture, interact with religion and worldview by influencing them and being influenced by them as well. The following statement is relevant to the spirituality of the research participants.

- Social, economic, and political context present serious challenges to the research participants. Their spirituality seems to be more shaped by these challenges than the other way around.

In this chapter, I have followed Kraft's cultural anthropological framework to examine the common spiritual traditions of the research participants identified

in chapter two, and the spirituality informed and nourished by these traditions has been described and interpreted.

3.7.2 Characteristics of the spirituality of the research participants

In chapter one the characteristics of spirituality were summarised as follows:

- Understood in the context of relationship with God
- Integration of all aspects of human life both religious and human
- Interdisciplinary, interreligious, ecumenical, and cross-cultural
- Scripture and the history of Christianity as its norms and hermeneutical context
- Transformative

In chapters two and three, the first two characteristics of spirituality were examined: “Understood in the context of relationship with God” and “integration of all aspects of human life both religious and human.” Regarding the first characteristic “spirituality is understood in the context of relationship with God,” I have examined the Kikuyu traditional understanding of God in the Kikuyu Traditional Religion section, which has some bearing on the spirituality of the research participants. And then I have shown the relationship of the research participants with Christian God through the examination of different religious traditions. It can be summarised as follows:

- They understand that their Kikuyu God, *Ngai*, is the same God as the God of the Bible. They think the character of *Ngai* is not the same as Yahweh but that there is continuity.
- Christian God takes a central position in their lives, and they want to be more like God and live with him. They experienced God through visions, prayers, sovereign leading, and the Scriptures. Spiritual growth aspect is a part of their spirituality. In other words, their relationship with God is not static but dynamic. They also believe faith should be supported by actions. It means that their relationship with God is not internal only but has external social dimensions

(from the definition of spirituality by research participants in chapter two).

- Their relationship with God is a personal relationship with Christ (Christological). Their experience of salvation is real and concrete (chapter two and three).
- Their understanding of God is Spirit-centred (Pneumatological), and the charismatic expression is an important characteristic of their spirituality. There is a struggle in the Presbyterian denomination between the conservative and charismatic.
- Their relationship with God is scriptural as well. They regard the teachings of the Bible as essential for their ministry. One interesting observation was that it seems that they are not completely satisfied with charismatic spirituality but that deeper spiritual satisfaction is derived from the word of God (from chapter two).

The second characteristic of spirituality, “integration of all aspects of human life both religious and human” was shown also throughout chapter two and three. Chapter two gave a unique and individual experience of research participants both religious and human, and chapter three gave detailed discussion of worldviews and socio-economic-political subsystems, which are all related to the comprehensive understanding of the spirituality of the research participants.

The third character “interdisciplinary conversation” has been engaged in this chapter, mainly through cultural anthropology all throughout the chapter and sociology in the socio-economic-political section of this chapter. More interdisciplinary dialogue will continue in chapter five.

The fourth character “Scripture and the history of Christianity as its norms and hermeneutical context” will be examined in chapter four, and the fifth character “transformation” will be discussed in chapter five.

3.7.3 Questions formulated

The questions captured from the statements above are as follows:

- Would mission Christianity including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa continue to be an effective form of Christianity in Kenya and among the Kikuyu?
- What is the relationship between charismatic spirituality and the contextual spirituality of East Africa?
- How can spirituality shape and influence the socio-economic-political context more than it being influenced by the context?
- What would the biblical and historical spirituality suggest to the spiritualities of the research participants?

The questions listed above will be further discussed in chapter five, and now I will turn to biblical and historical spirituality, which will provide norms and grids for deeper evaluation of these questions.