

**SPIRITUALITY OF KENYAN PASTORS:
A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF
KIKUYU PCEA PASTORS IN NAIROBI**

By

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ABSTRACT

The subject of spirituality is descriptive, comprehensive, transformative, and interdisciplinary. This study is about the spirituality of Kikuyu PCEA (Presbyterian Church of East Africa) pastors in Nairobi. This research seeks to find expressions and meanings of Christian spirituality of the research context. Thus, the concrete aims of this research are: (1) to understand the complex spiritual/religious/cultural world of Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church in Nairobi; (2) to study biblical and historical spirituality in order to find biblical and Western-historical spiritual perspectives; (3) to have critical hermeneutical dialogue between narratives, different cultural/religious traditions, biblical/Western-historical spiritual perspectives, and African theological perspectives with a view to finding strategies for transformation of the research participants, churches in Africa, and African society at large.

To achieve the aforementioned aims of this research, a research paradigm was employed which is comprised of postfoundationalism, practical theology, narrative, and social constructionism. Postfoundationalism provided theological positioning; practical theological process laid a framework of the research as the main research methodology; narratives generated essential experiences for the research; social constructionism provided a method with which to form the realities socially which would have a relevance to the context.

Thick questions were formulated from the following studies: the narratives of the research participants, African (Kikuyu) cultural/religious traditions, Christianity's influences on the research context, and the socio-economic-political phenomena of the Kenyan society. The questions were: (1) Would mission Christianity including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa continue to be an effective form of Christianity in Kenya and among the Kikuyu?; (2) What is the relationship between charismatic spirituality and the contextual spirituality of East Africa?; (3) How can spirituality shape and influence the socio-economic-political context more than it being influenced by the context?;

(4) What would the biblical and historical spirituality suggest to the spiritualities of the research participants?

In regards to biblical/historical spiritualities, the spiritualities of both Old and New Testament and each historical period were unique, and the spirituality of each period was developed distinctively by the needs of the time. Then the fusion of horizons between the research context and biblical/historical spiritualities turned out to be a valuable process for the making of the final strategies for transformation.

The strategies for transformation reflect the essential elements of African Christian spirituality, which can be applied to the African socio-religious context beyond the scope of the current research arena. Christian spirituality in the 21st century Africa demands African expression and identity whether it means contextualisation, liberation, or reconstruction. Structures, governance, forms, and expressions of the Christianity of the past century need to be re-evaluated for the formation of authentic African Christian spirituality. African society faces tremendous challenges and pressures providing Christianity with both an unprecedented privilege and obligation to impact African society with the message of love and hope.

KEY TERMS

Spirituality

Postfoundationalism

Practical theology

Narrative

Social constructionism

Cultural anthropology: worldview, religion, and subsystems

Mission Christianity and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa

East African Revival Movement

Charismatic movement

Biblical and historical spirituality

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LIST OF FIGURES

Fig 1.1	Research paradigm	43
Fig 2.1	Definition of spirituality	87
Fig 3.1	Cultural subsystems and worldview	105
Fig 3.2	Worldview contrast	124
Fig 3.3	Kikuyu worldview change	128
Fig 3.4	Kikuyu culture	131
Fig 3.5	Kikuyu traditional religion and research participants	153
Fig 3.6	Contribution of mission Christianity	170
Fig 3.7	The spirituality of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa	184
Fig 3.8	The spirituality of the East African Revival movement	192
Fig 3.9	Characteristics of the charismatic spirituality in Africa	203
Fig 3.10	Traditions of religion and their influences	205

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
KEY TERMS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND METHOD	
1.1 The scope of the study	1
1.1.1 The researcher	1
1.1.2 Research objective	2
1.1.3 Limitation and delimitation	3
1.2 The subject of spirituality	3
1.2.1 Etymology of spirituality	4
1.2.2 Historical development of meaning	5
1.2.3 Spiritual theology vs. spirituality	6
1.2.4 Definition of spirituality	7
1.2.5 Three approaches to the study of Christian spirituality	8
1.2.6 Characteristics of spirituality	10
1.3 Research paradigm	11
1.3.1 Postfoundational	12
1.3.1.1 Modernism vs postmodernism	12
1.3.1.2 Postmodern view of reality	14
1.3.1.3 Postmodern theology	15
1.3.1.4 Foundationalism & nonfoundationalism	16
1.3.1.5 Postfoundationalism	18
1.3.1.5.1 Interpreted experience	19
1.3.1.5.2 Rationality	20
1.3.1.5.3 Interdisciplinary conversation	22
1.3.1.5.4 Critical realism	23
1.3.2 Practical	24
1.3.2.1 Four movements of practical theology	26
1.3.2.1.1 Descriptive theology	27

1.3.2.1.2 Historical and systematic practical theology	29
1.3.2.1.3 Strategic practical theology	30
1.3.3 Narrative	32
1.3.3.1 Narrative understanding	33
1.3.3.2 Narrative research	35
1.3.4 Social construction	39
1.3.5 Distinctive features of this research paradigm	43
CHAPTER 2 NARRATIVES: UNIQUE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUALITY	
2.1 Research experience	45
2.1.1 Research context	45
2.1.2 Research participants	45
2.1.3 Research process	47
2.1.4 Researcher's theological and cultural position	48
2.2 Stories of Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa	50
2.2.1 Story of Sam the Kenyan	50
2.2.1.1 Unstable childhood	50
2.2.1.2 From Anglican to Presbyterian again	51
2.2.1.3 Reforming Presbyterian Church of East Africa his mother church	51
2.2.1.4 Turning to Charismatic	53
2.2.1.5 Kikuyu but Kenyan	54
2.2.1.6 Conviction in teaching the word	55
2.2.1.7 Ministry challenges	56
2.2.1.8 Summary of Sam	57
2.2.1.9 Major themes of Sam's narrative	57
2.2.2 Story of Paul the modern Kikuyu	58
2.2.2.1 Christian family heritage	58
2.2.2.2 Multi-denominational perspective	58
2.2.2.3 Modern Kikuyu	59
2.2.2.4 Affiliation with the Presbyterian Church by choice	60
2.2.2.5 Holistic approach to ministry	62
2.2.2.6 Spiritual disciplines	62

2.2.2.7 Important issues	63
2.2.2.7.1 Leadership	63
2.2.2.7.2 Gender	63
2.2.2.7.3 Theological issue	64
2.2.2.7.4 The issue of poverty	65
2.2.2.8 Summary of Paul's narrative	66
2.2.2.9 Themes of Paul's narrative	66
2.2.3 Story of Grace the resilient	66
2.2.3.1 God's grace on childhood	66
2.2.3.2 Teacher's college and theological school	67
2.2.3.3 Modern Kikuyu	68
2.2.3.4 Strong member of the Presbyterian Church	68
2.2.3.5 Experiencing God	69
2.2.3.6 Woman's issues	70
2.2.3.7 Yearning for becoming Charismatic	72
2.2.3.8 Summary of Grace	72
2.2.3.9 Themes emerging from Grace	72
2.2.4 Story of George the Charismatic Kikuyu	73
2.2.4.1 Life synopsis	73
2.2.4.2 Baptism of the Holy Spirit	73
2.2.4.3 Total Kikuyu	74
2.2.4.4 The Presbyterian Church as an inheritance	75
2.2.4.5 Summary of George	76
2.2.4.6 Major themes of George's narrative	76
2.2.5 Story of Mary the virtuous Kikuyu minister	77
2.2.5.1 Early Christian formation	77
2.2.5.2 Theological training	77
2.2.5.3 Contribution of the East African Revival Fellowship	78
2.2.5.4 Loyal to the Presbyterian Church	78
2.2.5.5 Christian Kikuyu	79
2.2.5.6 Some issues	80
2.2.5.7 Modernised gender role	81
2.2.5.8 Vision for children's ministry	82
2.2.5.9 Woman pastor's experience	82

2.2.5.10 Mentors	84
2.2.5.11 Summary of Mary	84
2.2.5.12 Themes of Mary	85
2.3 Definition of spirituality by research participants	85
2.4 Summary of stories	87
2.4.1 Affiliation with the Kikuyu tradition	87
2.4.2 Influence from Christian tradition	89
2.4.3 Other insights	90
2.4.4 Major overlapping themes of the narratives	91
2.5 Questions formulated for chapter 3	91

CHAPTER 3 DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION: SPIRITUALTY INFORMED BY TRADITIONS

3.1 Introduction	93
3.2 Descriptive theology and human sciences	96
3.2.1 Purpose of descriptive theology	96
3.2.2 Five dimensions of practical reason	97
3.2.3 Relationship between theology and human sciences	98
3.2.4 Hermeneutic sociology	99
3.2.5 Cultural anthropology	99
3.2.6 Summary	100
3.3 Anthropological approach	101
3.3.1 Historical development	102
3.3.2 Culture	103
3.3.2.1 Definition	103
3.3.2.2 Subsystems of culture and integration	104
3.3.2.3 Five dimensions of practical thinking vs. cultural anthropological model	106
3.3.2.4 God, culture, and humans	107
3.3.2.5 Transformation of culture	107
3.3.2.6 Spirituality in the cultural scheme	108
3.3.3 Worldview	109
3.3.3.1 Definition	109

3.3.3.2 Characteristics of worldview	109
3.3.3.2.1 Worldview is assumed	109
3.3.3.2.2 Worldview provides a lens	110
3.3.3.2.3 Worldview is most difficult to deal with	110
3.3.3.3 Universals of worldview	111
3.3.3.3.1 Classification	111
3.3.3.3.2 Person/group	111
3.3.3.3.3 Causality	111
3.3.3.3.4 Time/event	112
3.3.3.3.5 Space/material	112
3.3.3.3.6 Relationship	112
3.3.3.4 Worldview vs. rationality	112
3.3.4 Summary of culture and worldview	113
3.4 Kikuyu worldview	114
3.4.1 Kikuyu traditional worldview	115
3.4.1.1 Holistic and supernatural perception of reality	116
3.4.1.2 Group identity	117
3.4.1.3 Past-oriented and cyclical time	119
3.4.1.4 Human relationship as primary	121
3.4.1.5 Age as a sign of wisdom	122
3.4.1.6 Cooperation for survival	123
3.4.1.7 Summary	124
3.4.2 Worldview change	125
3.4.3 Retention and modification of Kikuyu traditional worldview	126
3.5 Kikuyu religion	129
3.5.1 Kikuyu tribal origin	129
3.5.2 Kikuyu traditional religion	130
3.5.2.1 Africa Traditional Religion	131
3.5.2.2 The concept of God	133
3.5.2.2.1 The attributes of God	133
3.5.2.2.2 The worship of God	134
3.5.2.3 Spirit world	137
3.5.2.3.1 Ancestors and the living-dead	137
3.5.2.3.2 Other spirits	138

3.5.2.3.3 Kikuyu communion with ancestors	139
3.5.2.4 Specialists and mystical powers	140
3.5.2.4.1 Specialists	140
3.5.2.4.2 Mystical powers	142
3.5.2.4.3 Kikuyu practice	144
3.5.2.5 African morality	146
3.5.2.6 Summary of Kikuyu traditional religion	148
3.5.2.6.1 The intrinsically spiritual world	148
3.5.2.6.2 Communal spirituality	150
3.5.2.6.3 Pragmatic spirituality	151
3.5.2.6.4 Summary	152
3.5.3 Influx of Christianity: powerful invasion	153
3.5.3.1 Early Catholic (1498-1889) and Protestant (1844-1890) missions	153
3.5.3.2 Proliferation of Protestant missions (1890-1940)	155
3.5.3.3 Missions to the Kikuyu	156
3.5.3.4 Missionary methods	157
3.5.3.5 Missionary attitudes towards African culture	158
3.5.3.6 Mission church and colonial government	161
3.5.3.7 Legacy of mission Christianity and its influence on the spirituality of the research participants	164
3.5.3.7.1 Demise of traditional structure	164
3.5.3.7.2 Introduction of western education and medicine	165
3.5.3.7.3 Introduction of new religious ideas	166
3.5.3.7.4 A new status of woman	167
3.5.3.7.5 Denominational Christianity	168
3.5.3.8 Summary	170
3.5.4 The Presbyterian Church of East Africa	170
3.5.4.1 The Church of Scotland Mission	171
3.5.4.2 The Gospel Missionary Society	172
3.5.4.3 The issue of female circumcision and schism	173
3.5.4.4 Development	177
3.5.4.5 Current issues	180
3.5.4.6 The spirituality of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa	

And the research participants	181
3.5.4.6.1 Scottish Reformed and American evangelical tradition	181
3.5.4.6.2 Strengths and weaknesses	182
3.5.4.6.3 Reforming spirituality	183
3.5.4.7 Summary	184
3.5.5 East African Revival Movement	184
3.5.5.1 History	185
3.5.5.2 Organisation	186
3.5.5.3 Conventions	187
3.5.5.4 Characteristics	188
3.5.5.5 Response of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa	189
3.5.5.6 Contribution and spirituality of the Revival movement	190
3.5.5.6.1 East African expression of Christian faith	190
3.5.5.6.2 Personal and direct encounter with Christ	190
3.5.5.6.3 New ecumenical sense of fellowship	191
3.5.5.6.4 Strength to withstand the Mau Mau rebellion	191
3.5.5.7 Summary	192
3.5.6 Charismatic and Pentecostal movement	193
3.5.6.1 African Independent Churches	193
3.5.6.1.1 National/secessionist churches	194
3.5.6.1.2 Spirit churches	194
3.5.6.1.3 Charismatic churches	196
3.5.6.2 Charismatic movement in 1970s	196
3.5.6.3 Pentecostal and Charismatic spirituality	198
3.5.6.4 Contribution to African spirituality	200
3.5.6.5 Charismatic movement and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa	201
3.5.6.6 Charismatic movement and the spirituality of the research Participants	202
3.5.6.7 Summary	203
3.5.7 Summary of religion	203
3.6 Kikuyu surface culture	204
3.6.1 Traditional socio-economic-political structure	205
3.6.1.1 Social organisation	205

3.6.1.2 Initiation and marriage	206
3.6.1.2.1 Initiation	206
3.6.1.2.2 Marriage	208
3.6.1.3 Gender	210
3.6.1.4 Economic subsystem	212
3.6.1.5 Political subsystem	212
3.6.2 Change	214
3.6.2.1 Social realm	214
3.6.2.2 Economic realm	217
3.6.2.3 Political arena	218
3.6.2.4 Changes in research participants	220
3.6.3 Contemporary socio-economic-political phenomena	222
3.6.3.1 Urbanisation and poverty	222
3.6.3.2 HIV/AIDS	224
3.6.3.3 Tribal politics and corruption	225
3.6.4 Summary of subsystem and its relationship with the spirituality	
The research participants	228
3.7 Conclusion of the chapter	229
3.7.1 Summary of traditions	229
3.7.2 Characteristics of the spirituality of the research participants	232
3.7.3 Questions formulated	234

CHAPTER 4 BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL SPIRITUALITY

4.1 Introduction	235
4.2 Biblical spirituality	235
4.2.1 Old Testament spirituality	237
4.2.1.1 The Old Testament canon	237
4.2.1.2 Themes of the Old Testament spirituality	239
4.2.1.2.1 Creation	239
4.2.1.2.2 Covenant	243
4.2.1.2.3 Community	246
4.2.1.2.4 The presence of God	247
4.2.1.3 Prophetic spirituality	248

4.2.1.3.1 Who are the prophets	249
4.2.1.3.2 Justice and righteousness	249
4.2.1.3.3 In love with God	250
4.2.1.4 Wisdom tradition	251
4.2.1.4.1 Blessing tradition	251
4.2.1.4.2 The book of Proverbs	252
4.2.1.4.3 The book of Job	252
4.2.1.4.4 Ecclesiastes	252
4.2.1.4.5 Song of Songs	253
4.2.1.4.6 Psalms	253
4.2.1.5 Summary of Old Testament spirituality	255
4.2.2 New Testament spirituality	255
4.2.2.1 Gospels	257
4.2.2.1.1 Matthean spirituality	257
4.2.2.1.2 Marcan spirituality	258
4.2.2.1.3 Lucan spirituality	260
4.2.2.1.4 Johannine spirituality	262
4.2.2.2 Pauline spirituality	264
4.2.2.2.1 Life in the Spirit	265
4.2.2.2.2 Corporate spirituality	265
4.2.2.2.3 Christ crucified and risen	266
4.2.2.2.4 Creative tension in the spiritual life	266
4.2.2.3 Summary of New Testament spirituality	268
4.3 Trinitarian spirituality	269
4.4 Historical spirituality	272
4.4.1 The patristic period	272
4.4.1.1 Patristic theology	273
4.4.1.1.1 Monotheism, the Trinity, Christology	273
4.4.1.1.2 Biblical and pastoral theology	274
4.4.1.2 Liturgical celebration	275
4.4.1.3 Mysticism	276
4.4.1.4 Martyrdom	278
4.4.1.5 Asceticism	279
4.4.1.6 Monasticism	280

4.4.1.7 Summary of the patristic period	281
4.4.2 The medieval West (AD 600-1450)	282
4.4.2.1 Early medieval spirituality (sixth to eleventh centuries)	282
4.4.2.1.1 Benedictine spirituality	282
4.4.2.1.2 St Gregory	284
4.4.2.2 High Middle Ages (eleventh to thirteenth centuries)	286
4.4.2.2.1 Contemplative textual spirituality	286
4.4.2.2.2 Mendicant movement	289
4.4.2.3 Late Middle Ages (Thirteenth to fifteenth centuries)	292
4.4.2.3.1 Medieval mysticism	292
4.4.2.4 Summary of the medieval West	297
4.4.3 Eastern Orthodox	299
4.4.3.1 Theosis	299
4.4.3.2 Jesus Prayer	299
4.4.3.3 Icon	300
4.4.3.4 Apophatic and cataphatic	301
4.4.3.5 Synergy	301
4.4.3.6 The holy mysteries of God	302
4.4.3.7 Summary of Eastern Orthodox spirituality	303
4.4.4 Protestant spirituality	304
4.4.4.1 Reformation spirituality	304
4.4.4.2 Lutheran spirituality	305
4.4.4.2.1 The Word	306
4.4.4.2.2 Mystical Christ	306
4.4.4.2.3 Sacraments	307
4.4.4.2.4 Alternative model to ascent	307
4.4.4.2.5 Priesthood of all believers and vocations	308
4.4.4.2.6 Moral life	308
4.4.4.2.7 Prayer	309
4.4.4.3 Reformed spirituality	309
4.4.4.3.1 The spirituality of Zwingli	309
4.4.4.3.2 The spirituality of Calvin	311
4.4.4.4 Later Protestant spirituality	313
4.4.4.4.1 Puritanism	313

4.4.4.4.2 Pietism	314
4.4.4.4.3 John Wesley and the Methodism	316
4.4.4.4.4 Awakening spirituality	317
4.4.4.5 Summary of Protestant spirituality	318
4.4.4.6 Anglican spirituality	320
4.4.4.7 De-traditionalisation	321
4.4.5 Major streams of spiritual traditions	322
4.4.6 Conclusion	324
CHAPTER 5 INTEGRATION & STRATEGY FOR TRANSFORMATION	
5.1 Introduction	326
5.2 Integration	327
5.2.1 Would mission Christianity including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa continue to be an effective form of Christianity in Kenya and among the Kikuyu?	327
5.2.1.1 Narratives and traditions	328
5.2.1.2 Interaction with biblical and historical spirituality	331
5.2.2 What is the relationship between charismatic spirituality and the contextual spirituality of East Africa	333
5.2.2.1 Narrative and traditions	334
5.2.2.2 Interaction with biblical and historical spirituality	336
5.2.3 How can spirituality shape and influence the socio-economic-political context more than it being influenced by the context?	337
5.2.3.1 Narratives and traditions	338
5.2.3.2 Interaction with biblical and historical spirituality	340
5.2.4 What would the biblical and historical spirituality suggest to the spiritualities of the research participants?	343
5.2.4.1 Definition of spirituality by research participants	344
5.2.4.2 Perspectives from biblical and historical spirituality	345
5.2.5 Summary of the integration	346
5.3 Strategies for transformation	346
5.3.1 Understanding of the concrete situation	347
5.3.2 Praxis for transformation	348

5.3.2.1 Mission Christianity's effectiveness	348
5.3.2.1.1 Inter-denominational and inter-tribal dialogue	348
5.3.2.1.2 Restoration of community within the church	350
5.3.2.1.3 Contextualisation (Africanisation of Christianity)	351
5.3.2.1.4 Holistic approach to ministry	352
5.3.2.1.5 Biblical teaching and discipleship	353
5.3.2.2 Charismatic spirituality's contextuality	354
5.3.2.3 Christian spirituality's influence on the socio-economic-political context	355
5.3.2.3.1 Reconnection to society	355
5.3.2.3.2 Development of relevant theology	356
5.3.2.3.3 Change of the church system	358
5.3.2.3.4 Restoration of moral authority	360
5.3.2.3.5 Summary of socio-economic-political context	361
5.3.2.4 Deepening of individual spirituality	361
5.3.2.4.1 People of action	361
5.3.2.4.2 Empowerment of laity	362
5.3.2.4.3 Opening up to the power and gift issue	363
5.3.2.4.4 Learning from inter-religious devotional practice	363
5.3.3 Five dimensions of practical theology	363
5.3.3.1 Visional level	364
5.3.3.2 Obligational level	364
5.3.3.3 Tendency-need	364
5.3.3.4 Environmental-social	365
5.3.3.5 Rule-role	365
5.3.4 Communication	365
5.3.5 Summary of strategies for transformation	366

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Reflection on the research process	369
6.2 Reflection on the research paradigm	370
6.3 Conclusion of the research	371
6.4 Critical reflection on the research journey	373
6.5 Suggestion for further research	374

APPENDIX 1	376
APPENDIX 2	377
APPENDIX 3	378
WORKS CONSULTED	379

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND METHOD

1.1 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1.1 The researcher

For the past six years that I have served as a missionary in Kenya, I have done pastoral training in many areas of Kenya. During this time, I have engaged in talks with many Kenyan pastors about spirituality. Apparently, there seemed to be a different understanding and/or practice of spirituality among Kenyan pastors, and I wanted to find out what lay underneath. I understand that the backgrounds, traditions, perceptions, understanding, and practice of spirituality of the Kenyan pastors may be different from mine. I am also approaching this issue as an outsider. However, through my six years of exposure and involvement within the context of serving as a pastoral leadership trainer, and through the relationships I have built with some of the Kenyan pastors, I believe that I have a good platform from which to do this research. For the sake of research, I set the limits of my research to Kikuyu PCEA (Presbyterian Church of East Africa) pastors in Nairobi.

My personal history resonates with the research arena. Since my conversion more than two decades ago, my main focus has been to grow spiritually, which is one aspect of spirituality. Upon conversion, I engaged in rigorous spiritual disciplines, such as Bible memory, Bible study, one-on-one discipleship, evangelism, etc. Thus, I was involved in discipleship training and disciple-making ministry for about ten years after conversion. After I was ordained, I was involved with adult education in the local church in which I served, led many Bible studies, and tried to help church members grow spiritually.

Since I came to Kenya, I have been more focused on the development of character and inward spirituality. I have been emphasizing the growth and

development of the quality of spiritual life both in myself and in the lives of Kenyan pastors.

Considering the Kenyan churches from the perspective of the struggles and experiences that I have had, I believe that the societal phenomena of rampant corruption, deceptive behaviours, immorality, lopsided emphasis on the Spirit's function (depending on the church's denominational affiliation), and lack of personal spiritual maturity, have root in pastors' understandings and practices of spirituality.

Currently, I am still engaged in pastoral training and am involved in the spiritual development of Kenyan pastors. Wherever I go for training seminars, after the seminar is over, they always ask me when I can come back to teach them further. I have found favour from the Lord and Kenyan pastors. One Kenyan colleague who does pastoral training with me once said, "Sung, you are a blessing to Africa." I believe the Lord has called me to this context for a purpose.

Richard Foster (1998) talks about six major streams of spirituality expressed over the years in church history in his award winning book *Streams of Living Water*: the Contemplative Tradition, the Holiness Tradition, the Charismatic Tradition, the Social Justice Tradition, the Evangelical Tradition, and the Incarnational Tradition. I understand that my spiritual journey or tradition may differ from others, and that Korean or Korean-American spiritual tradition may vastly differ from Kenyan spiritual tradition. However, perhaps, I would find similarities. Whatever I find, I believe my findings will benefit both the people I am here to serve and also myself because of the new insights, perspectives, and understandings my research participants and I would gain.

1.1.2 Research objective

My research will be done on the *spirituality of Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)*. I want to understand the spirituality of Kikuyu pastors and the contributing elements to their spirituality, with a view to creating new horizons of meaning—towards dynamic

transformation that could possibly benefit their lives, the churches they serve, the communities they live in, and society in general.

Studies have been done about African theology, the Kikuyu tribe, African traditional spirituality, and various African churches in Kenya. However, in the area of African Christian spirituality, particularly in East Africa, very few studies have been conducted precisely upon the spirituality of Kikuyu pastors. Currently, there is no explicit study on this subject, and I am willing to enter into this area and find out what lies within.

There are three main objectives of this study. The first objective is to understand the spiritual world of Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa through the “thick description” of Don Browning (1996:135). This is the foundation of the study, and in this section, the spirituality of the Kikuyu pastors I will be interviewing will be discussed. The method I am using to collect data is narrative, and the narratives will unfold the stories of individuals. The second objective is to study biblical and historical spirituality to form a grid with which to look at the present reality. This grid is essential in viewing the current picture from the normative biblical/historical perspective. The third objective is to write an alternative story or understanding of the spirituality of these pastors through critical hermeneutical dialogue in order to bring about dynamic transformation (Browning 1996:288).

1.1.3 Limitation and delimitation

This research will be done on Kikuyu pastors of one denomination in Kenya called the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in the Nairobi area. The Presbyterian Church of East Africa has its main ministry within the Kikuyu tribe, which is the largest tribe in Kenya, and I will limit my research to these Kikuyu PECA pastors. Pastors of other denominations, other tribes, and other areas in Kenya will be excluded from this research.

1.2 THE SUBJECT OF SPIRITUALITY

As the subject of spirituality is vast, there are many definitions of spirituality. Dallas Willard (1988:77) defines spirituality as follows: Spirituality is simply the

holistic quality of human life as it was meant to be, at the centre of which is our relation to God. Willard (1988:77) quotes Francis Schaeffer in that “true spirituality” is a positive, external manifestation of inward positive reality. McCarthy’s (2000:196) definition of spirituality is in-depth and broad; thus, it gives us concrete ideas of the subject. “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.” To summarise the above definitions, the subject of spirituality is holistic. It encompasses the whole human experience with God in the centre. It includes both inner life and outer manifestations. These elements provide us with some initial ideas of spirituality.

However, it is necessary to discuss the subject matter of spirituality further, that is, the etymology of spirituality, historical development, different approaches to spirituality, and characteristics of spirituality. The discussion of these issues will clarify the subject matter of spirituality.

1.2.1 Etymology of spirituality

The English word “spirituality” originated from the Latin term *spiritualitas*, an abstract word derived from the noun *spiritus* and the adjective *spiritalis*, as translations of the Greek *pneuma* and *pneumatikos* respectively. In mediaeval times, the Latin word *spiritualitas* gave rise to such forms as *esperitalité*, *esprituaute*, and *espérituaulté* in French, and *spiritualty* or *spirituality* in English (Principe 2000:44-46).

In Pauline theology, *pneuma* or *spiritus* are not contrasted with *soma* or *corpus*, but with *sarx* or *caro*. In other words, “Spirit” or “spiritual” are not antonyms of “physical” or “material,” but of “all that is opposed to the Spirit of God.” Therefore, the contrast is between two ways of life or attitudes to life. “The ‘spiritual’ is what is under the influence of or is a manifestation of the Spirit of God” (Sheldrake 1995:42). The “carnal” is what is opposed to the working and guidance of the Spirit of God (Principe 2000:45). The Christian life is “life in the Spirit” (Gal 5:25).

1.2.2 Historical development of meaning

In the ninth century, a new meaning of spirituality was introduced by Fulda, most likely a monk, who used the word *spiritualitas* as opposed to *corporalitas* or *materialitas*, thereby changing the Pauline moral sense of the word to an entitative-psychological sense. This shift of meaning brought in the idea of disdain for the body and matter in the later movement related to spiritual life (Principe 2000:45). Then, in the twelfth century, scholasticism made a sharp distinction between spirit and matter. The word “spiritual” was applied to an intelligent creature, that is, mankind, as opposed to non-rational creation. Losing its original Pauline moral sense, “spirituality” adopted a new meaning more radically opposed to corporeality or matter. However, the new meaning did not replace the old meaning completely, but rather the two meanings co-existed in the thirteenth century (Sheldrake 1995:43). For example, while in the majority of Thomas Aquinas’ texts, the word *spiritualitas* is related to the Pauline idea of life, that is, according to the Holy Spirit or what is highest in the human, in a good number of texts, it is used as opposite to corporeity or matter (Principe 2000:46). The thirteenth century was also the time that saw the split between theology and spirituality, or between the reasoned expression of faith and its lived experience (Schneiders 2005:2).

In the seventeenth century the word “spiritualite” became established once again in France in reference to the spiritual life. It was used positively to express a personal, affective relationship with God. However, it was also used pejoratively of enthusiastic or quietistic movements (Sheldrake 1995:43; Principe 2000:46). Then in the early eighteenth century, the word “spirituality” disappeared from the vocabulary of Roman Catholics due to a suspicion of religious enthusiasm and quietism. In the nineteenth century, it was used mainly in free religious groups outside mainline churches. In the early decades of the twentieth century, “spirituality” appeared once again among Roman Catholics in France; and then it passed into English through translations. The increased use of the word “spirituality” in this period was related to the attempts to distinguish dogma and the study of spiritual life as well as an increasing emphasis on religious consciousness and the experiential dimension of Christian life (Sheldrake 1995:43-44). Historian

Sheldrake (1995:41) points out that in recent decades, there has been more emphasis on human experience in the general approach to theology, and this brought about a movement from the static “spiritual theology” to the more fluid “spirituality.” Among Protestants, the word “spirituality” came to be used from about 1960 (Holt 2005:8).

1.2.3 Spiritual theology vs. spirituality

In the early patristic and early medieval periods, before the split between theology and spirituality in the thirteenth century, spirituality was the purpose of all study, both sacred and profane. Spirituality was lived theology and theology was articulate spirituality. Spirituality that may be called “mystical theology” or “spiritual theology” continued to appear in scriptural and patristic commentaries up to the twelfth century (Sheldrake 1995:49). In the High Middle Ages, however, this integrated approach was destroyed as theology moved from the monastery to the university and became a philosophically elaborated academic and scientific specialisation. From then on, mystical theology as an experiential knowledge, and wisdom of God acquired in prayer through meditation on the Scriptures, became an exclusive monastic experience. Sheldrake (1995:52) explains the period as follows:

The period from the twelfth century onwards in the West saw a process of development in the approach to the spiritual life which may be characterised as one of separation and division. There was, first of all, a division of spirituality from theology, of affectivity from knowledge. Secondly, there was a gradual limitation of interest to interiority or subjective spiritual experience. In other words, spirituality became separated from social praxis and ethics. And finally, although it has been touched upon only indirectly, there was a separation of spirituality from liturgy, the personal from the communal, expressed most graphically by a new attention to the structures of personal prayer and meditation. Through these divisions and separations, an interest developed in specific experiences and activities: prayer, contemplation and mysticism.

After the Reformation, Protestant orthodoxy was suspicious of the word “mysticism” because of the suggested elitism or paranormal experience not rooted in the Scriptures, and preferred to use “piety,” meaning a daily reading

of Scriptures and prayer. Anglicans preferred the terms “devotion,” “inner life,” and “life of perfection” to “piety.” (Schneiders 2005a:22; Schneiders 2005b:2). From the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, “spiritual theology” as a discipline emerged in Catholic seminaries as a sub-discipline of theology. According to Schneiders (2005:2),

It [spiritual theology] was defined as the ‘science of perfection’ and usually subdivided into ‘ascetical theology’ which dealt with the active stages of the spiritual life and ‘mystical theology’ which dealt with the higher reaches of contemplation. The discipline of spiritual theology was deductive in method, prescriptive in character, and concerned primarily with the practice of personal prayer and asceticism.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a new discipline that came to be called “spirituality” rather than “spiritual theology” emerged in the academy. The emergence of this new discipline was due to interest in the search of meaning, transcendence, personal integration and social transformation (Schneiders 2005b:3). The transition from spiritual theology to spirituality is well summarised by Sheldrake (1995:57-58).

There has been a major shift in western theology towards a more serious reflection on human experience in its cultural particularity and therefore pluriformity. This in turn provoked a movement away from a static approach to the Christian life, embodied in an analytical and abstract spiritual theology, and towards a more dynamic and inclusive concept, namely ‘spirituality’. I would also add that this new concept has gained considerable ecumenical acceptance and so spirituality now tends to be eclectic in its approach as it seeks to draw upon the riches of a shared Christian heritage rather than to limit itself to a sectarian understanding of ‘life in the Spirit’. Spirituality, in other words, is far better expression of Catholicity than any previous spiritual theology.

1.2.4 Definition of spirituality

Besides some definitions given initially, I want to revisit the definition of spirituality here. Spirituality has two levels of definition. First, spirituality can be defined as “the lived experience of Christian faith and discipleship.” This definition is an emic view rather than etic (Holder 2005:5). Emic refers to the insider’s view and Etic to the outsider’s view (Kraft 2005:29). The

contemporary understanding of Christian spirituality on this level emphasises the holistic and personal involvement of the person in the spiritual quest (Schneiders 2005b:1-2). Principe (2000:48) explains of this as follows:

It is the way some person understood and lived, within his or her historical context, a chosen religious ideal in sensitivity to the realm of the spirit of the transcendent. For Christians such a life would be one influenced, as Paul taught, by the Holy Spirit or Spirit of God incorporating the person into Jesus Christ as Head, through whom he or she has access to the Father in a life of faith, hope, love, and service.

The second level of spirituality is spirituality as an academic discipline. Sandra Schneiders (2005a:16-17), one of the most significant figures in the emergence of Christian spirituality as an academic discipline, defines spirituality as “the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the horizon of ultimate value one perceives.” Schneiders further identifies “the horizon of ultimate value” in Christian spirituality as the “*triune God* revealed in *Jesus Christ* to whom *Scripture* normatively witnessed and whose life is communicated to the *believer* by the *Holy Spirit* making her or him a child of God” [italics mine]. This academic discipline of spirituality as a research discipline has the expansion of knowledge and understanding of the God-human relationship as its specific objective.

1.2.5 Three approaches to the study of Christian spirituality

Three approaches have been recognised in the study of spirituality as an academic discipline: historical, theological, and anthropological. First, the historical study approaches the subject matter historically, and supplies the context for and constitutes the positive data upon which other studies exercise their inquiries. As stated, spirituality as lived experience takes place in time and space. It occurs within specific cultural contexts in interaction with the forces operating in the same context; being influenced by what and who preceded it. In some sense, all studies of spirituality can be said to be historical (Schneiders 2005a:21). Second, the theological approach uses theological categories to examine the practice of Christian faith. In this sense,

spirituality can be regarded as a form of practical theology. Although this approach is closer to nineteenth- and early twentieth century understanding of spiritual theology, it is more holistic and integrated, and less dogmatic and prescriptive than its predecessor (Schneiders 2005b:4). Schneiders (2005a:25) explains more:

The contribution of the theological approach to spirituality is that it keeps the specifically Christian character of the discipline in focus and reminds everyone in the field, whatever their preferred approach, that Christianity is a specific faith tradition that has content and dynamics it does not share with other traditions, even those with analogous concerns.

Third, the anthropological approach focuses on the interpretation of Christian religious experience to generate responses to contemporary questions rather than historical or theological ones. This approach uses methodologies that are always interdisciplinary, with different disciplines taking the leading role in different research projects depending on the researcher's primary question (Schneiders 2005a:27-28). Again Schneiders (2005a:28) explains about this approach:

Whereas historical and theological approaches frame the questions raised about complex spiritual phenomenon from the standpoint of those particular disciplines, the 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 the study of spirituality, all three of these approaches are not mutually exclusive, but complementary to one another—as all Christian experience is human, historically situated in a particular socio-cultural setting, and rooted in a theological tradition of Christian faith. In this research I am using all three approaches. In the descriptive theology, chapter 3, I use mainly an anthropological approach. In chapter 4, I employ a historical approach. Throughout the research process, the theological approach provides the main framework.

1.2.6 Characteristics of spirituality

The contemporary understanding of spirituality has several distinctive features. First, spirituality is not simply the prescriptive application of absolute or dogmatic principles to life. Rather, it tries to understand the complex mystery of human growth in the context of a living relationship with God. Secondly, it does not concern only the interior life but seeks an integration of all aspects of human life and experience, both human and religious values (Sheldrake 1995:58-59). Thirdly, spirituality is not only informative but transformative. Through the wisdom gained from texts, traditions, and practices, such questions are asked, “What difference does this make?” or “What could or should our response be?” This transformative dimension of spirituality involves judgment and appropriation (Sheldrake 2006:23). Fourthly, spirituality is interdisciplinary, interreligious, ecumenical, and cross-cultural. In other words, it is holistic. Therefore, the context within which spiritual experience is studied is anthropologically inclusive (Berling 2006:40). Fifthly, Scripture and the history of Christianity are two constitutive disciplines that supply the positive data of Christian religious experience, as well as its norm and hermeneutical context (Berling 2006:39). Lastly, I would like to finish this part by quoting Sheldrake (1995:60-61):

A central feature is that spirituality derives its identity from the Christian belief that as human beings we are capable of entering into a relationship with God who is both transcendent and, at the same time, indwelling in the heart of all created things. This relationship is lived out, not in isolation, but in a community of believers that is brought into being by commitment to Christ and sustained by the active presence of the Spirit of God in each and in the community as a whole.... In other words, contemporary Christian spirituality is explicitly Trinitarian, Christological, and ecclesial.

Characteristics of spirituality can be 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

1.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

With such an understanding of spirituality as stated above, I take a postfoundational practical theological position with a narrative and social constructionism approach for this research. It is postfoundational because it is the most viable option between the rigid foundationalism and the relativistic nonfoundationalism or postmodernism. The reason I have chosen Postfoundationism as my research paradigm for this study is that authentic spirituality requires the use of an interdisciplinary method, begins with a consideration of context, is grounded in tradition, is integrative, and uses the process of discernment (McCarthy 2000:197-201). It is practical because all theology is practical. McCarthy's (2000:201) statement is so precise: "Spirituality as a discipline is a practical theological discipline precisely because it aims at effective action in the world." It is narrative because narrative is ubiquitous in our lives (Polkinghorne 1988:14), and Polkinghorne (1988:18) quotes Jackendorf that "narrative is a meaning structure that organizes events and human actions into a whole, thereby attributing significance to individual actions and events according to their effect on the whole." Narrative is useful to obtain meaning, purpose, and function of a practice, as human existence is essentially narrative in the end. It will also be useful and very relevant to the subject of my research. It is social constructionism because preferred realities are socially constructed and we ourselves are also socially constructed (Müller 2004:6). True spirituality is grounded in community. The following statement is powerful:

Thus an individual, privatised, or purely personal spirituality is an oxymoron. Authentic spirituality can never be an isolated, privatised, individual affair. It is always located in a particular community from which it derives its flavour, character, and efficacy (McCarthy 2000:200).

All these four elements mentioned above, that is, Postfoundationism, practical theology, narrative, and social construction, share the common spheres of positioning and methodology. However, in this research I would like to say that Postfoundationism provides the theological positioning; practical theology

is the main research methodology; narrative and social construction are used as the methods of the research.

1.3.1 Postfoundational

To discuss postfoundationism it is essential to understand modernism and postmodernism, since postfoundationism is the position between foundationalism (modern) and nonfoundationalism (postmodern).

1.3.1.1 Modernism vs. postmodernism

Postmodernism is a cultural condition (Gergen 1999:195), and the term “postmodern condition,” which was coined by Lyotard, a French philosopher, was used to “expose the tenuousness of the grand narratives of modernity and enlightenment” (Graham 1996:20). Postmodernism itself is more of an attitude than a specific demonstrable trend or paradigm (Van Huyssteen 1997:187), and it rejects the concept of ideology as false consciousness (Gergen 1999:209).

Postmodernism can be placed *beyond* modernism as a movement that transcends modernism, or it can be construed as a moment *within* the modern, where the postmodern is a continuation of modernity’s emphasis on self-conscious social construction. Or it could be, following Jean-François Lyotard, placed *before* modernism as an incipient form of modernity. Whatever position one may choose, the common theme is that “postmodernity becomes intelligible through its relation to modernity” (Penner 2005:18-19).

Enlightenment ideas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were highly successful in undermining the totalitarian rule of royalty and religion. Each individual is endowed with powers of observation and reason, and thus an inalienable right to participate in the process of governance (Gergen 1999:17-18). Thus, modernism that was spawned by the Enlightenment naturally puts a high value on the certainty about reality provided by natural sciences and personal gratification by autonomous freedom (Herholdt 1998:215-216).

Modernism as a culture, therefore, advocates beliefs in the sense of us as knowing, rational, and autonomous, and the correlative assumptions of objective knowledge, reason, and moral foundations. Thus, rational minds that are freed from the constraints of religious and moral tests would make irreversible progress in intellectual enquiry (Lundin 1993:20). However, the growing consciousness of the historical and cultural limitations of these beliefs sets the stage for considering major lines of critique typically identified as postmodern (Gergen 1999:29). In postmodern culture, all authoritative statements, propositions, descriptions, and rational arguments are questioned. The Enlightenment heritage of the “self-evident” and universal truths of reason and modern science methodology are critiqued. Thomas Kuhn’s (1970) work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, sparked this revolution in the epistemology of science. Claiming that there is no steady progress forward in knowledge in the natural sciences, Kuhn and others argued that movement comes often as a series of paradigmatic shifts and that all types of scientific knowledge are paradigm dependent, meaning that all scientific factuality is theory laden and every fact is an interpreted fact (Kreitzer 2005:1). All claims to knowledge of self and the world lose their authority (Gergen 1999:29). Without foundations and the universally accepted neutral ground provided by the traditional conceptions of reason, we confront a *legitimation crisis* (Loytard 1984). Van Huyssteen (1997:187) says:

Typical of postmodernism is its skepticism concerning the central role assigned to reason and rational thought. Over against indubitable truth-claims, an overconfident faith in science, and a metaphysical way of reasoning, the interrelatedness of truth-perspectives, ethical pluralism, and cultural relativism is typical of the postmodern perspective.

Postmodernism can take on many specific forms, such as revisionary thinking, constructionism, critical realism and deconstructionism (Herholdt 1998:215), or it is variously called post-foundational, post-Enlightenment, post-empiricist, post-structural, and post-modern (Gergen 1999:9). However, it is more than a time period after modernism. It is a progressive new way of doing science (Herholdt 1998:215).

1.3.1.2 Postmodern view of reality

In regards to the matter of reality, modernism, because of scientific objectivity, lacks an overarching epistemic framework that includes human subjectivity as part of reality. Therefore, postmodernism seeks to include human subjectivity and restore value of human feeling as part of experience. Actually, postmodernism regards the participation of the subject as essential to one's understanding of the external world.

Although Freedman and Combs (1996:22) said the following in a therapeutic context, their summary of postmodern reality conveys clarity and is relevant to this research.

- (1) Realities are socially constructed
- (2) Realities are constituted through language
- (3) Realities are organized and maintained through narrative
- (4) There are no essential truths.

In postmodernism, the importance of contextuality and the social determination [construction] of truth are emphasized (Herholdt 1998:216-220). Its view of reality is that people can construct their realities together as they live them (De Beer, Tumi, & Kotze 2001:37). However, Grobbelaar (2001:172) quotes Guba, that in postmodernism, reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated.

In regards to their view and use of language, there is a difference between modernists and postmodernists. In modernism there is a clear distinction between the objective (real) world and the subjective (mental) world, and language is seen as a reliable and accurate link between the objective and subjective worlds. Language is used to represent external reality, and our internal representations are accurate reflections of external reality (Freedman & Combs 1996:28). However, postmodernists believe that societies construct their views of reality through language. The only world that people can know is the world we share in language, and language is an interactive process, not a passive receiving of preexisting truths (Freedman and Combs 1996:28). Wittgenstein (1961:115), who provided postmodernism with intellectual power, believed that language shapes our understanding, and that meaning only

occurs in the context of a language game. He said, “*The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.*” For Gergen (1985:270), “Knowledge is not something people possess somewhere in their heads, but rather, something people do together. Language is essentially shared activity.” Experience is only within the scope of language (Linbeck 1984:39).

Postmodernism also stresses the central role of narrative in constructing reality. Narrative, as presented later in this chapter, reflects postmodern reality. Narrative understood with social construction attends to cultural and contextual stories as well as individual stories (Freedman & Combs 1996:31).

Postmodernists argue, “Within the multiple stories and multiple possibilities of the postmodern *multiverse*, we believe that there are no essential truth” (Freedman & Combs 1996:34). Relativism and pluralism are true postmodern characteristics.

In the old paradigm, humans were sometimes regarded as intricate machines and human values were consequently measured in terms of production. The function of a system was understood in a deterministic, periodic, linear, and static way based on cause and effect and action and reaction. Scientific knowledge is based on an objective and logical access to reality, known as a positivistic epistemology. However, postmodernism seeks an integrated understanding of reality that is holistic, ecological, and systemic (Herholdt 220-222). In other words, emphasizing meaning over facts and rules, postmodernism puts more emphasis on humanity than on physical science (Freedman and Combs 1996:22)

1.3.1.3 Postmodern theology

This new paradigm influenced theology as well. In modernism, biblical scholars felt that, parallel to natural science, exact knowledge of biblical reality could be obtained. Therefore, historical-critical exegesis was employed to discover what early Christians thought and believed. In exegesis, the process starts with the text and follows exact criteria to analyze the Bible. However, in the postmodern paradigm, truth is relative and is influenced by the intellectual climate and cultural categories of every period (Herholdt 1998:221).

Away from positivism and logical rationalism, postmodern theology de-emphasizes dogma that requires exact understanding, and emphasizes poetic literary approach that communicates relative and applied meanings to believers respective to their needs (Herholdt 1998:223).

In postmodern theology, there is not a fixed body of theological truth that need be communicated from generation to generation; but every generation needs to discover meanings for themselves through metaphoric reference. Therefore, the epistemic construction of God is local and not universal (Herholdt 1998:224-225).

To understand postmodernism correctly, it is important to view postmodernism as a part of modern. According to Van Huyssteen (1997:278), "...the postmodern shows itself best in the to-and-fro movement between the modern and the postmodern." Lyotard (1984:79) says that the postmodern is undoubtedly a part of the modern and in its nascent state. Calvin Schrag's (1992:17) word sums up the relationship between modern and postmodern, "It is thus that the discourse of modernity remains within the web of the discourse of postmodernity."

Before turning to postfoundationalism, I want to revisit modernism in the form of foundationalism and postmodernism expressed in nonfoundationalism.

1.3.1.4 Foundationalism & nonfoundationalism

Foundationalism is the "thesis that all our beliefs can be justified by appealing to some item of knowledge that is self-evident or indubitable" (Van Huyssteen 1997:2). Epistemologically, foundationalism always implies the holding of a position in an inflexible and infallible manner; invoking ultimate foundations on which to construct the evidential support system of various convictional beliefs (Van Huyssteen 1997:3). In the natural sciences, the implication of foundationalism is a positivist empiricism or scientific materialism that per definition renders all religion, theology and theological reflection meaningless. In theology, foundationalism implies biblical literalism, or positivism of revelation, that isolates theology in that it denies the crucial role of interpreted

religious experience in all theological reflections; thereby leaving the theologian to speak a language that may be internally coherent but powerless to communicate its content. Neo-orthodoxy and the Protestant evangelical movement are considered two forms of foundationalism. Neo-orthodoxy sought to return to the theology of the Bible and the Protestant Reformers emphasized the absolute authority of a transcendent God who could only be apprehended through the vehicle of God's own self-revelation and not the exercise of human reason (Graham 1996:74). Thus, foundationalism is unrelated to all nontheological discourse (Van Huyssteen 1997:226-227). Therefore, in both theology and philosophy, foundationalism is rejected in favour of nonfoundationalism (Van Huyssteen 1997:3).

Nonfoundationalism (or antifoundationalism) is one of the most important roots or resources of postmodernism (Van Huyssteen 1997:3). As postmodernism claims that all truth is relative and that there are no universal or absolute foundations, nonfoundationalism also denies any alleged strong foundations for belief-systems and argue that all our beliefs form a groundless web of interrelated beliefs. Nonfoundationalists emphasize the crucial epistemic importance of community, arguing that every community and context has its own rationality. This relativism of rationality in its extreme form denies interdisciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen 1997:3).

One more theological and philosophical position that deserves our attention is fideism. Fideism is a theory that teaches that all human knowledge has as its basis unjustifiable foundations that are solely founded upon a subjective feeling of certitude (Kreitzer 2005). Van Huyssteen (1997:24-26) speaks strongly against fideism:

Fideism, as a blind, uncritical commitment to a set of beliefs, could of course be at the heart of both foundationalist and nonfoundationalist models of rationality...the notion that religious system have their own autonomous principles and their own unique decision procedures not only is a denial of the interdependence of religious cognition and other forms of human cognition, but also is fundamentally inconsistent with a postfoundational holist epistemology, which claims a network

of interrelated intersubjective or transcommunal criteria for its statements.

Between rigid foundationalism and relativistic nonfoundationalism, where would we find theological and epistemological justification?

1.3.1.5 Postfoundationalism

As we have seen in the previous section, in both foundationalism and nonfoundationalism, dialogue with other disciplines becomes difficult. Therefore, in response to the alleged objectivism of foundationalism and the extreme relativism of nonfoundationalism, J W Van Huyssteen proposed a “viable third epistemological option,” which he termed “postfoundationalism.” Müller (2004:4) calls this “a third way,” a way out of the “stuckness” of modernistic or foundationalist science and theology on the one hand, and the fatalism of some post modernistic approaches, on the other. Kevin J Vanhoozer (2000:87-89) calls this position “via media.” Van Huyssteen (1997:228) says further:

In a postfoundationalist theology the epistemological link between theology and the other sciences can be left open because the project of theological methodology and ‘prolegomena’ now becomes part of theological reflection as such, that is, as part of an ongoing interdisciplinary inquiry within the practice of theology itself.

As a pastor of Reformed tradition, I have believed that everything begins from the text and moves towards the context. I put ultimate authority in the text without any questions raised. “Thus says the Lord” was the end of discussion. The text was the final source of any argument. However, after I began my study at the University of Pretoria, through readings such as *A Fundamental Practical Theology* by Don Browning, the postfoundationalism of Van Huyssteen, other books of narrative and social constructionism, and also interaction with Prof Julian Müller, I came to realize that I have many postfoundationalist elements in my lifestyle, preaching and teaching methods, and approach to ministry. I am not as dogmatic and rigid as foundationalists. Nor am I so relevant as to accept any and every idea non-critically. So, I thought that the postfoundationalist position provided me with a boundary, but

with enough space to move around with freedom within it. For me, it is “a viable option beyond the extremes of foundationalism and nonfoundationalism” (Van Huyssteen 1997:4).

In the following sections the main tenets of this postfoundationalism will be discussed.

1.3.1.5.1 Interpreted experience

In postfoundational theology, the focus will be the relentless questioning of uncritically held crypto-foundational assumptions. It engages in critical theological reflection in order to evaluate the roles of experience, tradition, and the classic Biblical text. Our beliefs are explored experientially and interpretatively. It allows the creative fusion of hermeneutics and epistemology. A postfoundationalist theology, therefore, acknowledges contextuality and the epistemically crucial role of interpreted experience (Van Huyssteen 1997:4). Just as all scientific observations are theory-laden, so all religious experiences are interpretation-laden—and it is the interpretation that provides (valid) religious meaning (Van Huyssteen 1997:19-20). Regarding this idea, Van Huyssteen (2006:15) writes:

Because we relate to our world epistemically only through the mediation of interpreted experience, it may be said that our diverse theologies, and also the sciences, offer alternative interpretations of our experience (cf. Rolston 1987:1-8). Alternative, however, not in the sense of competing or conflicting interpretations, but of complementary interpretations of the manifold dimensions of our experience....[A]ll religious language, and certainly all theological language, invariably reflects the structure of our interpreted experience (cf. van Huyssteen 1997:40f.).

This interpreted experience starts from the individual’s experience towards the interpersonal and social (Müller 2004: 7). Don Browning presents a similar picture. In his *Fundamental Practical Theology*, Don Browning (1996:61) proposes differentiating common human experiences into three poles or foci: (1) interpretations of the practices, inner motivations, and socio-cultural history of individual agents; (2) interpretations of relevant institutional patterns and

practices; and (3) interpretations of the cultural and religious symbols that give meaning to individual and institutional action. These three poles of interpretation make up a model developed from James and Evelyn Whitehead's two poles of reflection, that is, *personal* and *corporate* experience, which is based on Tracy's "common human experience" (Browning 1996:61).

According to Van Huyssteen, this interpretation is a "received interpretation," in the sense that it is socially constructed, as opposed to an individual or subjective construction, and emphasizes the contribution of tradition, culture, and cultural discourses to the interpretation (Müller 2004:7). Royce's (Browning 1996:50) idea that interpretation always proceeds within a community, and Peire's (Browning 1996:51) argument that reality can never be known adequately by an individual, share the same social constructionist idea. Later, social constructionism will be addressed in more detail, but Van Huyssteen's (1997:16) argument encapsulates it well: "Our search for legitimate knowledge always takes place within the social context of a community..."

1.3.1.5.2 Rationality

Rationality in postfoundationalism is "an awareness of the shared cognitive, pragmatic, and evaluative dimensions" (Van Huyssteen 1999:239). It is able to give an account, provide a rationale for the way one thinks, chooses, acts, and believes (Van Huyssteen 1997:39). This rationality describes the dynamic interaction of our various disciplinary dialogues with one another—as a form of transversal reasoning that justifies and urges an acknowledgment of multiple patterns of interpretation as one moves across the borders and boundaries of different disciplines (Van Huyssteen 2000:427). This rationality through transversal reasoning provides common ground for communication for people who have different beliefs and cultures.

Transversal reason, as mentioned above, originated from Calvin Shrag. It was used by Shrag (1992:149) to describe the way in which reason exists at the point of intersection between various disciplines, paradigms, and social

practices. Shrag (1992:149) says, “....transversality, most generally construed, provides a window to the wider world of thought and action.” This transversal reason was also called “shared rational resources” or “the resources of human rationality” by Van Huyssteen (2006:12, 40). For Van Huyssteen (2006:11-13), rationality takes many different forms, allowing 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 in which we interact with others. Van Huyssteen (2006:11) continues:

We cannot talk abstractly and theoretically about the phenomenon of rationality anymore; it is only as individual human beings, living with other human beings in concrete situations and contexts, that we can claim some form of rationality. In this sense human rationality is revealed as always person- and domain-specific, as we discover it as present and operative in and through the dynamics of our words and deeds.

Postfoundational rationality, according to Van Huyssteen, is constructed on the basis of own experience, but is capable of reaching beyond. It starts with an individual and extends to community. This rationality is diverse from community to community, and there is no trans-cultural rationality. Therefore, postfoundational rationality is context-specific and is embedded in tradition (Van Huyssteen 2006:11). Regarding transversal rationality, Van Huyssteen (2006:20) argues:

Transversal rationality facilitates a multiperspectival approach to dialogue, where rationality exists in the intersecting connections and transitions between disciplines. In interdisciplinary dialogue, it is precisely these shared domains of rationality, these intersecting, overlapping concerns, that have to be carefully identified. This interwovenness of many different disciplinary voices opens up spaces for the performance of human cognitive fluidity at work, reveals the interdisciplinary conversation as transitional and interrelational, and the performance of human rationality is transversal. Welsh puts this quite succinctly: transversal rationality is rationality in movement, it is an ability, a skill, and as such is dynamically realized in these interactive process (cf. Welsh 1996:764).

Van Huyssteen (1999:267) further differentiates theological rationality from scientific rationality, “There are no universal standards of rationality against which we can measure other beliefs or competing research traditions.” For example, scientific rationality is different and should be treated differently from theological rationality because of different object, language, and method (Van Huyssteen 1997:263-265). Although the direction and process may be different, postfoundational rationality definitely has the characteristic of social constructionism, which is also a part of my research paradigm. Van Huyssteen’s rationality starts from an individual and reaches out to other human beings while social constructionism starts with the community (Müller 2004:7). This postfoundational notion of rationality challenges the interdisciplinary dialogue. It also produces interpersonal and all forms of cross-cultural dialogue, enabling us to interpret multiple aspects of our embodied experience (Van Huyssteen 2006:12-13). “In fact, rationality is all about epistemic responsibility: the responsibility to pursue clarity, intelligibility, and optimal understanding, as ways to cope with ourselves and our world” (Van Huyssteen 2006:11).

1.3.1.5.3 Interdisciplinary conversation

Another major strength of postfoundationism is interdisciplinarity. A postfoundationalist notion of rationality in theological reflection claims to point beyond the confines of the local community or culture towards interdisciplinary conversation (Van Huyssteen 1997:4). In particular, Van Huyssteen argues for interdisciplinary dialogue between theology and science, although domains of rationality of these two disciplines are different. For interdisciplinary dialogue between disciplines, paradigms, and practices to occur, transversal reason as mentioned above is employed. Van Huyssteen (2006:9) says:

Interdisciplinary discourse, then, is an attempt to bring together disciplines or reasoning strategies that may have widely different points of reference, different epistemological foci, and different experiential resources. This ‘fitting together,’ however, is a complex, multileveled transversal process that takes place not within the confines of any given discipline...but within the transversal spaces between disciplines.

Interdisciplinarity is further supported by the following arguments. Proposing three types of religious explanations—private, communal, and transcommunal—Philip Clayton (1989:3-5) defines transcommunal explanation as intersubjective explanation that transcends the boundaries of the individual or the religious community. Gelwick (1983:422) says, “Interdisciplinary study itself is a paradigm shift”. For such an interdisciplinary conversation to occur, epistemic humility is required and the willingness to learn is primary. In advocating fallibilism, one of the characteristics of postfoundationalism, Vanhoozer (2000:87-89) calls for exercising cognitive humility and willingness to put beliefs to the test. Don Browning (1996:81) also stresses the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue by saying, “It is extremely important for theology—especially practical theology—to have a strong and positive relation with the modern human sciences.”

When we thus engage in pluralist, interdisciplinary conversation, we are empowered to step beyond the limitations and boundaries of our contexts, traditions, and disciplines. “Here theology will share in interdisciplinary standards of rationality, which, although always contextually and socially shaped, will not be hopelessly culture- and context-bound. This will enable our theological reflection to aim for the reasoned coherence of a wide reflective equilibrium as the optimal epistemic goal of interdisciplinary dialogue” (Van Huyssteen 2006:41).

As we have seen above, in postfoundational critical theological reflection, the creative fusion of hermeneutics and epistemology occurs through the processes of interpreted experience, use of rationality and transversal reason, and interdisciplinary conversation. All of these are critical elements of my research.

1.3.1.5.4 Critical realism

One more thing I would like to mention about postfoundationalism is critical realism. McMullin (1985:39) argues that critical realism provides the test where there is an overlap and interaction between science and theology in the human domain. Van Huyssteen clarifies the issue by saying that as a

promising but yet to be established theory, critical realism is neither a theological nor scientific thesis but philosophical, or more accurately, an epistemological thesis about the goals of scientific knowledge and the implications of theoretical models in science (Van Huyssteen 1997:41). However, in theology, critical realism means that what we are provisionally conceptualising in theology really exists (Van Huyssteen 1997:131). Van Huyssteen (1997:134-135) says again, “In theology, critical realism will imply a model of rationality where theological concepts and models are indeed provisional, inadequate, and partial, but on the other hand, also necessary as the *only* way of referring to the reality that is God, and the reality of God’s relation to humanity.” My purpose for bringing up critical realism is that it leads us to the realism of the text, which I believe is important in chapter four, “historical and systematic theology.” In critical realism the issues of faith experiences, the language of faith, and the theoretical language of theological reflection all presuppose an essential role of the biblical text and its interpretive tradition (Van Huyssteen 1997:133).

1.3.2 Practical

Historically, practical theology shared some common features with pastoral theology. Sometimes, these two were treated identically, and other times completely differently. In the present context, the difference between these two is more of emphasis than substance. Pastoral theology is more associated with pastoring or shepherding, whereas practical theology is associated with academic and broad theoretic and theological issues. Despite these different emphases, both pastoral and practical theology are concerned with how theological activities can inform or be informed by practical action in the interests of making an appropriate and effective Christian response in our times. Within the mainstream Reformed tradition, however, practical theology tends to be a preferred term that includes pastoral theology (Pattison & Woolward 2000b:1-3).

Originally, the term “practical theology” emerged in the German Protestant tradition as part of the academic theological curriculum in the late eighteenth century (Pattison & Woolward 2000b:2). While there are many definitions of

practical theology, my purpose is not to elaborate on those various definitions, but instead to provide some significant characteristics of practical theology (Pattison & Woolward 2000b:6).

- (1) Transformational
- (2) Contextual and situationally related
- (3) Experiential
- (4) Interrogative
- (5) Interdisciplinary
- (6) Analytical and constructive
- (7) Dialectical and disciplined

Now in dealing with practical theology as my research paradigm, I would like to go one step further from these common characteristics presented above. I subscribe to the practical theology of Don Browning and use his work *Fundamental Practical Theology* (1996) as the main source for the development of my writing.

Traditionally, theology started from the text and the text provided norms of practice. Practical theology, therefore, has been treated as an inferior form of theology. However the whole theological process should be practical from the beginning because theology that is irrelevant to life in its abstract forms is not meaningful. Theology starts with the concrete and ends with the concrete. Browning's (1996:7) view makes sense when he says that theology starts from present theory-laden practice to a retrieval of normative theory-laden practice to the creation of more critically held theory-laden practices.

In the above process, practical theology engages in reflective, critical, communicative, interpretive, hermeneutical, and correlational dialogue in order to achieve its purpose of bringing new meanings and horizons to specific contexts. It should be noted that other practical theologians uses a similar methodology. Gerkin's (1997) interaction between tradition and practice reveals dialogical and interactive nature of pastoral care, which is a realm of practical theology. Lartey's (2000:130) "pastoral cycle" presents a

model similar to Browning's argument of *fundamental practical theology*. Lartey (2000:128-134) talks about the theological process using different terms from Browning. As he talks about several different approaches to practical theology, he promotes his pastoral cycle, which consists of experience, situational analysis, theological analysis, situational analysis of theology, and response. This model of practical theology is a process, and there are interactions between situational analysis and theological analysis, and also between theological analysis and situational analysis of theology. Pattison and Woolward's (2000a:36-50) "conversation model" of pastoral theology also has such characteristics of practical theology as we are dealing with here—dialectical, interdisciplinary, reflective-based, and experiential-practical. Although it is not as fully developed as Browning's model of practical theology, David Tracy's (1983:76) definition also shares the same line of thought of interaction between theory and practice and their critical correlation: "*Practical theology* is the mutually critical correlation of the interpreted theory and praxis of the Christian fact and the interpreted theory and praxis of the contemporary situation." Müller calls this movement from the context to the theoretical and backward "the circle of practical wisdom" (Müller 2004:3).

I will be using Don Browning's four movements of theology as a guideline in developing the argument in my thesis writing. In the following section, Browning's four movements of practical theology are discussed.

1.3.2.1 Four movements of practical theology

Browning (1996:8) argues that theology as a whole is "fundamental practical theology" and that it has four submovements of "descriptive," "historical," "systematic," and "strategic practical" theologies. Descriptive theology is to describe practices and attitudes of the personal, institutional, and religious situation of the research participant around a selected issue. Historical theology is to investigate the historical source, the Christian text, from the perspective of the description of contemporary practices. Systematic theology is a critical dialogue between the features of the Christian message and those of present practices. Strategic practical theology is to formulate new norms

and strategies of concrete practices in light of the critical dialogue and analysis (Browning 1996:72-73). These four submovements of practical theology deserve more attention.

1.3.2.1.1 Descriptive theology

Descriptive theology is a hermeneutical task (Browning 1996:78). It starts with a whole, goes to interpretive critical thinking, and then reconstructs. It describes a question in all of its situated richness. It describes how people think and act practically in specific contexts (Browning 1996:94-97). Its purpose is to capture the questions that lead to historical and systematic theology and then back to the concreteness of strategic practical theology (Browning 1996:134). Therefore, descriptive theology aims for a “thick” description of situations (Browning 1996:105).

It is worth noting at this point to mention the five levels or dimensions of practical thinking proposed by Browning for thick description (1996:71). They are:

- (1) the visional level (raises metaphysical validity claims);
- (2) the obligational level (raises normative ethical claims);
- (3) the 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) an environmental-social dimension (raises claims that deal with social-systemic and ecological constraints on our tendencies and needs);
- (5) the rule-role dimension (raises claims about the concrete patterns we should enact in our actual praxis in everyday world).

Browning (1996:71) recommends the use of these five dimensions for “describing the theory laden practices found in contemporary situations and for describing and critically assessing the Christian witness.” 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). Altogether, these five dimensions are a great tool to obtain a thick description or questions concerning a situation or a phenomenon.

The descriptive task of theology mentioned above is really that of hermeneutic dialogue (Browning 1996:78). Since descriptive theology is hermeneutic in nature, the relation of theology to the human sciences such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology becomes essential. In fact, the human sciences are also hermeneutic (Browning 1996:130). The relation of practical theology to the human sciences can be stated as truth to method, understanding to epistemology, that is, procedure for gaining knowledge, and interpretation to explanation (Browning 1996:82). These human sciences are the disciplines that provide us with some in-depth knowledge of human mind and behaviours. Although these disciplines are not good enough to study various phenomena and practices of humans with completeness, they are useful when we assess individual human behaviours and practices. Therefore, Browning's (1996:81) point makes sense when he says:

It is extremely important for theology—especially practical theology—to have a strong and positive relation with the modern human sciences. But the use of these sciences by theology must be conceptually precise as possible—more accurate than it has been in the past.

Browning (1996:92) again makes a meaningful statement about the nature of descriptive theology and its relationship to human sciences as follows:

The idea of descriptive theology is not completely foreign to the human sciences. When they are used explicitly within fundamental practical theology, what is implicit in the so-called secular human sciences becomes explicit. The religious and theological horizon is made clear and direct. Interpretations of situations are made from a directly theological perspective. The human sciences can be used within descriptive theology and their explanatory interests employed to account for biological, psychological, and sociological factors that influence but do not determine human

behavior...it [descriptive theology] makes explicit what is often implicit within the human sciences themselves.

Lastly, Browning's (1996:89-92) following point says it all:

All the human sciences are, at least at their horizons, a kind of descriptive theology...[and] the human sciences fade at their edges into religious perspectives.

When descriptive theology catches the thick questions of a situation or a phenomenon hermeneutically, it prepares a way to the next submovements, that is, historical, systematic, and strategic theologies.

1.3.2.1.2 Historical and systematic practical theology

Practical theology moves from descriptive theology and its formation of questions back to historical theology and asks the following question, "What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis as honestly as possible?" (Browning1996:49). It is to understand what the text and the tradition say to the present context. The following statement of Tracy and Ricoeur succinctly summarizes what happens in this stage of practical theology.

This is where the traditional disciplines of biblical studies, church history, and the history of Christian thought are located. In this scheme, these disciplines and all their technical literary-historical, textual, and social scientific explanatory interests are understood as parts of a larger practical hermeneutical enterprise. Their technical, explanatory, and distancing manoeuvres are temporary procedures designed to gain clarity within a larger hermeneutic effort to understand our praxis and the theory behind it.

(Browning 1996:49)

As historical theology is engaged in dialogue, however, it is not an individual matter, but a communal interpretive process, especially in regards to both the theological academy and congregations (Browning 1996:51). This communally oriented interpretive process shares the same line of thought with social constructionism, which argues that we are socially constructed (Müller

2004:3). However, it needs to be noted that Browning is weak in social constructionism overall.

Then systematic theology, the third movement, is engaged. It is, according to Gadamer's hermeneutics, a fusion of horizons between the vision implicit in contemporary practices and the vision implied in the practices of the normative Christian text (Browning 1996:51). Systematic theology tries to gain as comprehensive a view of the present as possible and examine large, encompassing themes of our present practices. Its two main questions are:

- (1) What new horizon of meaning is fused when questions from present practices are brought to the central Christian witness?
- (2) What reason can be advanced to support the validity claims of this new fusion of meaning (Browning 1996:51-52)?

In answering the first question, systematic theology addresses general, shared and common themes of praxis in an orderly way. In answering the second question, systematic theology brings in critical and philosophical moment into theology (Browning 1996:52-54). Taking historicity seriously, Bernstein (1983:153) calls this process and challenge "the best possible reasons and arguments that are appropriate to our hermeneutical situation in order to validate claims to truth." After all, systematic theology is concerned with the grounds for religious belief—that is, how religious belief can make sense for modern people, since modernity undermines the common themes of practice (Browning 1996:54).

1.3.2.1.3 Strategic practical theology

The first three submovements of practical theology have prepared us for the last movement, that of strategic practical theology. We began with the historically situated context or theory-laden practice, moved back to classical ideals, had a dialogue, and now we move forward to the future with new formulations.

In this stage, there are four basic questions that we ask. First, how do we understand this concrete situation in which we must act? It is a further development from general themes of praxis in systematic theology to particular ones of concrete individual, institutional, and religio-cultural situation. Secondly, strategic practical theology asks, what should our praxis be in this concrete situation? The symbolic and actional norms from historical and systematic theology are brought in to this particular situation. Thirdly, how do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation? Here the five dimensions of practical thinking—the visional, obligational, tendency-need or anthropological, environmental-social, and rule-role, employed to describe the theory-laden practice in descriptive theology—are engaged again for the defence of the norms. The revised correlational approach to practical theology at this stage, therefore, is different from just simple confessional, narrative, or cultural-linguistic approaches—because it defends the validity claims of the norms. Fourthly, what strategies and rhetorics should we use in this concrete situation? This last question refers to the communication question for transformation, not only in the context in which the whole inquiry began, but also for the wider community (Browning 1996:55-56).

What is of special interest to strategic practical theology is the dynamic of transformation related to the fourth question above, and the nature of this dynamic of transformation is dialogical (Browning 1996:279). The dialogue that started with descriptive theology, the new horizon created in systematic theology, and the new praxis and norms put forth in strategic practical theology, when they are communicated, are truly powerful sources of transformation. Browning (1996:288) argues again for the crucial role dialogue plays in the process:

Increasingly, in this pluralistic and rapidly changing society where new moral challenges are constantly emerging, the establishment and maintenance of moral ideals will occur through critical hermeneutical dialogue.

This critical hermeneutics is the same as the revised correlational approach (Browning 1996:215), and the revised correlational approach to strategic

practical theology is basically an approach to communication (Browning 1996:291). These communications comprise a truly transformative dialogue (Browning 1996:292).

In the beginning of the discussion of practical theology, the first characteristic of practical theology put forth by Pattison and Woolward (2000b:6) was transformational. Unless practical theology aims at and brings about transformation of some sort for the betterment of Christian praxis, the whole hermeneutics and epistemology of practical theology focused upon in this section becomes an academic and theoretical activity. Practical theology, after all, is a transforming practice for communities of faith.

Before I close this section, I would like to mention Groome's (quoted by Browning 1996:218-219) "shared praxis." This model of practical theology is similar to Browning's. His five movements of critical reflection on present shared practices called shared praxis correspond to the four movements of fundamental practical theology of Browning. His five movements are: (1) Expressing present praxis; (2) Critical reflection on the present praxis; (3) Making accessible the Christian Story and Vision; (4) A dialectical hermeneutic between present praxis and interpretations of the Christian Story and Vision; (5) Decision and response for renewed Christian praxis. In his model, the fifth movement, which is also a forward movement for transformation, corresponds to Browning's last movement.

I quote Lartey (2000:133) as I conclude the practical theology portion as a valuable element of my research paradigm.

It is perhaps sufficient to say that what is aimed at in practical theology is a relevant, meaningful, methodologically appropriate and viable form of theological activity which may be personally and socially transformative.

1.3.3 Narrative

Narrative is one of the main characteristics of postmodernity following Wittgenstein's "The limit of my language mean the limits of my world." The narrative understanding of reality is that it is not based on a single narrative,

but various narratives such as social, cultural, political, etc (Meylahn 2003:86). An awareness of the role of narrative in constructing human experience and giving significance to events in our lives has only recently surfaced in the human sciences (Polkinghorne 1988:184). Narrative theory of human understanding focuses its attention on existence as it is lived, experienced, and interpreted by the human person (Polkinghorne 1988:125). Polkinghorne (1988:183) argues,

Human beings exist in three realms—the material realm, the organic realm, and the realm of meaning. The realm of meaning is structured according to linguistic forms, and one of the most important forms for creating meaning in human existence is the narrative. The narrative attends to the temporal dimension of human existence and configures events into a unity. The events become meaningful in relation to the theme or point of the narrative. Narratives organize events into wholes that have beginnings, middles, and ends.

In Africa, this narrative approach is more valid than the western context. Manaka's statement (quoted by Müller, Van Deventer, & Human 2001:78) reveals the essence of this narrative approach to research—"in Africa we do things together through stories."

1.3.3.1 Narrative understanding

We understand and live our lives through stories. According to Morgan (2000:5) "A narrative is like a thread that weaves the events together, forming a story" and the broader stories of the culture in which we live influence the ways we understand our lives (Morgan 2000:9). Polkinghorne (1988:13) defines narrative as follows: *Narrative* can refer to the process of making a story, to the cognitive scheme of the story, or to the result of the process—also called *stories, tales, or histories*. Barthes' comment (quoted by Polkinghorne 1988:14) is meaningful.

The narrative is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; the history of narrative begins with the history of mankind; there does not exist, and never has existed, a people without narratives.

According to Crites (1989:69-71), there are two kinds of narratives: sacred and mundane. Sacred stories lie deep in the consciousness of culture, whereas mundane stories pass between people. Sacred stories form consciousness, while mundane stories find their setting within the world of consciousness. Barthes (quoted by Polkinghorne 1988:14) believes that narratives perform significant functions. On the individual level, people have narratives of their own lives that enable them to construe what they are and where they are headed. On the cultural level, narratives serve to give cohesion to shared beliefs and to transmit values. There is an interaction between the individual and cultural levels. Freedman and Combs (1996:17) say that cultural stories influence the way they interpret their daily experience, and that their daily actions influence the stories that circulate in society. "All a people's mundane stories are implicit in its sacred story, and every mundane story takes soundings in the sacred story" (Crites 1989:71).

The Enlightenment view of reality was a closed material system organized according to rules that could be expressed in terms of formal logic and mathematics. However, narrative understanding is that human experience is hermeneutically organized according to the figures of linguistic production (Polkinghorne 1988:155).

The concept of narrative action was born as an alternative to the three positions following: (1) mean-end rationality, that is, purposeful action is the result of a means-end calculation to achieve personal ends, (2) structuralism, that is, action is the enactment of transcendent and logically ordered rules, and (3) action as language game, that is, action is behaviour conforming to socially agreed upon rules (Polkinghorne 1988:137-142).

When action is understood within the systems mentioned above, the richness and fullness of its meaning disappears. Against the aforementioned approaches to human actions, the concept of human action proposed by a narrative approach is that action is an expression of existence and that its organization manifests the narrative organization of human experience (Polkinghorne 1988:142). This narrative involves the gathering of events into a plot in which meaning is given to the events as they relate to the theme of the

story. The plot configures the events into a whole, and the events are transformed from merely serial, independent happenings, into meaningful happenings that contribute to the whole theme (Polkinghorne 1988:143). Polkinghorne's (1988:145) statement is to the point:

Narrative is a form of hermeneutic expression in which human action is understood and made meaningful. Action itself is the living narrative expression of a personal and social life.

This hermeneutically based understanding of human behaviour as a narrative expression of existence can produce far more authentic and useful descriptions for a science of the human realm (Polkinghorne 1988:146). Kotze and Kotze (2001:1) say, "Telling narrative is doing spirituality."

1.3.3.2 Narrative research

In the research arena, the narrative approach is a new form of research pattern. According to Müller (1999:1), the "narrative approach has made the discovery that people do not tell stories only for interest's sake or for entertainment but that life's grain is exposed through these stories." Although Müller said the above in the context of narrative therapy, it is revealing. In the research arena, we use the narrative approach in order to be truthful in doing research (Müller et al. 2001:77). One foundational understanding of narrative research is that we view people not as *research subjects*, but as *research participants* or *co-researchers*. In other words, research is not done on them, but with them (Müller et al. 2001).

There are two kinds of narrative research. One is descriptive, and it aims at rendering the narrative accounts already in place as are used by individuals or groups as their means for ordering and making temporal events meaningful. The criterion for evaluating this kind of narrative research is the accuracy of the researcher's description in relationship to the operating narrative scheme. The other kind is explanatory, and it aims at constructing a narrative account that explains "why" a situation or event involving human actions has happened (Polkinghorne 1988:161).

The purpose of descriptive narrative research is to produce an accurate description of the interpretive narrative accounts that individuals or groups use to make sequences of events in their lives or organizations meaningful. However, the research does not construct a new narrative; it merely reports an already existing one (Polkinghorne 1988:161-162). However, in this research paradigm, narrative is also understood to create an alternative story or understanding with the help of practical theology and social constructionism.

In narrative research, we ask questions, but questions are asked not to gather information, but to generate experience (Freedman and Combs 1996:113). Although Freedman and Combs developed these questions in a therapeutic context, they are still meaningful and can still be used in narrative research. The first type is called “deconstruction questions.” They are used to help people unpack their life stories so that they can see their life from different perspectives. Through deconstruction questions, problematic beliefs, practices, feelings and attitudes are revealed along with cultural and contextual influences. Then the second type of question is asked, called “opening space questions.” Once people see their lives from a different perspective, they are in a position to construct their lives differently with a unique outcome in mind. Then “preference questions” are asked to make sure the new story being constructed is that which they prefer to other past stories. Then we ask “story development questions” in order to develop new stories that would include details of time, context, people, and specific processes involved. Finally, “meaning questions” are asked to probe the meanings of all the previously asked questions. Meaning questions are asked about personal qualities, relationship characteristics, motivation, hopes, goals, values, beliefs, knowledge, and learnings that people derive from their developing narratives. Generally, deconstruction and opening space questions are asked in the early part of the interview, and preference, story development, and meaning questions are alternatively asked in latter part of the interview (Freedman and Combs 1996:113-143). In this research I will be using deconstruction questions in the beginning, but as the research progresses, I will be employing all the other questions as well.

It is worth mentioning “emplotment” at this point. In narrative interview, as the story develops and is constructed, the research needs to move from the specific stories towards the more general life stories that provide self-identity and give unity to the person’s whole existence (Polkinghorne 1988:163). The process is called emplotment. Plots are meaning expressions, and emplotment, or plotting, is an activity in which temporal happenings are shaped into meaningful units. Plot is the logic of narrative discourse that produces meaning. Through the action of emplotment, the narrative constitutes human reality into wholes, manifests human values, and bestows meaning on life. Emplotment composes meaning out of events using a similar process that grammar employs to develop meaning from words. Therefore, narrative meaning consists of more than the events alone; it consists also of the significance these events have in relation to a particular theme (Polkinghorne 1988:159-160).

In narrative research, research participants are valued and the researcher is involved in the lives of research participants. In the empiricist tradition, the investigator who “discovers” or “reveals” the true nature of things is honoured. As a result, the investigator’s voice is dominant and other voices are suppressed. As an alternative, in the narrative research, researchers seek to admit more voices to the conversation that generates understanding through the firsthand accounts (Gergen 1999:95). Therefore, in the narrative approach, the researcher with subjective integrity in mind, strives for participatory interaction and develops story through the active interaction between the researcher and participants (Müller et al 2002:85). Mishler (1986b:248-249) comments about the control of the research context by the researcher, “If we wish to hear respondents’ stories, then we must invite them into our work as collaborators, sharing control with them, so that together we try to understand what their stories are about.” This context is different from the typical survey interview context, in which the interviewer controls the interview by asking specific questions and intervenes when the answers are “off-track” (Polkinghorne 1988:161) or “suppresses narrative accounts in interviews” (Mishler 1986b:248).

The analysis of narrative interview needs attention as well. When analyzing narrative interviews, Labov argues for abstracting a core story, the plot, the theme from the total response of the interviewee. However, Agar and Hobbs offer a second model of analysis of narrative interviews that gives more attention to the particular content of a story than does Labov's method. They emphasize the question of how an episode in the story is related to the general story, that is, how it coheres with the rest of the account. Their proposal of three levels of coherence are as follows: local, in which the succession of statements is connected to prior statements by syntactic, temporal or causal relations; global, in which the statements cohere with the overall theme or intent of the story; and themal, in which general culture themes or values are expressed. Mishler, however, proposes still a different analysis—that the analyst can assume two notions about the story. First, the story is a form of self-presentation in which the teller is claiming a particular kind of self-identity. Second, the analyst searches for statements and references to the teller's identity through the account (Polkinghorne 1988:164-166). Mishler (1986a:64) further says, "Terms take on specific and contextually grounded meanings within and through the discourses as it develops and is shaped by speakers."

In this research, I will extract the themes that emerge from the interviews to develop them towards having a thick understanding of the context and also try to relate the stories to one another and to the themes.

Polkinghorne's (1988:160) following comment about narrative summarizes the central place of narrative in our lives:

Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told, with the stories that we dream or imagine or would like to tell. All these stories are reworked in that story of our own lives which we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semiconscious, virtually in interrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meanings of our past actions, anticipating the outcomes of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed.

We live and die through narrative (Gergen 1999:172).

1.3.4 Social construction

In the previous section, narrative leads us to think about people's lives as stories. In this section, social constructionism, we learn that every person's social and interpersonal reality has been constructed through interaction with other human beings and human institutions.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (quoted by Krog 1998:143) once stated: “[A] person is not basically an independent, solitary entity. A person is human precisely in being enveloped in the community of other human beings, in being caught up in the bundle of life. To be...is to participate”. In an increasingly diverse world where various realities clash and traditional values are waning, social constructionism as a postmodern project is seen as an alternative against the modernist faith in the individual mind, rationality, objectivity, and truth. This is a shift from focusing on the process by which an individual person constructs a model of reality from his or her individual experience, towards a focus on the way in which people interact with one another to construct, modify, and maintain what their society holds to be true, real, and meaningful. It is this social epistemology that attracts us to social constructionism (Freedman and Combs 1996:27)

The basic tenet of social constructionism is that people construct realities together. Freedman (1996:16) says:

The main premise is that the beliefs, values, institutions, customs, labels, laws, divisions of labour, and the like that make up our social realities are constructed by the members of a culture as they interact with one another from generation to generation and day to day. That is, societies construct the “lenses” through which their members interpret the world.

Without commitment to fundamental values, social constructionism is relativistic—meaning that all positions possess legitimacy in their own terms—but it is not relativism. Social constructionism invites a posture of continuing reflection; each moment of reflection is value-saturated. Their commitments are situated within culture and history (Gergen 1999:231-235).

Social constructionism is an alternative against scientism and humanism. Scientists argue that there are no principled differences between humans and machines, whereas humanists declare that there are many. Social constructionism offers an alternative to both traditions. Gergen argues we need not decide between the two any more than we must decide whether opera is any more true than jazz. We need to generate new conceptions that open up new alternatives for action. The point is not to search for what is fundamentally true or real, but to add to the cultural resources for relating (Gergen 1999:214).

Paré (1995:3-4) and Freedman and Combs (1996:20) discuss the locus of knowledge in the family therapy context from which epistemology has thus evolved: (1) knowable reality—its elements and workings can be accurately and replicably discovered, described, and used by human beings toward (2) perspectivist position—attempts to describe reality tell us a lot about the person doing the describing, but not much about external reality, and gradually to (3) a locus of knowledge in a community of persons—the realities we inhabit are those we negotiate with one another. Paré asserts that there has been a gradual, and as yet incomplete, evolution from the first to the third views over the course of this century. This trend is postmodern and social constructionistic, and celebrates relationship as opposed to the individual, connection over isolation, and communion over antagonism (Gergen 1999: 122).

Heshusius (1994:16) calls this “participatory consciousness” as opposed to the “alienated consciousness” of the natural sciences. Alienated consciousness requires that the act of knowing takes place through the distancing of oneself and the regulating of that distance in order to come to the known. Participatory consciousness takes place when the boundaries between the self and other are overcome through a deep connection. Heshusius (1994:16) contends:

Participatory consciousness is the awareness of a deeper level of kinship between the knower and the known....It refers to a mode of consciousness, a way of being in the world....It

requires an attitude of tremendous openness and receptivity....One is turned toward other (human or nonhuman) '*without*' being in need of it or wanting to appropriate it to achieve something

In the social constructionist view, the experience of self exists in the social realm (Weingarten 1991:289). The meanings of words are social constructions, meaning that words are not derived from private ideas in the mind but from social practice (Wittgenstein quoted by Polkinghorne 1988:26). The psychological is fashioned from the social (Gergen 1999:129). Even in education, truth does not exist beyond community. What is true or rational is an outgrowth of communal relations (Gergen 1999:180). In therapy, therapists take the position of "not knowing" instead of serving as the expert, and construct meaning through generative conversations (Gergen 1999:169-170). In various communities, as we have just seen above, people use stories to build new visions for the future—and the realities embedded in the stories come to life. According to Pieterse (quoted by Meylahn 2003:62), the social reality is determined by people's definition of their situation in terms of their own text and experience.

We need to take note here that there is a fundamental difference between constructionism and constructivism. Constructivism is a tradition deeply rooted in rationalist philosophy. The process of world construction is psychological and it takes place "in the head." However, social constructionism takes an outcome of real social relationships. Constructivism follows the individual tradition in the West. The individual mind is the centre of interest. Yet, constructionism searches for relational alternatives to understanding and action (Gergen 1999:236-237).

In social constructionism, reason also has a different interpretation. From the early Enlightenment philosophy to its emanation in twentieth century modernism, a strong faith has been placed in the power of reason. It is the power of human reason that stands against religious and political totalitarianism and from which we derive ethical foundations. However, for constructionists, rationality is not an inner state of mind but a form of public performance (in language, symbols, material arrangements). "Good reason"

derives its intelligibility and power from relationships. Reason is lodged within a particular culture and is committed to particular values and ways of life (Gergen 1999:229).

Finally, the social construction process takes us forward with new or alternative understandings. Although Habermas' "discourse ethics"—ethical foundations for productive dialogue on how we should resolve our conflicts—is appealing, we should move toward transformative dialogue that affirms relational responsibility and group realities (Gergen 1999:152-157). Malony (1983:189) says about the importance of dialogue for transformation as follows:

Truth exists in the interaction *between* persons rather than inside them....[T]ruth is discovered in the dialogue persons have with one another and that change comes through group action rather than individual insight.

Social construction is not a complete theory, but through reflection, constructionists appreciate the limitations of their commitments and the potential inherent in alternatives (Gergen 1999: 235)

In this research, I am using social construction as a method. Since realities are constructed together and alternative understanding is reached socially through group action, social construction is applicable to this research. De Beer (2001:38) comments about African reality:

An African world-view does not view the life of an individual in isolation from other human beings but sees life in communal terms. According to such a view, only through the mutual interdependence between people, as well as between an individual and her community, a full and healthy life can be enjoyed. The basic philosophy, according to Mbiti (1998:145) is: 'I am because we are, and since I am therefore we are.'

In favour of social constructionism Gergen (1999:221) says:

It is not the mind of the single individual that provides the sense of certitude, but the process of communal relationship. If there were no relationships there would be no meaningful discourse...We may properly replace Descartes' dictum with, *Communicamus ergo sum*—We relate, therefore I am!"

1.3.5 Distinct features of this research paradigm

The following will be the main features or values that will guide this research.

- Thick description and interpretation of experience
- Use of transversal reason for interdisciplinary conversation
- Communal construction of reality
- Dialogue for transformation

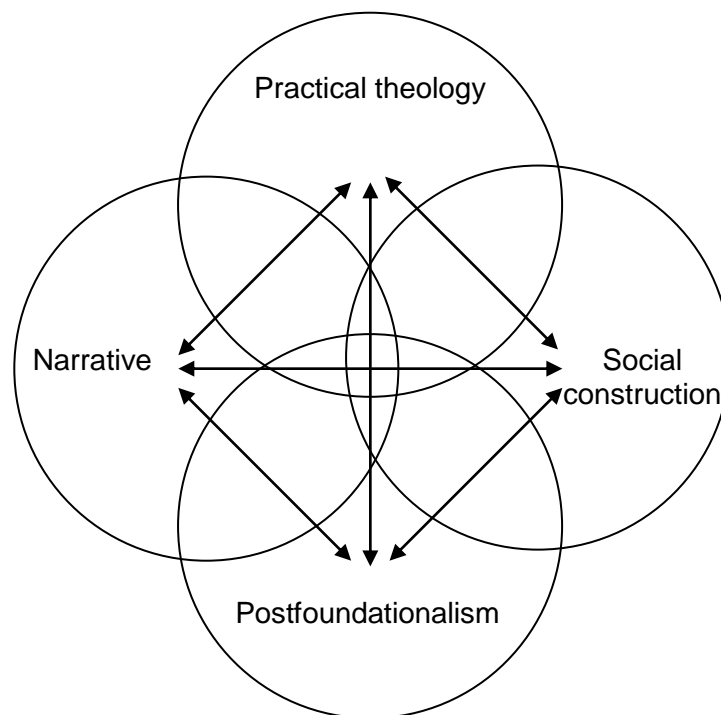


Fig 1.1
Research paradigm

In summary, my theological position is postfoundationalism and practical theology. The main methodology I will be using is Browning's practical theology, and the epistemology will be narrative and social construction. These four elements will dialogue and interact with one another as the

research progresses. The diagram on the previous page shows the interrelatedness of these four elements of my research paradigm.

CHAPTER 2

NARRATIVES:

UNIQUE DESCRIPTION OF SPIRITUALITY

2.1 RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Narratives create meaning in human existence, recounting our past actions and anticipating future outcomes (Polkinghorne 1988:160,183). I listened to the stories of the Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) with a view towards understanding their spirituality and its formation. It was a great learning experience both for me and for my research participants. As my research participants described their life and ministry experiences, both good and bad, both joyful and painful, I, as a researcher, tried to listen to their experiences with subjective integrity, since I have come from a different background and context. I did not prepare questionnaires but approached them with some deconstruction questions with an intention to help them unpack their life stories.

2.1.1 Research context

My research context was the Kikuyu PCEA (Presbyterian Church of East Africa) pastors in Nairobi area. The Kikuyu tribe is the largest tribe in Kenya and they are Bantus. As one of the mainline denominations, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa has its main thrust among the Kikuyu. Nairobi is the capital of Kenya and the hub of East Africa.

2.1.2 Research participants

My research participants are five in all. The criteria that I used to select the research participants were: (1) pastors of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in their 30s, 40s, or 50s who had had at least 5 years of ministry experience and who lived in Nairobi area; (2) those who were trained in the theological institution of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa or the institution which was affiliated with the Presbyterian Church; (3) three male pastors and two female pastors; (4) at least one or two pastors from slum

churches—since the slum population comprises more than half of Nairobi population.

The five research participants whom I selected—Sam, Paul, Grace, George, Mary (all pseudonyms)—fit the criteria which I had set. I came to know them through Paul, one of the research participants, who introduced me to these pastors for interview. To give a little detail of the research participants, Sam is over 50 years old and has a total of 18 years of ministry experience in the Presbyterian Church. Since he is an elderly pastor, I thought he would provide a story that other pastors would not. Currently, he is a pastor of a slum church. Paul is a friend of mine, and I wanted to interview him. He has been involved with the Presbyterian Church over 15 years and is a pastor of a slum church. He is enrolled in a master's degree program, and I thought that his education would enable him to share something that perhaps others would not. George recently pastored a church located in suburban Nairobi. He has 10 years of ministry in the Presbyterian Church.

I had two women research participants. Grace has worked with the Presbyterian Church over 10 years. She pastors a church which is located close to a slum. Mary has worked for the Presbyterian Church for almost 15 years, and just started taking classes at a theological institution for continuing education.

These five pastors are all experienced Presbyterian pastors, and they are “encultured informants,” who know their culture well and take it as their responsibility to explain what it means (Rubin and Rubin 1995:66). Except Sam, they all belong to a “younger” generation, who are in the middle of their career. I am sure that although there would be other qualified Presbyterian pastors for this research project, the mixture of experience, age, ministry location, and education of my research participants provided me with a wide spectrum of voices of the Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Nairobi.

I also consulted with scholars who taught at theological training institutes. Julius Murikwa is from a Catholic training institute who is a Kikuyu Anglican minister. I met with him three times and he provided insights in the area of the Kikuyu worldview. Caleb Kim is an anthropologist teaching at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST). I also met with him three times, and his anthropological insight helped me look at and describe the subject of my research from the discipline of anthropology. Michael Kirwen is a scholar at a Catholic training institute whom I consulted with in the area of Africa Traditional Religion. I met with him once. Sammy Linge is from Nairobi International School of Theology and provided me with insights in the area of African spirituality. I met with him twice. I consulted with these scholars, exchanged ideas, and some of them read my description of the context and provided me with feedback according to their expertise. I did not form a focus group because of their unavailability to all meet at the same time. Instead, I visited them in their offices and talked with them individually.

2.1.3 Research process

Initially, I obtained written permission from my research participants after I explained to them why I was doing this research and what I was going to use it for. I also recorded every interview with their permission. I met with the research participants individually five times each. The meeting place was an office, church, or school. After each interview, I typed a rough draft, transcribed the interview, and received feedback at the following interview, which I conducted as a follow-up of the previous interview. For each research participant this process was done five times, and all my visits were made personally.

Since my method of interview and collecting data was narrative, I did not prepare questions but approached my research participants open-handed to listen to their stories. As a narrative researcher I took the position of “not-knowing” (Human 2003:42). However, I tried to use the questions of Freedman and Combs (1996:113-143), such as deconstruction, preference, and meaning questions of their spiritual experiences—first to unpack their

lives and subsequently to guide the interviews. For example, some deconstruction questions I used are as follows:

1. Who are those who influenced you in the formation of your current spirituality?
2. What events or experiences contributed to your spirituality?
3. Have you followed any tradition of spirituality consciously or unconsciously? If so, what traditions have you followed?
4. Can you identify any aspects of Kikuyu traditional spirituality that have become a part of your Christian spirituality? If so, what are those?

When the interviews were concluded, the overall impression I had of these men and women was that they were decent pastors. They loved the Lord their God, and were committed to their denomination, and were proud of being Kikuyu. Woman pastors struggled with gender issues but proved to be strong. Slum churches were struggling with the lack of funds. Within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa there was also a struggle between the conservative and the charismatic, with the charismatic gaining more power and adherents. Overall, financial issues were always a concern and constraint.

One out of the many benefits of this research for me is that I built relationships and friendships with the research participants—an invaluable resource for me. For my research participants, the interviews were tedious but rewarding. Two of the participants said that it was a hard process but that it made them revisit the past and look at their lives from a different angle. My research participants were cooperative, and it seems that they were sharing their lives' stories honestly. They taught me!

2.1.4 Researcher's theological and cultural position

I think it would be helpful to clearly make known my theological and cultural positions at this juncture, since my positions definitely interact with those of my research participants and unconsciously affect the research process, which is somewhat unavoidable.

I am a Presbyterian pastor trained at a dispensational seminary, and have studied missions at a school of world mission of another seminary. I was involved with campus discipleship ministry when I was in college and seminary, and was also exposed to charismatic ministry. Now recently, I was exposed to postfoundational research ideas. My theological perspective, therefore, is not limited to one denomination or theological school. It seems that I am “multi” something and I am happy with that.

Culturally, I am of Asian-born, raised in Korea, and moved to the US in my early twenties. All of my post-secondary education was done in the US. In my early forties, I came to Kenya as a missionary. I have experienced Korean culture, American culture, and Kenyan culture. I have become sort of “multi” here culturally as well.

Spiritually, I think the most dominant characteristics of my spirituality are, according to Richard Foster’s streams of spirituality, (1) the Evangelical tradition, that is, spirituality centred around the Word of God, and (2) Holiness tradition, pursuing the virtuous life. I can also identify the influence of Confucianism as part of my spirituality. It is there in me and in the Korean culture as a moral principle.

From the standpoint of these theological, cultural, and spiritual positions as I have briefly mentioned above, I am approaching the issue of Kikuyu pastors’ spirituality. Honestly speaking, these stances may hinder or promote the description, interpretation, and formulation of an alternative understanding. They may hinder the process because of the alleged differences between them and me. However, this distance that exists between us may produce a more balanced description and interpretation since the postfoundational research process involves collaboration with the research participants. I am quite positive about that.

2.2 STORIES OF KIKUYU PASTORS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA

The Kikuyus are the tribe who received the gospel early when the first missionaries came to Kenya in the late 19th century. They are the ones whose fertile land was taken by British colonialists. They are also the ones who led the Mau Mau revolt against the colonial government and further towards Kenyan independence. Originally, the Kikuyus were agriculturists, but their innate inclination for capitalism moved them to urban areas and exposed them to different cultural influences. I have found that none of my research participants are traditional Kikuyus, which means that they have abandoned their traditional Kikuyu rituals and sacrifices. They are all modernized in one-way or another.

This chapter is about the stories of the five Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Their stories include life's grains (Muller 1999:1); and the emplotment of their stories provide self-identity and unity to the person's whole existence (Polkinghorne 1988:163). The weaving of individual stories makes a beautiful tapestry that has distinctive colours and designs unique to their own spirituality. These narratives are in fact the description of their spirituality as lived experience. The names used in these stories are pseudonyms.

2.2.1 Story of Sam the Kenyan

2.2.1.1 Unstable childhood

Sam was born during the period of struggle for independence in the 1950s. Kikuyus were trying to defend their identity and land from the colonialists. His parents were involved in this struggle as well. He said that they were not Christians necessarily, but were members of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). Since he was not baptized as an infant because of social unrest, he had to go through catechism, was baptized when he became 11 years old, and then confirmed. After he finished primary education, he went on to high school but could not finish it because of financial difficulties. But

then a couple hired him and sent him back to school for vocational training, and he became employed as a clerk.

While he was with the couple who employed him, he accepted Jesus Christ as his personal saviour and started growing spiritually. They were involved with the East African Revival Movement (EARM), which emphasized salvation and holiness. The East African Revival Movement started from 1929, and most of the church leaders now were leaders of that movement back then. It kept the church awake for almost 50 years, and Sam's evangelistic fervour has its root in the Movement. The common Christian expression "Nimeokoka" meaning "I am saved" started as a result of this movement. After he was saved, he led his parents and siblings to Christ.

2.2.1.2 From Anglican to Presbyterian again

While he was working as the director of the community development centre at Eastleigh after the vocational training, he received a call from God to become a preacher. After several attempts, he managed to enrol in a one-year crash program at the Pastoral Institute Kikuyu. He moved on into ministry and was ordained later. In fact, from when he was saved, the Lord started impressing on him that he should go into ministry. At the time, his mentor or employer was a Church Army captain in the Anglican Church. Since the Church Army was evangelistic, they influenced him to become evangelistic as well. Then he sought an opportunity to train with the Anglicans but was not accepted because he was a Presbyterian and only 18 years old at the time. As for him, he did not want to be an Anglican anyways. He ended up being involved in evangelism activities with the Anglicans until he went to the Presbyterian Institute.

2.2.1.3 Reforming Presbyterian Church of East Africa as his mother church

Although he was baptized at a Presbyterian church in his early childhood, he became its firm follower only after he was married. Before marriage, he associated with the Anglicans because he was still under the umbrella of the family who were his benefactors, and they were Anglicans. In fact, his Presbyterian affiliation began early on when he went to the PCEA-sponsored

primary school. His parents were also staunch members of the PCEA in the 1920s and 1930s. He considers the PCEA as his mother church. He seems to like it considerably, giving it a lot of respect. He gave three reasons why he liked the PCEA: its orderliness, development consciousness, and its reforms.

However, the conservatism of the PCEA caused its decline until recently. In the early 1970s, the conservative stance of the traditional churches, such as the Presbyterian, the Anglican, and the Methodist, caused their members to leave and form such Pentecostal churches as the Deliverance Church, Redeemed Gospel Church, and others. Sam stated, “They started out as small churches and it was like a revolution.” He was envious of them but the Lord spoke to him to stay and fight from within. He was challenged and took up the fight. From then on, he has been fighting for the reform of the PCEA from within.

In the early 1970s, the East African Revival Movement (EARM) also started getting some problems as it became institutionalized, and started breaking up. Although it was a very grand movement in the beginning, the EARM gradually became quite conservative and lost momentum. Instead, in the 1970s, the Pentecostal movement, or Pentecostalism, started taking over the Kenyan church almost as if God planned it, and started to influence everybody. About the characteristic of the PCEA and the EARM, Sam commented, “What the EARM and the PCEA emphasized was Jesus Christ a lot. Yesu, Yesu, Yesu all the time! And the Holy Spirit was not emphasized.”

Regarding the reform of the PCEA, the PCEA is Reformed and yet is reforming. The reform—actually Sam prefers the word transformation to reform—within the PCEA started 2-3 years ago with the present moderator Rev Dr David Githii. Githii and Samuel Muriguh, the denominational leaders, have been the supporters of the renewal movement of the PCEA, but the overall struggle started over 10 years ago. Presently, although conservative leaders are trying to block the present moderator from being re-elected, Sam believes that this will not occur since the church has moved on. During the last two, three years, the PCEA saw a remarkable growth from 24

presbyteries to 42 presbyteries under David Githii's leadership. Sam said, "Although the struggle for reform was hard, it was not in vain."

Regarding the weaknesses of the PCEA, Sam commented:

The weaknesses of the PCEA are slow procedures. They always say, 'If we are going to change, let's agree all of us together.' The other thing is bureaucracy. It takes too long. You have to move from a local church all the way up. But it is also positive since you can put a check along the process.

The PCEA has a policy of moving pastors to different parishes every five years. But the actual practice is every three years or less. It has both positive and negative impacts on pastors. As for Sam, transfers were good experiences. He stated:

Transfers expose ministers to different kinds of people. It only becomes bad when a minister has no mission. I feel I have a mission. I want to set as many groups free as possible. I hate dull churches. Dullness, if not checked, grows to deadness...If you have a mission, it's good to move everywhere.

That also matches with his desire to become a freelance minister within his denomination, the PCEA. According to Sam, the PCEA charismatic churches are growing very fast and since they are growing, they have no financial problems either.

2.2.1.4 Turning to Charismatic

He was against the charismatic movement until 1993, when he attended a Mombasa convention organized by one of his colleague pastors. The charismatic pastors there at the convention challenged Sam so much that he started thinking of the Holy Spirit and asked God to show him the way. His efforts in reading the Bible and the relevant Christian literature about the Holy Spirit, and listening to the audiotapes of famous preachers like Bonke and Yonggi Cho, opened his eyes to the Holy Spirit—and as a result he was transformed. He said, "The whole of my Christianity was transformed." Then he started preaching for the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, he compared his

salvation and earlier life to a soldier's life in the barracks, and his life after the transformation to that of a fighting soldier.

From then on, he has fought for the charismatic movement within the PCEA. The Lord clearly told him to tell the church. He has obeyed his call, and despite much fear, pain, and tears he has not given up. Sam said, "We are almost through..." He also says, "People who support the charismatic movement within the PCEA are still minority." That speaks to how tough the struggle has been and is.

2.2.1.5 Kikuyu but Kenyan

From what he said, I can say he is a real Kikuyu man. He was brought up in the EARM where they shunned tribalism. Sam does not like the question "What tribe are you from? Which part of central Kenya do you come from?" According to Sam, "Tribalism is a big problem." He mentioned that in the referendum vote on 11/21/05, on the new proposed constitution, the votes were divided according to the tribal division. He said of his identity, "I am a Kikuyu naturally but spiritually and nationally I feel differently."

He also states that Kikuyus are capitalists and very good learners. The negative elements of Kikuyus, however, are pride and selfishness. He said, "We are very proud of what we are." In regards to others, he thinks Kikuyus should influence others since they are blessed of God.

Sam was not exposed to traditional Kikuyu rituals. He himself paid dowry for his wife but never asked dowry for his daughters. He is against the dowry system. He was also circumcised at a hospital as opposed to going through tribal rituals. He just wants to be identified as a Kenyan born in the central province. He said, "The other ones [identities] bring lots of problems. Other tribes give Kikuyus a lot of names." He said, "I want anybody to see me as a Kenyan."

In regards to Ngai, the Kikuyu God, his initial response was “I don’t know.” He believes human beings believe in supreme beings who are somewhere. However, later he said, “I believe Ngai is same as Yahweh.” He said:

They [Kikuyus] didn’t have the details but Yahweh of the Bible as it was given to us has given us more details...the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. That [the fact that Kikuyus had Ngai] could be a reason the Kikuyu tribe accepted the gospel faster than the other tribes.

2.2.1.6 Conviction in teaching the word

Sam states that the tradition that the Scottish missionaries brought to Kikuyu has prevailed within the PCEA until the East African Revival Movement came in 1929. Then the EARM prevailed for almost 50 years. What the EARM taught Kenyans was holiness and upright living. This movement spread across tribal and denominational boundaries. In the 1970s, when the EARM became irrelevant and could not move any further despite its effort for renewal, the charismatic movement took over. About the charismatic movement, he seemed to have a firm conviction regarding it. He said, “We want the church to go where the Spirit of God is leading us.”

Another strong emphasis he has come to develop is his conviction in teaching the word of God. It started about 5 years ago. He was trying to change the PCEA structure laid down by the PCEA over 100 years ago but was not succeeding at all. Instead he was making many enemies. So he talked to his comrades that he would engage with people individually by teaching them the truth. And the truth shall set them free. He organized revival meetings on Sunday afternoons and provided them with heavy teaching, grounding participants on the word of God. And it started taking effect. Now the revival meeting on Sunday afternoons is everywhere. He said, “Pastors who are not teaching are in trouble because people are moving [to other churches]. Hundreds of them are with the Jesus is Alive Ministry because the PCEA didn’t teach them.”

He also said, “...we as ministers have not been able to give [people] more teachings...the Lord is challenging that when the Lord is calling me to be very

evangelistic, I should always be having something to teach...that will set them free.” He mentioned Matthew 28:20 that speaks strongly to him about the necessity and urgency of teaching. Nowadays he downplays preaching but puts emphasis on teaching. Sam says, “The Pentecostals are really trying to teach.” He pointed out some such Pentecostal ministries as Jesus is Alive Ministries, Green Pastures Tabernacle, and Nairobi Pentecostal Church, that concentrate on teaching the word of God. “The Pentecostals realize that signs and wonders are temporary, and they are teaching. This is a recent phenomenon.”

Sam was frustrated with all the preaching done in the PCEA churches that just focused upon, “Get saved. Get saved.” He said, “That is not enough. That is the beginning but we have to continue making them firm in the faith.” He also said, “They are all looking for green pasture. People are hungry and thirsty.” His conviction in teaching becomes evident when he said, “You are to teach. Otherwise, we shall perish. There will be no Presbyterian Church of East Africa if it doesn’t change.”

So it seems that Sam’s involvement with the EARM laid a spiritual foundation in his life. Then the paradigm-shift to the charismatic movement made him an effective preacher. Then he acquired an additional element for his ministry, which is his conviction in teaching the word of God.

2.2.1.7 Ministry challenges

He talked about the Kibera slum where his church is located—that it started as a Sudanese refugee settlement. It was and is predominantly Muslim. Despite many efforts of Christian ministries in Kibera, problems still abound. The two main problems he mentioned in Kibera were HIV/AIDS and poverty, and that these two are closely related. He quoted South African President Mbek—that it is poverty that causes HIV/AIDS. Because of poverty, people become careless and relate to each other carelessly.

Another major challenge his church faces is they have not been able to penetrate into the surrounding Muslim community. He also talked about the

lack of financial power of people. Although he wants to build a community-development and training centre in his church compound, which will draw people to the church for training, the necessary funds are not available. He also mentioned the need for spiritually mature leadership in his church; and he has started a program to train leaders to remedy the situation.

For his own spiritual health, he uses prayer, devotional reading, and preaching. Regarding preaching, he said, “I regard preaching as a spiritual exercise. I come down if I don’t preach a couple of weeks.” He is also very well aware of spiritual battles. Spiritual battle, entering enemy camp, and declaring war are all fighting metaphors he used. According to Sam, this understanding came after he joined the charismatic camp.

2.2.1.8 Summary of Sam’s narrative

Sam is a Spirit-filled pastor who has witnessed what young pastors have not had the privilege of seeing. As a young boy, he saw the struggle for independence and suffered from it. However, the Lord was gracious with him and pulled him through. His wisdom from long years of ministry, evangelistic fervour, Charismatic ministry, and conviction in teaching the word of God have all made him an effective leader within the PCEA system. He finds his identity in Christ and puts the Kenyan national identity above his tribal identity. This makes him a model for others to follow since tribal division is one of the main struggles in Kenya, even in Christian churches. His church is a slum church and that brings some financial constraints to his ministry. However, he hopes to serve and liberate as many churches as possible with the power of the Holy Spirit.

2.2.1.9 Major themes of Sam’s narrative

- The East African Revival Movement
- History and reform of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa
- Pentecostal or Charismatic movement in Kenya
- Kikuyu culture and religion
- The issues of HIV/AIDS and poverty

- Conviction in teaching the word of God

2.2.2 Story of Paul the modern Kikuyu

2.2.2.1 Christian family heritage

Paul had the privilege of being part of a Christian family in his life. His grandmother was a devout Catholic, and his mother joined the PCEA through her life crisis. He said of his grandmother, “I believe she had a very powerful influence on my prayer life.” When Paul was young, his parents were living in the city because of work, and thus he spent the first few years of his life with his grandmother. As for his father, he used to drink a lot and did not do much for Paul except to provide for basic provisions such as school fees and clothes. For this reason, Paul said that he invests deliberate effort and time towards his own children.

For Paul, it seemed that women played a major role in shaping him while he was growing up. Generally speaking, Kikuyu children are influenced more by women than men, both at church and at home, as was in Paul’s case. Although he stated that the Kikuyu tribe is matriarchal in his early interview, he corrected himself later saying that Kikuyus are neither patriarchal nor matriarchal. “It depends on each locality because there are areas where women make more decisions than men, since women are majority in those places.”

Paul was born again as a Christian in his early 20s. He recalls the day when the he was born again as “a powerful revelation. It was revelation of what Christ did, what he desires and demands of me.” From then on, God led him gradually. Although his academic training was in the area of accounting to become a CPA, God called him into ministry, and Paul yielded to his call and went on to theological training.

2.2.2.2 Multi-denominational perspective

Paul had a Catholic influence from his grandmother early on, the African Inland Church (AIC) influenced him in the Word and prayer impact, and then

he was saved at an interdenominational prayer meeting. He also said he attended Pentecostal meetings frequently from 1989. For this reason, Paul was open to Pentecostals or Charismatics. For theological training, he went to St. Paul United Theological College, where it was possible to mingle with pastors of other denominations, such as Anglican and Methodist. Furthermore, he experienced discipleship ministry through the Navigators and the Life Ministry. Currently Paul attends Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST) and is gaining more interdenominational exposure. All these experiences and exposures have given Paul a unique perspective and have put him in a position to serve people across denominational lines. As a pastor rooted in the PCEA, one of the mainline denominations in Kenya, and having been exposed to a variety of denominations, Paul may have acquired the understanding and flexibility to influence a wide spectrum of church and society. This, I consider a blessing.

2.2.2.3 Modern Kikuyu

He said, “I am a modern Kikuyu.” According to Paul, “Modern Kikuyus’ are mostly those who were born after independence (1963) and they have no roots in the rural areas.” His parents and grandparents were not overly committed to Kikuyu culture as being of primary concern, but were “Christianised” Kikuyus. For example, when Paul was born, his parents did not take him to the traditional altar like other traditional Kikuyu parents did. He followed some Kikuyu cultural forms such as circumcision, marriage custom and naming of children. However, even these customs were fulfilled in non-customary ways, especially circumcision and marriage. He was circumcised at a hospital and his marriage ceremony was Christian. Even paying dowry for his wife was a token gesture. He said, “My foundation is both Kikuyu and Christian.”

As a Christian Kikuyu, Paul loves his children and shares the responsibilities of home together with his wife. It seems like Christianity brought about changes in his life in the area of gender roles. In this sense, Paul does not seem to be a traditional African male but a Christian man who follows the

biblical role models. He said, “Young PCEA pastors are not traditional in gender roles mainly because of peer pressure.”

2.2.2.4 Affiliation with the Presbyterian Church by choice

I had an impression that he likes his denomination, the PCEA, in general. He said, “By choice, I am a Presbyterian.” He likes PCEA governance and the freedom it gives him. When he studied theology, he said that he checked the Reformed Theology critically and realized that he could “live with it.” However, as a young pastor, Paul is not quite satisfied with some of the denomination’s policies. For example, he has resentment towards the pledging system of the PCEA, which is an offering system of the denomination, and its crippling effects upon the function of the church. He was keenly aware of the denomination’s economic policy and its accompanying difficulties. But it seems like he is trying to bring about changes in the areas where they are needed, for example, in the implementation of policies. He said of it,

The process is too slow...it is what I call the bureaucratic kind of system. It is not responding as it should....There is a generation of ministers...their way of thinking is not modern and they happen...to be in their leadership position. So they are not changing with the times.

Paul also mentioned other areas where the PCEA needed to change and improve, specifically to address the needs of the current generation at this time. Those areas are children and youth ministries, stewardship of finances, ministerial placement, discipleship and nurture, and the upgrading of catechism materials. He said there were no proper programs to teach children and that the PCEA needed trained youth workers, as there were only three parishes where there were youth workers, that is, St. Andrews, Nairobi West and Langata.

Currently, Paul teaches stewardship in the Kibera parish; additionally, the discipleship program he has introduced to the Nairobi West parish in the past is going well. Paul is an initiator. Overall, despite the problems he experiences within the PCEA, I sense that he likes his denomination like the other PCEA

pastors I interviewed. I see this as a good sign for the denomination. It seems like there is some bond between the PCEA and the Kikuyu.

Regarding the impact of the East African Revival Movement on the PCEA, Paul said that the concept of salvation came into the church through the East Africa Revival Movement. Those born again started their own fellowship called “Tukutendereza Fellowship.” “Tukutendereza” means “praise the Lord” and it was the identification of the East African Revival Movement. People who confessed Christ through the Revival movement were at first kicked out of their churches, but later, the three denominations—Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican —later accepted them back. Paul said, “When these people came back, the impact was powerful. This revival movement was God-ordained as any other revivals and gave tremendous benefits to the Kenyan church. Its impact is still felt.” Its influence on the Kenyan church’s spirituality must have been remarkable.

Paul said that from 1989 he attended Pentecostal meetings frequently. He seemed to be open to Pentecostals and in fact, wants to help Pentecostal pastors with training. Within the PCEA, however, Charismatic pastors are still a minority. They have been fighting for a more open attitude from the PCEA towards them. This struggle seems to be bearing fruit at some churches, and they are gaining more members and growing. Paul said, “We can’t ignore the impact of the Pentecostal movement we have had in this nation. We can’t ignore that.” He continued, “This Pentecostal affiliation or involvement is a generation thing. Young people are not satisfied where they are. Their needs are not met. So they are all over the place. They are interacting in school, colleges, wherever.”

One thing I also noticed through my encounters with PCEA pastors is that they did not seem to be very authoritative. Young pastors behave naturally or freely in the presence of pastors who are in authority. According to Paul, “There is a lot of freedom within the PCEA.”

2.2.2.5 Holistic approach to ministry

His ministry approach seems to be holistic, meaning that his idea of spirituality is broad and multi-faceted. He has been involved in a national prayer movement to change politicians. He is currently serving in a slum church and experiencing their problems first-hand. He is also well aware of the dangers of cultic movements, and the syncretism that arises out of them, and the danger of televangelists. He believes in the power of prayer - that prayer brings about changes.

He is deeply concerned about raising leaders who model the Christian lifestyle. Concerning raising leaders, he said, "I'd like to see intentionality." Talking about the church, he said, "There should be a deliberate effort on the part of the church," and "All the congregation must have intentional discipleship." In this, he seems to imply that intentional effort is lacking in the ministry of the church, and also in the process of raising godly leaders both for the church and society. His question is very much to the point, "How can the church be relevant in every sector of the nation?" His comment also makes a good point,

I believe every congregation should be a congregation that tends to influence the people who don't know the Lord, to grow in the Lord, and to have a lasting impact, eternal impact. The church should be involved in the society at various levels. The church needs a proactive approach and a focus. The church needs to be represented in a community planning so that its people can be benefited like housing project in the Kibera slum.

As a person, he seems to be very diligent and organized, although he also tends to act too quickly sometimes. His seeking of balance, intentional effort, and critical evaluation should all be useful to achieve his vision and goal, which is raising up and equipping leaders.

2.2.2.6 Spiritual disciplines

Paul seems to value the disciplines of fasting, prayer, time alone, etc. He seems to know the importance and benefits of spiritual health and disciplines.

His statement “I feel under-nourished” makes sense because he said he was always time-pressured.

Paul also knows the importance of discipleship: “Nobody took me through a formal spiritual growth [training].” However, he has had several people who have taken interest in him and have helped him grow, such as Dr Iliya Majam and Dr Stanley Mukolwe. Also the Life Ministry helps him at Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST). In turn, he has started a discipleship group in Nairobi West, his former parish, and it is now growing. This is very encouraging.

2.2.2.7 Important issues

2.2.2.7.1 Leadership

Paul said, “Leaders in this country have a position of leadership but they are not leading as an example. They want to maintain a status quo.” In this, he is referring to both church and government leadership. Currently, he has devised a leadership training material of stewardship and has also created a draft for a leadership training organization called R.E.A.L (Raising and Equipping African Leaders). Paul wants to place a deliberate effort in identifying, training and mentoring those who have the leadership gift. He seems to be on the right track in that the leadership issue is an essential topic for this society. He wants to raise competent, God-fearing leaders who have integrity, character, responsibility, patriotism, etc. Furthermore, he wants to raise a core group of leaders who will give influence to others socially, politically and spiritually.

2.2.2.7.2 Gender

He said Kikuyu was a matriarchal society. Historically, because most of the Kikuyu men died during the war for independence, most homes were left in the hands of women. So in most homesteads, women were the heads of family. He further explained about the gender roles as follows.

The traditional roles of man have been replaced by modernity. In the traditional community most of men used to hunt,

shepherd cows, or do security and all those other things. Women, children, young men and women were farming. But modernity has displaced those roles. You find that now men are in town and their wives are in rural areas. So roles have changed completely. We need to develop new roles that are biblically sound for men.

About the leadership of men, he said, “In practice even a casual observation will tell you that men have lost their position of leadership in the home. We men are in serious trouble.” As for the PCEA, they have started the Presbyterian Churchmen Fellowship with programs to help the elderly men mentor young men. At church Sunday schools, since most teachers are women, boys do not want to go to church school. In some sense, boys lack a male role model to imitate and aspire towards.

About women in leadership, Paul said, “More women are enrolling in and graduating from theological colleges than in the past, and women have been more active than men in the church.” For example, the women’s organization came into being before men’s and there are more women than men attending the church. According to Paul,

Within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa the women’s guild came into being before the independence because of the issue of FGM [Female Genital Mutilation]. It started to help those girls who came to the mission station to avoid FGM and grew to become the woman’s guild....In the Presbyterian church women have a voice and they have a place...in fact, even women have been ordained. So within the Presbyterian Church the gender issue is not a serious matter. At least now it is not. In fact, if you go to a parish and you don’t work well with the woman’s guild as a minister, you will not stay there long. That’s how powerful they are.

2.2.2.7.3 Theological issue

There are many cultic groups in Kenya. Paul said, “Some indigenous churches are called ‘uniformed churches’ because they wear uniforms. Culture influenced them more than the word of God. So there is a need for correct theology.” The other major cults are also active in Kenya. According to Paul, “Mormons and Jehovah’s Witness build temples all over. They buy land all over too.” He also mentioned the danger of televangelists—that they

preach from any theological point and poison peoples' mind. Paul asserted that while the Presbyterian Church may have correct theology, the Reformed Theology, the independent churches of Kenya need correct theology. One thing he mentioned that could help the Kenyan church with theology was the Theological Education by Extension (TEE). However, what the Presbyterian Church needs to do is to integrate theology with the needs of people.

2.2.2.7.4 The issue of poverty

He seemed to be learning something new through his involvement in the slum church. He was dissatisfied with the way things were, one of them being that the church expected its members to support their minister while they themselves were absolutely poor. He came to search his heart and his spirituality more in-depth to find answers to the problems. He said he would like to give the members hope and that his involvement in the slum church brought him a change of attitude. According to Paul, "The issue of poverty is very central...the church needs to be involved in government initiatives such as building better houses in the slum areas, sanitation matters, environmental issues...we need to connect at the grassroots." He also said,

The other issue is that the church can have a revolving fund for small businesses and train people to manage those businesses. It is not enough just to train them. We have to facilitate [help] them with tools to start work. In fact we should go further and train and empower them to become employers.

He is keen about economic issues. He has made concrete financial plans for his future ministry to become self-supported. Economic issue is very important to human beings and his sensitivity or awareness of this matter is legitimate. Perhaps he has gained this sensitivity from his awareness of the current environment in Kenya, and also from his Kikuyu cultural heritage, or perhaps it is simply a matter of survival. His interaction with the economically challenged also has made him aware of this issue. Although the issue of poverty is so complex and discouraging, Paul spoke with a positive tone. "Kenyans are workers. These people work seriously. There is one thing that you will find. Kenyans are workers." He keeps a positive attitude toward this disheartening problem.

2.2.2.8 Summary of Paul's narrative

Paul is an action-oriented initiator. He translates his thoughts to actions quickly. He likes to interact with people. He is not overly charismatic but supports the Charismatic movement. He does not want to be a parish minister, but a scholar and a trainer of leaders. He is brilliant in organization and implementation of plans. He is a father of four children, two boys and two girls, an ideal situation in a Kikuyu family. As a young pastor, he struggles economically to make both ends meet, but he always keeps a positive attitude towards life and continues to try until he finds a solution. As a modern Kikuyu, Paul is not familiar with Kikuyu traditions and rituals but retains Kikuyu values. He speaks primarily English and learned the Kikuyu language from his wife after they got married. He is not completely satisfied with the PCEA, but like other young PCEA pastors, tries to bring changes to the denomination with hopes for the future.

2.2.2.9 Themes of Paul's narrative

- Modern Kikuyu and changes in the Kikuyu tribe
- Areas of reform within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa
- The East African Revival Movement
- The Pentecostal movement in Kenya
- Church's relevance in society/integration of theology with needs
- Leadership and discipleship in society and in the church
- Gender issue in the Kikuyu tribe
- Poverty

2.2.3 Story of Grace the Resilient

2.2.3.1 God's grace during childhood

For Grace, her childhood experience was not that pleasant until she met the church people who took care of her. Her father, although a rough man, seemed to protect her from all the harms that may have been done to her as a girl. She was protected from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and also sent to school, although she was a girl. Her father did not allow her to participate or even watch some harmful Kikuyu cultural practices, such as drinking beer,

Kikuyu cultural dances, traditional cleansing ceremonies and traditional protective measures. It was God's sovereign plan that her father let her go to church along with her brothers and sisters, although he himself was not a Christian at the time. She said he was a half-Kikuyu and half-Christian. However, she told me that "They [her parents] were just there as parents." According to Grace, this was the general attitude toward children in Africa, but that "As children grow, parents consider them as a sign of wealth." Although leadership was transferred to boys, girls were valued as a source of wealth since they would generate income later on when they were married.

When Grace met the Revival people of the PCEA, she was introduced to the church and taken care of by them spiritually. They also showed her love, which was lacking in her life. This experience and nourishment laid a spiritual foundation in her life. She said, "They gave me a foundation." Grace seemed to exemplify the crucial nature of one's childhood experience as it leaves an indelible mark on his/her life. Talking about her childhood, she said, "Jesus Christ and the church were the only sources of my spiritual welfare." This experience was also a stepping-stone for her accepting the Lord as her Saviour when she was in secondary school later on.

Grace said, "It is the Holy Spirit who gave me the love for God, fear of Him and the desire to please Him." Since she gave herself to God in class 7, she felt that she was "going to God and serving him" and that "this has been continuing until today." This is a great testimony of her love and desire for God.

2.2.3.2 Teacher's college and theological school

Grace was trained as a P1 (primary one) teacher. It took her two years to graduate. She met many people with different kinds of beliefs, feelings and behaviours; she thanked God that she joined the college as a Christian and left it the same. Afterward she joined the teaching career and enjoyed it until the Lord called her into full-time ministry. Then she joined the Presbyterian College Kikuyu for theological training. Her experience there was quite challenging and different from her former life. There she was able to see the reality of ministry as an insider. She had to stretch herself because of the

demand of both family and studies, but did well. By the time she left the college, she testified, “My faith became stronger.”

2.2.3.3 Modern Kikuyu

Grace stated that she was a modern Kikuyu. Since she grew up in the Rift Valley, away from the Kikuyu land, she had exposure to other tribes and their cultures, and as a result, did not learn the pure Kikuyu culture. She said, “My Kikuyuness was diluted by other cultural influences while growing up,” and as a result, “I couldn’t teach my children any culture.” It seemed that she was struggling in regards to culture. She said, “I don’t know where we are heading to. I am now becoming worse.” However, Grace retained some essential Kikuyu cultural elements such as the values and norms that were shared by other Kikuyus. To be specific, those are commitment to God (Ngai), orderliness of leadership, generosity, respect for each other both the old and the young, hard working—leading to the capitalistic way of life, and courage.

She said that most Kikuyus still keep marriage and burial customs. The dowry system still existed. She also talked about the important place that Mt. Kenya held in the minds of Kikuyus as a sacred mountain. However, she did not subscribe to this belief. She rather thought of Mt. Kenya as a tourist attraction, or a source of life that provided people with water, timber, fruits, fresh air, etc. Regarding the age-old Kikuyu God Ngai, Grace considered Ngai the same as Yahweh.

Language wise, Grace feels most comfortable when she speaks Kikuyu. When she preaches, she switches to Kikuyu language when she wants to drive a particular point. Kiswahili is the second language and English is the third (of Grace or the tribe?). However, her children prefer speaking English and Kiswahili.

2.2.3.4 Strong member of the Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church is the only church she came to know well. Although she still goes to other churches when she has time for worship and fellowship, her Presbyterian Church membership seems to be strong since it goes back

to her childhood years. She seems to be loyal to her denomination. She likes the Presbyterian Church because of its orderliness, its teachings and care for people, and advanced politics—use of P.P. (practice and procedure)—despite its shortcomings such as slow procedures and old systems. However, Grace seemed to lament the Presbyterian Church's lack of flexibility that caused many people, especially young people, to leave the church. But at the same time she is hopeful for the changes that are coming. She said "We are moving from a place to another one. It is a transition period." She said the Presbyterian Church is a reforming church.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa is predominantly of the Kikuyu denomination and she talked about the advantages and disadvantages of it. The advantages of the PCEA being mainly Kikuyu are that they bring Kikuyus together, develop the language, and enhance or retain the culture. The disadvantages are tribalism and pride. Although the Presbyterian Church is trying hard to incorporate other tribes by eliminating Kikuyu service in urban areas, it does not seem to be easy.

2.2.3.5 Experiencing God

Grace had a difficult time when both of her parents passed away and she took upon the burden of taking care of her siblings - nine in all. She did not have a choice in this matter. Nonetheless, she did well in raising them and they are currently all in adulthood. It seemed like Grace experienced God through this challenging process and built toughness as well. She said, "I have seen God working." This God she experienced in life's real situations became a powerful witness to her. Grace's conduct during this time also reveals her caring nature. Her caring character/attitude was shown as well when she said her vision/calling was for the needy. In talking about her experience within the PCEA system, she mentioned, "I am also rigid. If I am flexible, perhaps I couldn't have made it." This experience of hers as a woman pastor says she does not easily give up but continues on.

Grace seemed to have a good prayer habit. Daily prayer at three o'clock in the morning is not an easy thing. However, this seemed to have built her

spiritual muscle along with Bible reading. Regarding prayer, Grace said, “Things are not good but with prayer they will be....Prayer has given me comfort.” What impressed me when I interviewed the PCEA pastors including Grace was that prayer was a natural part of their lives. This is not as easily seen in the lives of pastors from the West. If this practice is not a form but a genuine expression of faith in God, it certainly is excellent.

Grace talked about the three visions she had in the past: a big cross coming down with a voice; small crosses coming down; and a fishing rod. She said that this was the first time she was sharing these visions. These visions altogether seemed to tell her that God wanted her to serve Him, as the voice said in the first vision, “You need to serve me.” After receiving the vision of the fishing rod, she decided to join the theological college. In this vision, someone was fishing in the church and the rod came to Grace’s shoulder. She interpreted this as God wanting her to serve Him.

Grace talked about her desire to serve the needy, such as children, women in slums, and single mothers. She said, “My direction is towards the needy not because I can assist them but because I can stay with them, encourage them, and be with them.” She singled out poverty and unemployment as the main problems along with AIDS. She also talked about the breaking up of the family because of poverty and unemployment. In order to alleviate these problems, she suggested free education to the highest level, better governance, job creation, and population control. She mentioned creating projects for the retrenched and the retired people as well.

2.2.3.6 Woman’s issues

She talked about the Kikuyu tradition - that it was the women who were ruling in the Kikuyu culture originally. Then, the men vowed never to give leadership to the women because the women were so rough. According to Grace, this was the reason why, when civilization came to Kenya, the boys went to school but the girls were left out. Girls were also prepared for marriage at an early age by their parents. Women were also oppressed and not recognized

although they were also valued as being the source of life. Grace actually surmised, “They [women] were hated.”

Grace further said, “Even in ministry men frustrate women. It is tough for a woman to be in a leadership position since she is a minority in an atmosphere where democracy is never practiced. “Training for ministry for women is also hard because of, let alone the selection process, all the responsibilities women have including raising children while in theological school.” But she has taken all these pressures and is enjoying the ministry currently. She said, “So far so good.” She seemed to have acquired an attitude to view life a little bit from a distance now. Maybe it’s her age and experience that she is able to see the whole thing that way. Not giving up but *endelea pole pole*, which means in Kiswahili “Go on slowly.”

Grace also talked about the patriarchal nature of the Kikuyu home and society, in which the husband is the head and the wife is second in authority. She said, “A kikuyu man is a kikuyu man,” meaning he holds the position of a leader. He must be the leader. This cultural practice may coincide with biblical teaching but the actual working out of the value could be different. She said, “A woman is just subordinate, second to husband here in Kenya.” Although it was tough in practice, Grace seemed to have accepted this cultural practice. About the leadership role of woman, she said that women are bound by pregnancy and child rearing, which hinders their leadership role. Overall, she said, “I enjoy it [the husband being the head of the family], especially when he roars like a lion in the house. I like that.”

However, after long suffering in the hands of men, African women are raising their voices and are looking for equality in many areas, including the church. Regarding woman’s ministry of the PCEA, Grace said, “The church was saying the woman ministry was a success....There are also some women who have steered some major churches in Kenya and there are others as well at the background.” Although the women pastors of the PCEA may experience difficulty in rural areas, she was glad that she did not have such a problem in Nairobi. But she mentioned she had some trouble with the

neighbours in the house purchase process at Buruburu church. The men in the neighbourhood did not want to deal with a woman pastor in the property purchasing deal. They wanted a man pastor. However, that situation has thus been resolved.

2.2.3.7 Yearning for becoming Charismatic

Grace said she wanted to be charismatic. She is not only open to the charismatic movement but desires it. She talked about early Scottish missionaries and their condemnation of African culture. She interpreted her charismatic experience and its influence on the PCEA as one of experiencing freedom. I have never thought of the charismatic experience or expression from that perspective. It is a very unique perspective. She said, “Being charismatic is growing out of colonial oppression to the freedom that God is giving us.” According to her, other PCEA pastors who desire reform feel the same way.

2.2.3.8 Summary of Grace’s narrative

Grace has had many experiences as a woman and as a pastor in several parishes. These were tough experiences and helped her to build resilience in her life. She is calm but strong inside, and this inner strength is that which supports her. At the same time, Grace is a caring person who has compassion for the less privileged. She is not a revolutionary but seems to know her position and adapts well to the situation she is in. Although she may have had some bitterness about the situation of women in the male-dominated society or culture, she seems to have accepted reality and has managed to go on within the system. Actually she feels thankful to God for many things and keeps a positive attitude. Her perspective upon charismatics—that it is an expression of freedom—was fascinating!

2.2.3.9 *Themes emerging from Grace*

- The East African Revival Movement
- The Kikuyu culture
- The PCEA (history, policy, structure, vision, mission, or issues)

- The issue of woman in Kenya (position, attitude toward them and vulnerability)
- Poverty/unemployment/AIDS
- Charismatic movement in Kenya
- Early missionaries and their attitudes

2.2.4 Story of George the Charismatic Kikuyu

2.2.4.1 Life synopsis

George was born and grew up in central Kenya among Kikuyus. He was baptized as an infant and confirmed at the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. His upbringing was totally Kikuyu – he was surrounded by Kikuyu people talking the Kikuyu language. He also attended the PCEA church during this whole time. After high school, George attended a teacher's college where he received Jesus as his saviour and was born again. There at the teacher's college he experienced discipleship briefly in his last year of study. He also experienced baptism by the Holy Spirit around that time and started a personal walk with God. His spiritual foundation was formed there at the teacher's college through strong prayer ministry, discipleship, and yearning for the study of the word of God. After graduation from the teacher's college, he started teaching. Five years later he received a call from God and joined a theological college. Through theological training, his understanding of the word of God deepened and his spiritual life also became enriched through fasting and prayer, preaching to other pastors, and Christian literature.

2.2.4.2 Baptism of the Holy Spirit

His charismatic experience began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit when he was a college student. This left such an indelible mark that it has become a focal point in his Christian life and ministry ever since. He asserts firmly, "You can't deny what you are." Once when he was serving as a pastor in a town, his ministry became so charismatic that his denomination, the PCEA, did not like it and thought it was too much. As a result, he was disciplined for one year and had to stay out of ministry. However, this one-year disciplinary period built in him another foundation of studying the word of God. George did

not seem to be afraid of change at all. Rather he welcomed changes and expected them. George also possessed a strong, positive belief in the power of the gospel - that it would bring changes to the current Kenyan context. He said, “Definitely the church has to play that major role to give Kenyan people hope. We have to push and things can improve.”

2.2.4.3 Total Kikuyu

George feels most comfortable when he speaks in Kikuyu. He said, “You feel good when you minister in Kikuyu. You have ministered to Kikuyu people and the response is good.” He said he had grown up as a Kikuyu surrounded by Kikuyu language, culture, and people. It was a hundred percent Kikuyu for him. Therefore, Kikuyu cultural values were deeply ingrained in him such as respecting elders and socializing with people let alone speaking the language. He also said, “Kikuyu are deeply religious and they are lively...they like singing and dancing and these build one’s spirituality.”

Even in his ministry context, his Kikuyu cultural influence was naturally at work. He says, “When you come as a pastor, you are not a boss. You are among them...we are a family...in African culture, no one says, ‘I will’ or ‘by myself.’ There is no independence. There must be interdependence among people...as long as Bantus are concerned...you just don’t live by yourself.” He also mentioned Kikuyu hospitality, which I can confirm by my own exposure to Kikuyu families. George was the purest Kikuyu man out of all the research participants. He has retained Kikuyu cultural values. However, he did not follow Kikuyu rituals.

One of the Kikuyu values that George has retained is a naming practice. Traditionally Kikuyus name their children after their parents. For instance, George has two sons and named his first-born son after his father and the second son after his wife’s father. If he gets a girl, he would name her after his mother and the second girl after his wife’s mother. If he gets a third son, he would name him after his eldest brother. This is their tradition. As demonic Kikuyu customs, George pointed out Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and traditional brew. Although Kikuyus are mainly agriculturalists, they keep some

animals such as hens, goats, sheep and cows. George also keeps several animals. He says, “You cannot miss those ones [animals].”

2.2.4.4 The Presbyterian Church as an inheritance

George seemed to have strong ties with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa and also had a very positive view of his denomination, despite some of its abuses and shortcomings. He said, “...There are a lot of good things in the Presbyterian Church....We are always reforming.” The positive things he mentioned were transfers and ‘we-system.’ He liked the many different experiences he had due to transfers and the value group decisions of the PCEA. “There is no absolute authority in the PCEA as for the individuals are concerned,” which tells about the importance of each individual within the denomination. One negative thing he mentioned about the PCEA, however, was a slow decision-making process. George also added that the PCEA was getting more decentralized. For example, from the year 2003, the presbytery took over from the General Assembly the responsibility of paying salary to ministers. Although this was an added responsibility to the presbytery, the presbytery now had more power than before. According to George, there was another issue within the PCEA, the issue of stewardship. People used to make a pledge and gave it to the church no matter how much they earned. Now people were being taught to tithe, manage their resources properly, and hold the ministry. George said, “That one is creating a great impact in the church...and they grew very much.” He summed up, “The PCEA is a heritage to us...It is our inheritance.”

Talking about the white PCEA missionaries in early 1900s, he had both positive and negative viewpoints. The missionary influence was positive in that they helped Kikuyu in the areas of education, health and agriculture. It was negative because missionaries condemned the African culture. George says, “[According to missionaries] anything African was bad...it was just kind of their culture brought to us, which was not in any way divine.” They introduced western culture such as hymnbook, English language, different house structure, etc. He continues:

Something has been lost. It was like a mutilation of culture. In those days anything that seemed African culture was condemned and people came to hate their own food, names, homes, etc. But now they are coming back. In those days there was no difference between a white priest and a white man.

About worship of the PCEA church, George said that they were changing from Kikuyu service to Kiswahili and English services in the urban areas. However, during the Kiswahili service, the preacher sometimes switches to Kikuyu language because the predominantly Kikuyu congregation wants to hear their language, and some old people know only Kikuyu language. According to George, the change has not been radical.

2.2.4.5 Summary of George's narrative

Overall, George seemed to possess a balance between the ministry of the Word and the charismatic aspects of ministry, both being central to his spirituality. His spiritual formation seemed to have also been strongly influenced by the Kikuyu culture and the PCEA, which is predominantly Kikuyu. He advocates the African expression of Christianity and African values a lot, which is coming back after having been lost. In a sense he is not satisfied with the current status of Africa including Kenya. He feels that the position Africans are in today is not one in which they should be; also that the church should play a major role in giving people hope and in empowering them in their socio-economic-political context.

2.2.4.6 Major themes of George's narrative

- Charismatic experience
- Reformation of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa
- Kikuyu cultural value
- Contextualization of the Gospel
- Centrality of the Bible

2.2.5 Story of Mary the virtuous Kikuyu minister

2.2.5.1 Early Christian formation

Mary was born into a Christian home with supportive parents. Her mother served as a role model, especially in terms of prayer. Mary also had a good memory of Sunday school and of the youth group of the PCEA church she attended. She said, “I had good teachers and I loved them, even the way they were treating us.” She learned the word of God from Sunday school teachers. She was also a part of the East African Revival Fellowship—same as the East African Revival Movement— which taught her spirituality and nurtured her spiritually. When she was in primary school at age 10, she was saved by hearing the gospel at a district prayer meeting. During her childhood, her father was away from home and it was her mother who raised her; and it seems that she did it well.

When Mary was in high school in Form 2 (10th grade), she heard the call from God. She had a vision and heard a voice calling, “Wambui, Wambui, I want you to be my servant.” She questioned the call since she had never before seen a woman minister but had peace after prayer. This call from God turned out to be genuine as Mary is now a servant of God.

2.2.5.2 Theological training

Some time after receiving the vision, an elder in her church nudged Mary to join the holy ministry. Then he told her father about it. Mary felt uneasy about the entire process but finally decided to tell her parents of the vision she had received when she was in Form 2. When she told her parents, she found out her parents were very supportive, especially her father. Her mother also told her that there was a known woman minister. Although Mary already had a conviction that God had called her, she had to wait three years to attend theological training because of her age. After that, she went through a series of interviews and was admitted to Kikuyu theological college, where she studied for two years towards a certificate. In his sovereignty, God had guided and prepared her for his service.

2.2.5.3 Contribution of the East African Revival Fellowship

There was a good movement called the East African Revival Fellowship in her area, Nyeri, and her parents used to go to the Fellowship. Early in her life it was these Fellowship people who led her to Christ. They taught her the word of God and Christian morals. Mary was a part of the Fellowship until the time she was getting ready to be married. Regarding the Revival Fellowship, the members were very conservative and did not want saved Christians to interact with non-believers for fear of backsliding. They targeted mainly churchgoers for salvation and once they were saved, wanted them to associate mainly with other believers only. They also encouraged ladies to be modest and simple. However, when Mary became a minister, she could not accept this teaching anymore. Moreover, the members wanted to have a parental influence over her when she was getting married. This she did not appreciate. Thus, she parted with them but continued as a Presbyterian minister.

2.2.5.4 Loyal to the Presbyterian Church

Mary grew up as a Presbyterian because her parents were Presbyterians. She said, "I have never joined any other church all through my life. I am a Presbyterian." She went to the Presbyterian theological college and was ordained in the PCEA. She worked as a PCEA minister at different parishes and is currently studying for the BD (Bachelor of Divinity) degree at Saint Paul Theological College. Her study is being paid for by the PCEA, perhaps through the means of an anonymous sponsor.

She said, "I like PCEA...even my blood, my everything. It is the PCEA and I would not like to change. I work for it. I even pray for it...I feel the Presbyterian it is the only one I feel happy [about] and I feel comfortable when I am there." She seemed to be very loyal to her denomination. She liked the style of worship, the procedures, the government of the church, which she considers the best amongst the denominations, the courts that is, the General Assembly, the Presbytery, and the local church. She said she enjoyed Sunday school and the youth ministry. She also mentioned the sharing of ministry roles as another positive aspect of the PCEA. The only negative thing

she mentioned was the slow implementation process. But even there she said, “They are slow but sure.”

She talked about the transfers within the PCEA. Since she knew she would be transferred every three years, she was prepared for it. Overall Mary felt that the transfers were satisfactory except for a couple of times when she was transferred as an associate, which she did not like. However, although she seemed to accept the transfer system, Mary advocated a five-year term instead of three since a three-year term was too short to accomplish anything in a parish. Moreover, people were confused by the frequent changes that a new minister brought about. She said that the PCEA had already started implementing the five-year term. It seemed that Mary possessed a leadership gift because she liked to exercise autonomy and leadership.

The PCEA is more egalitarian than hierarchical. “If you are a moderator of the GA (General Assembly), you are just moderating as a chairman.” When it comes to decision-making, Mary said, “Although he is a powerful person, the moderator or chairman cannot hold sway in a meeting. Most of the time decisions are made as people have agreed in the meeting.” The PCEA also has a court in the GA and the presbytery so ministers can go to a higher authority. Within the PCEA, “Leadership is approachable. The moderator of the GA is like our father. On Wednesday anybody can go and talk to him,” Mary added.

2.2.5.5 Christian Kikuyu

Since she grew up as a Christian, she did not follow Kikuyu traditions. She said, “When one joins a church, he becomes a Christian and he leaves the tradition.” She herself embodied this. She said she left the issues of tradition completely and followed the teachings of the missionaries, that of Christianity. The East Africa Revival Fellowship also discouraged many of the traditions. Thus she did not follow them. Mary also stated that she did not even like most “Kikuyu things”, referring to Kikuyu traditional rituals.

However, as a Christian Kikuyu, she retained the moral part of the Kikuyu culture - such as respecting parents, the old, and relatives; being an upright person; helping; working hard; etc. She identified these morals with Christian values.

Mary believes that the Kikuyu god, Ngai, is the same as Yahweh of the Scriptures. Their characters are almost the same. The only difference is that Kikuyus did not understand that Ngai was everywhere and not just in Kirinyaga (Mt. Kenya). Mary said, "It is wonderful that God revealed himself to Kikuyus as Ngai and prepared them for the gospel. They believed in one God and the only thing they didn't know was Jesus Christ."

It seems like Mary is a good, hardworking, Kikuyu woman who is committed to her work and family. When she talked about Kikuyu traditions and Christianity, she talked about the missionaries who brought education and health along with Christianity. She said, "They are together." She said it is this education that brings about change.

In regards to language, Mary feels the most comfortable with the Kikuyu language and she likes it. This reveals that in some sense her Kikuyuness is still strong since language is the primary vehicle of culture (Kraft 1996:247).

2.2.5.6 Some issues

Denominationalism was one thing that she mentioned as something that hindered the love of God in Kenya. As a parish minister she experienced that people were not united. Within the PCEA, the present moderator encouraged PCEA churches to have district Sundays - on district Sundays, people did not go to church but had worship with those who lived in the same district and invited others to their meeting.

She also mentioned leadership. There were some leaders who misused their leadership. She said, "They are jealous and want to dominate but there are others too who encourage you." Since the church officers are elected in the

PCEA, the leadership is in check. She said, “The PCEA’s leadership is very good.”

Mary also said that the PCEA was trying to be charismatic. She attributed this to the young people who were coming up and wanted to be charismatic. Although the missionaries laid a foundation that was conservative, she thinks the charismatic movement is a revival. She said, “Without charismatic movement the church will be dull. Also if it is not a sin, it’s OK. I adjust myself to each different congregation.” Although Mary is not overly charismatic, it seems that she likes the movement and is pretty much accepting of it.

Mary criticized Christian nominalism in society and disunity within the church saying, “In society majority are Christians only by name. They do not follow Christian teachings but their own selfish gain. They are not caring for other brothers and sisters. Within the church, there is a division between the rich and the poor.” She has an experience of dealing with disunity caused by different educational, economic, and social levels in her congregation and district prayer groups. The rich and the poor did not want to associate with one another.

2.2.5.7 Modernised gender role

In the Kikuyu culture the desired characteristic for a girl is that she grows up as a chaste girl who is obedient, social, and respectful of elders. Girls learn kitchen work from their mothers, such as fetching firewood and water. When they grow up and get married, they are expected to respect their husbands and care for the family. Men’s work include fencing, cultivating, feeding the cows, caring for chickens, etc.

However, as for Mary, she was brought up as a Christian and her mother used to tell her children that all work was for everybody. In her family, everybody, boys and girls alike, worked together. Even now when there is a family get-together, they work all together. She said, “There is no man. There is no whatever.” This is further evidence that Mary does not follow Kikuyu traditions.

Although she did not grow up that way, she follows the Kikuyu tradition in her own family because her husband did not have quite the same experience as her. She said, “I don’t expect him to do the work as I was taught...if I see him doing something, I appreciate.” She is showing great flexibility here. On her husband’s side, he does not seem to strictly follow the Kikuyu tradition either, but helps her with housework, and sometimes even with cooking. It was great to hear of their cooperation with each other in their family.

In Mary’s mind, the traditional male-female gender role has been replaced by the Christian virtue of husband-wife helping each other and sharing the burden of family work. She said, “We believe we come together...we both of us need to help one another to make the family happy and to bring up children in this family to make them happy. Both of us should work.” However, she also said “There are some Christians who still follow Kikuyu traditions: those who cannot go to kitchen and cook. They can’t hold a baby or change the nappy.”

2.2.5.8 Vision for children’s ministry

Mary’s vision is to work with children. She said if she were given a position of church school on the denominational level, she would be happy. Her good childhood experiences of Sunday school must have affected her thoughts. She also thinks children’s ministry is the best ministry since children are open and innocent. The PCEA, however, is not doing well in this area. Teachers and elders are not serious. Children are neglected. Only very few are interested. Even the woman’s guild is not serious about children’s ministry although they have vowed to join it.

2.2.5.9 Woman pastor’s experience

When Mary joined the ministry, she said that people thought she was in the wrong profession. People had not heard or seen woman pastors before so they could not believe that she was a woman pastor and not a “nun.” Then when she was assigned to a parish, people compared her with men pastors. She experienced prejudice. Men did not believe a woman could lead them and they also had fear of a woman leading them. So instead of accepting her,

they observed her. She had to prove herself. Mary must have developed endurance and resilience through all these experiences. Her struggle as a woman minister in the African context must have been quite challenging. However, she kept going and has come to the present situation. Hooray!

Mary shared encouraging news, such as that in recent times, women pastors were being appreciated, and were in more demand than men pastors, because of their hard work and serving. Furthermore, there were many women who were studying theology at St. Paul with their own money. Even on the GA (General Assembly) level, people were more understanding of women pastors. I could see that she had developed a very positive self-esteem as a woman pastor. She said, “I accept myself to be a woman...I am a woman and I should work as a woman not as man.” Including other women pastors, she also said, “We do enjoy the work [parish work].”

Mary also had the unique experience as a woman pastor whose husband was a pastor as well. She married her husband when he was an evangelist. She was already a pastor. People did not understand or accept the fact that a woman pastor married a man evangelist! If it had been the other way around, they would not have had any trouble. This was a gender issue. Moreover, people did not understand the situation of both husband and wife being pastors. For this reason, they blocked her husband’s way to theological college for 12 years.

However, Mary persevered and has arrived to her present situation. Her husband is in a parish as a parish minister and she is studying for a BA degree. She is doing her best in her current situation—it is tough for a married woman to study while raising children. She stays at school with her children and her husband is at his parish. Although the PCEA tries to place the two of them closer to each other, that is not always the case. There is also a financial issue. Since both of them receive their salaries from the same organization, the PCEA, when the PCEA struggles with finance, they are also vulnerable.

2.2.5.10 Mentors

In her journey, Mary met many good people who helped her and provided her with guidance. Early in her life it was her mother who helped with her spiritual formation. Then she had Sunday school teachers and people from the East African Revival Fellowship who nurtured her young faith. When in high school, people from the Christian Union helped her spiritually. The teacher grandmother at her church was also her mentor. When she joined the theological college, lecturers also encouraged her, like Rev Jessy Kamau and the late Rev Waweru. The late Rev. Geoffrey Ngari from the East African Revival Fellowship was also a mentor to her. Rev Kariuki Stephen and other pastors from Nyeri were also there to help her. Looking back, she said, “I just landed to good ministers who were to encourage...they are there to work for the Lord and they are happy when they see another person coming up.”

In the African context where some leaders suppress and frustrate upcoming younger leaders, she was blessed to have many encouragers and mentors who were willing to come alongside her and walk with her for a time for a specific purpose. However, she said, “I also met those who were discouraging.”

2.2.5.11 Summary of Mary’s narrative

I had the impression that Mary is a sweet, God-loving, strong, enduring, and experienced woman of God. She experienced prejudice, misunderstanding, and discrimination along the way as a woman pastor. However, through prayers and encouragement from the word of God, and through the counsels of godly men and women around her, Mary found the strength to continue the journey. Now she has become strong like other PCEA woman ministers. The Christian heritage that she inherited from her parents seemed to have laid a foundation for her spirituality. Her complete separation from the Kikuyu traditional rituals but the retention of the Kikuyu virtues is a good example to other Kikuyus.

2.2.5.12 *Themes of Mary*

- The East African Revival Fellowship (Movement)
- The PCEA (worship, procedures, government, courts)
- Kikuyu culture (rituals, morals, virtues, Ngai, language, gender)
- Denominationalism, leadership, nominalism, disunity among people
- Prayer
- Children's ministry
- Woman pastor within the PCEA (struggles, victories, history)
- Mentoring

2.3 **Definition of spirituality by research participants**

My research participants defined spirituality in various ways. For Sam, spirituality is a way of life: "When someone accepts Jesus Christ as his own personal saviour, his entire life is devoted to God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is not living in the two worlds, the flesh and the spirit. It has to be one. Then there is life." Sam says, "I continue to desire to be wholly engaged with God and every step I take and whatever decision I make I have to ask God to guide me and show me the way."

Paul said that spirituality is a state of being rather than doing. However, the actions of a person are those that agree with being. That is, his/her conducts and behaviours are shaped by the core beliefs of the Christian faith. A spiritual person exhibits spirituality when he/she practices Christian disciplines such as prayer, fasting and Bible study to a higher degree. He/she is also sensitive to spiritual realities such as the nudging of the Holy Spirit.

Grace explains her understanding of spirituality as follows.

Spirituality means God-oriented. It is growing in a godly manner from one glory to another. That is focusing directly to God and growing everyday towards God. Spirituality should not be stagnant but it should be something that you become more godly every time and everyday.

George emphasized balance in spirituality by saying, "Spirituality is not just a personal decision to keep for yourself...it is a question of giving out. It is a question of bringing forth results." However, he also had a good

understanding of its inner component by saying, “Without inner thing there is nothing outside...” and “What you are...precedes what you do. George strongly talked about the need for contextualisation of the gospel because he felt something valuable had been lost because of the condemnation of the African culture by missionaries. He also emphasized nurturing and discipleship for renewed spirituality. He said, “The Bible is central to all that we do...the word of God is the regulatory aspect of building spiritual life and so I hold it so dearly.”

Mary said, “Spirituality is faith: how it is growing and how you are going with your God and the fellowship you have with your God throughout your life.” She said she believed in prayer. According to her,

Through prayer you talk with your God and as you talk with God, things are revealed to you, what to do and you grow. In your inner being you have peace with God and you are counselled. When you pray, you also feel you have power and that your spirit is moving. The word of God and fellowship with other Christians also build you up. They help your spiritual being.

This prayer emphasis was shown in the ministry she had in her former parish. She had a prayer and fasting day on the first Tuesday of every month from 9 am till 4 pm. She also had district prayers. She taught people to pray alone and with the family, to read the Bible, and to have fellowship with one another. This prayer conviction, she said, came from her mother, who modelled prayer for her. She said, “She was a woman of prayer.” She learned from her mother and saw that prayer was working, that “prayer does things.” Her mother used to tell her, “There is somebody who gives us money. Therefore, let’s pray.” She also told her, “We have a healing God. Let’s pray.”

The definition of spirituality of the research participants can be charted as follows in the next page.

2.4 Summary of stories

I have listened to the stories of five PCEA pastors and listed their narratives. The following are preliminary summary statements with ensuing questions.

Sam	Whole engagement with God
Paul	A state of being supported by faith actions and disciplines
Grace	Growing to be more godly
George	Bringing forth results based on who you are
Mary	How you are going with your God throughout the life

Fig 2.1 Definition of spirituality

2.4.1 Affiliation with the Kikuyu tradition

- None of them participated in Kikuyu traditional rituals as they grew up. None of them were exposed to traditional rituals and sacrifices.

**Further question: What are these traditional rituals and sacrifices?*

- However, one of the traditional beliefs that were carried over from the Kikuyu traditional belief to Christian belief is their belief in Ngai, the Kikuyu God. All of them believe that Ngai, the Kikuyu god, is Yahweh of the Bible. Many characters of Ngai are similar to those of Yahweh, which has made it rather easy for the Kikuyu to accept the Christian gospel when it came to them with fuller revelation.

**Further question: What is the concept of Kikuyu God Ngai?*

- As cultural forms are replaced with other forms, underlying values and beliefs in cultural structures can also change (Kraft 1996:65). However, in case of the Kikuyu, since many Kikuyu values were not much different from Biblical values, the Kikuyu values had a great chance of surviving at the influx of Christianity without causing much conflict. All of my research participants have kept Kikuyu values and virtues such as hospitality, hard working, respect for elders, etc. In regards to language preservation, except for Paul the modern Kikuyu, all of them were most comfortable with the Kikuyu language. That also confirms

the retention of cultural values and norms since “language mirrors culture at every point” (Kraft 1996:238).

**Further question: What are these values and norms for the Kikuyu?*

- My research participants have retained some Kikuyu customs, such as marriage and circumcision, but in modified forms and with different meanings. This is an anthropological process called “domination syncretism” when a new culture is introduced and a new form and meaning are created (Kraft 1996:377). However, the naming practice has been preserved intact.

**Further question: What are the Kikuyu social customs?*

- The degree of Kikuyu tribal affiliation has been different from person to person. This different cultural identity shows a different degree of acculturation on their part, after Christianity and western culture were introduced to them.

**Further question: How important do they think their tribal affiliation is? What is their primary social affiliation?*

- All my research participants were educated. They graduated from the secondary school and had more education of some kind either in theology or other disciplines. Except Sam, who is elderly, all of them have a desire for further education. Further education seems to be a priority for young pastors. The Church of Scotland Mission, that established the PCEA, had education as one of its focuses.

**Further question: How is education related to spirituality?*

Culture is dynamic and is always changing. The fact that each of the research participants stands on different cultural grounds and moves in different directions demonstrates that the Kikuyus are changing. It also illustrates the possibility and room for further dialogue and transformation. This was encouraging.

2.4.2 Influence from Christian traditions

There were several Christian traditions identified in the dialogues that influenced the spiritual formation of the research participants. These traditions continue to affect their lives and spirituality.

- Although not everyone talked about the early Scottish missionaries, those who mentioned them held some negative impressions despite their contributions to the country and the tribe.

**Further question: What are the impacts of the Church of Scotland Mission on the Kikuyu?*

- All of the research participants possessed a strong relationship with the PCEA. Their affiliation with the PCEA was not just about membership but was about a lot more. There seemed to be something that kept them there despite various challenges. However, they all talked about the need of reform within the PCEA. The participants also talked about the need of getting out of Kikuyu tribalism within the PCEA but, at the same time, seemed to want to preserve their Kikuyu identity through the language.

**Further question: What is the history of development, structure and reform of the PCEA?*

- All of the research participants were affected by the East African Revival Movement either directly or indirectly. This movement played a positive role in forming their spirituality though the movement turned legalistic at a later stage.

**Further question: What is the East African Revival Movement and what impact did it have on the church of Kenya?*

- All of the participants were either overtly charismatic or condoned the movement within the denomination. However, there is an ongoing struggle within the denomination between the conservative and the progressive.

**Further question: What is the history of the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement in Kenya? What is its impact upon and its prospects within the PCEA?*

- Early in their spiritual development, the participants experienced God through Christian family or early Christian experiences, visions, and calls to ministry. They continued their development through discipleship and mentoring, experienced paradigm shifts towards the Charismatic, and nurtured personal disciplines of prayer and study of the word of God. All of them also possessed clear conversion experiences. Overall, their religious or spiritual foundations seemed sturdy.

**Further question: What does spirituality have to do with experiencing God?*

- They have different ministry visions or passions. For Sam, it is teaching the word of God. For Paul, it is the raising and equipping of leaders. Grace is called to the ministry to the less privileged. Pastoral ministry is George's passion. Mary has a heart for children's ministry.

**Further question: How are they going to fulfil their vision for God?*

2.4.3 Other insights

- Out of all my research participants, only two were women pastors. My observations were that they were mostly satisfied with their current status despite the struggles they had had or were having. Unlike my expectation, gender-related issues were not a priority for them.

**Further question: Would the current understanding and practice of gender roles for these women be ideal for their spirituality?*

- The socio-economic constraints that surrounded these pastors were chiefly poverty, unemployment, and AIDS.

**Further question: How are these socio-economic constraints related to spirituality?*

2.4.4 Major overlapping themes of the narratives

Out of the many themes or threads from the narratives, some common themes were identified in relation to the formation and understanding of the spirituality of the research participants. These overlapping major themes of spirituality are the ones that will be described and interpreted in Ch. 3. They are:

- Kikuyu culture
- Early Scottish missions
- The Presbyterian Church of East Africa
- The East African Revival Movement
- Charismatic movement
- Socio-economic issues

2.5 Questions formulated for Chapter 3

The following are the questions formulated along the aforementioned major overlapping themes that will be carried over to Ch. 3 for description and interpretation of the context.

- 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 is its legacy?
- What impact did the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement have upon the Kenyan church or the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) specifically?
- What is the PCEA's contribution 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?

In this chapter, I presented the stories of five pastors. These stories are the unique description of their spirituality as lived experiences of Christian faith. Questions have been formulated along the major themes of their spirituality. These require answers, description, and interpretation for a thick understanding of the context, to which I will now turn.

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

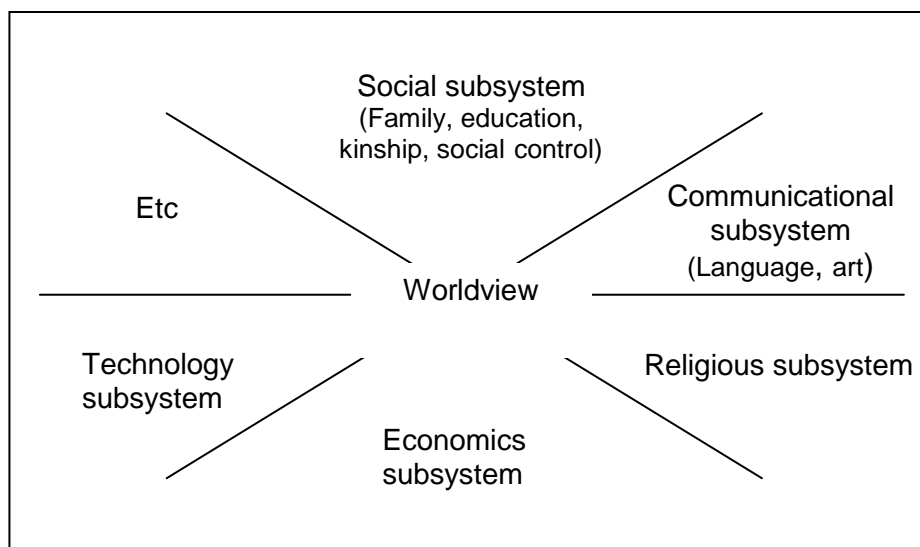


Fig 3.1 Cultural subsystems and worldview

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.

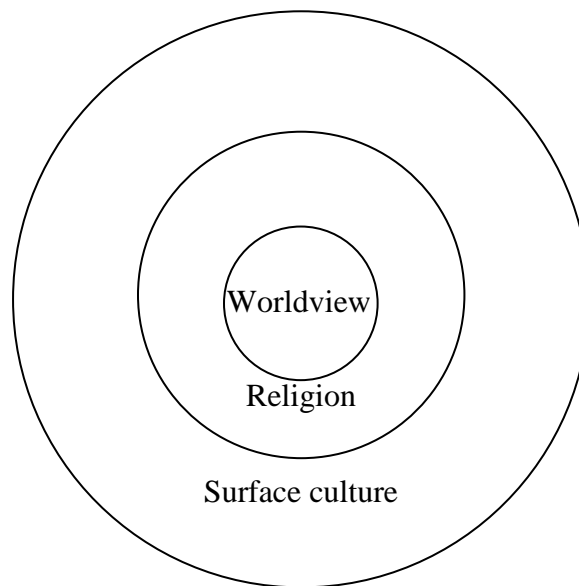


Fig 3.4 Kikuyu culture

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 (Kenya 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 Kenya (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 *rurindi* (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.

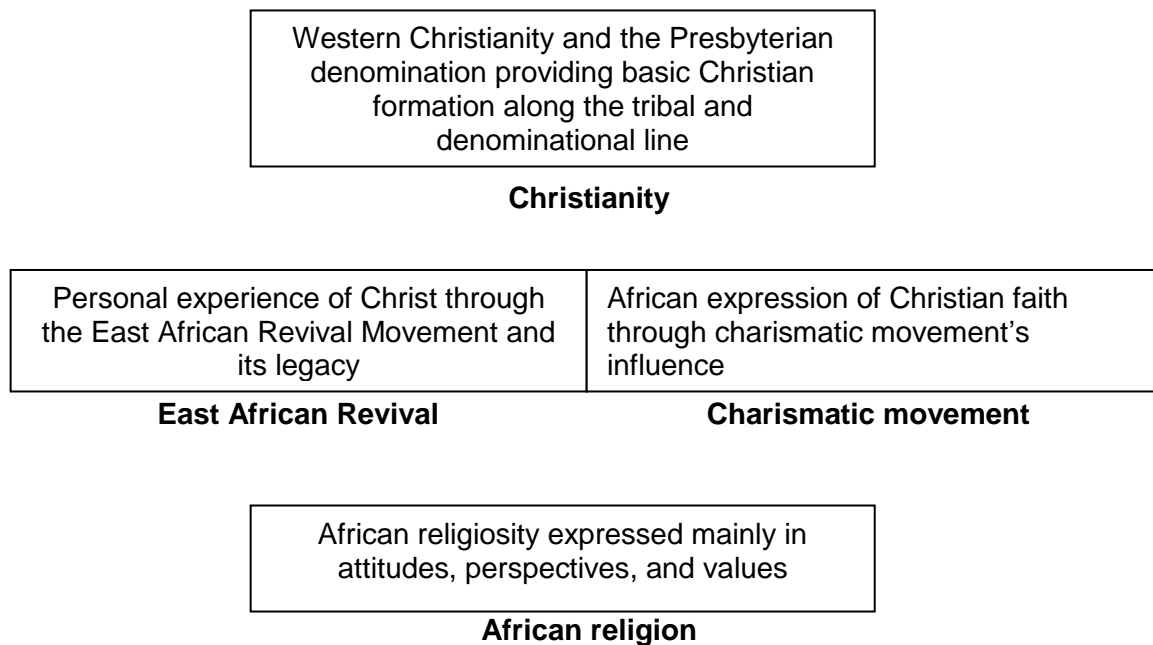


Fig 3.10 Traditions of religion and their influences

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 (Kenyatta 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 (Kenyatta 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 (Fedders & Salvadori 1979:119).

3.6.1.5 Political subsystem

According to Jomo Kenyatta (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.

CHAPTER 4

BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL SPIRITUALITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 3, the research context was described and interpreted and questions were formulated. In this chapter, the normative Christian text, that is, the Scriptures and Christian traditions will bring in a framework that can be used to look at the current praxis. This is Don Browning's next movement of practical theology: that is, a movement from descriptive theology and its formation of questions back to historical theology with the question of "What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis as honestly as possible?" (Browning 1991:49). It is to understand what the text and the tradition say in the present context. To be precise, I will present biblical and historical dimensions of spirituality with a view to understanding the spirituality of Kenyan pastors. Schneiders (1998:3) says that the scriptures and the history of Christianity "supply the positive data of Christian religious experience as well as its norm and hermeneutical context."

4.2 BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY

The term "spirituality" encompasses both Christian and non-Christian spiritualities. Christian spirituality treats specifically "Christian" spirituality as seen in chapter one, and it is essentially biblical. Bowe (2003:11) contends:

In some sense, for a Christian, all spirituality is fundamentally *biblical*. The life of faith of Christians has been and continues to be inspired and nourished by the encounter with the God mediated by the Scriptures....In short, our faith, our spirituality, is *biblical* because through the Scriptures we are schooled in the ways of the biblical God.

Schneiders (2002: 134-136) distinguishes three meanings of the biblical spirituality. The first is biblical spirituality as the "spiritualities that come to expression in the Bible and witness to patterns of relationship with God that

instruct and encourage our own religious experience.” Schneiders (2002:135) explains:

We find in the Bible a variety of biblical spiritualities: the dialogical spirituality of the deuteronomistic tradition in which God intervenes directly and participates in Israel’s history, the profoundly Christocentric spirituality of Paul, the contemplative Jesus-centred spirituality of John, the ecclesiastical spirituality of the pastorals, the apocalyptic spirituality of Revelation. In the Psalms we find expressed in prayer and poetry the full range of Old Testament spiritualities that have been practiced by Christians in the light of the mystery of Christ.

The second meaning of biblical spirituality is “a pattern of Christian life deeply imbued with the spirituality(ies) of the Bible and the third meaning as “a transformative process of personal and communal engagement with the biblical text.” These second and third meanings of biblical spirituality are rather contemporary expressions of biblical spirituality. In this chapter I will focus on the first meaning of biblical spirituality, that is, the spiritualities that come to be expressed in the Bible which instruct our own religious experience.

Regarding the transformative process of biblical spirituality, Donahue (2006:83-85), following Schneiders, argues for a faithful reading of the text in its original context and turning to appropriation and transformation based on the contemporary hermeneutic theory of Georg Gadamar and Paul Ricoeur. According to Ricoeur, the process of interpretation starts with a “naïve grasping of the meaning of the text as a whole” moving to the explanation of the text through the historical-critical method, culminating in a “second naiveté” (Schneiders’ term), that is, an informed explanation of the text. However, the meaning of the text is not limited to the intention of the original author but engenders a new self-understanding through the process of appropriation in a dialectical relationship between authorial intention and subsequent meaning. Schneiders (2002:137-141) claims that true transformation is delayed until a faith community responds to the preached word and liturgy and is committed to transformative action. Therefore, Biblical

spirituality is focused on descriptive studies of biblical texts, issues of hermeneutics and appropriation, and furthermore transformation.

4.2.1 Old Testament spirituality

It may be the case that historical traditions of spiritual life and theological treatises serve as a focal point of Christian spirituality, but omitting the Old Testament is a serious mistake. The Old Testament is an essence of and a rich source for Christian spirituality. But technically speaking, it is impossible to talk about *the* Old Testament spirituality because of the multiplicity and diversity portrayed in the Old Testament. It is rather correct to talk about Old Testament *spiritualities*.

It is beyond the scope of this research to describe various spiritualities of the Old Testament's figures, authors, and books, so I would rather discuss "the spirituality which is informed and nourished by the Old Testament." The focus of this kind of spirituality would be on the Old Testament's contribution to a sound spirituality today (Jones, Wainright, & Yarnold 1986:48), which is more relevant to this research. A point that needs to be made is the importance of Jewish perspective on the Old Testament. Stevens and Green (2005:52) say, "The fact that the Christian Bible includes texts which originated within and are still shared by the Jewish community is massively significant."

4.2.1.1 The Old Testament canon

In Old Testament study the term "canon" refers to the list of books that constitutes the scriptural corpus of literature for both Jewish and Christian communities of faith as normative and regulative. The Hebrew canon is organised into three distinct elements: the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Torah, the Five Books of Moses, received the highest scriptural authority in Jewish tradition and, derivatively, in Christian tradition as well; the Prophets, divided into the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings) and the Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets) have less authority than the Torah; the Writings, which include a more or less miscellaneous collection of eleven books, possess much less canonical authority (Brueggemann 2003:1-5).

Claiming the unity of the Hebrew Bible, Freedman (1991:1-39) claims a view that the text from Genesis to 2 Kings (except Ruth), that is, the Torah and the Former Prophets, constitutes the Primary History of ancient Israel that formed the imagination and fidelity of Judaism. Freedman (1991:39) says the following:

The purpose of the author/editor was to show how God created Israel to be his people and then formally sealed the relationship through a covenant that was concluded between them at Sinai/Horeb, mediated by Moses, and summarized or epitomized in the Decalogue. Israel's subsequent history could be told in terms of its successive violations of the commandments—one by one, book by book, until Israel ran out of options and possibilities and was destroyed as a nation, and its people taken into captivity.

This Primary Narrative, as Brueggemann (2003:15-16) calls it, offers an imaginative portrayal of Israel's memory that runs from the creation of the world (Gn 1) to the exile of Israel in Babylon (2 Ki 25). It is the story of heaven and earth culminating in the deportation of Jerusalem to a foreign land. Despite distinctive literary development and different theological judgment, Brueggemann contends that the pre-land Torah and the land narrative of the Former Prophets are intimately connected. Brueggemann (2003:102) claims as follows:

In canonical perspective, we may say that the Torah is the articulation—in narrative and in commandment—of the norms of faith and obedience commensurate with the rule of YHWH. The prophetic canon is a literature that articulates Israel's faith and practice in the rough and tumble of historical reality. The prophetic canon is an exercise in rereading the history of Israel and the history of the world according to the gifts and requirements of the God of the Torah. The simple sequence of "Torah prophets" is a given of the canon....[T]here is a likelihood that the 'Former Prophets' draws its theological perspective from Deuteronomy and is thus shaped by Torah literature. In the 'Latter Prophets,' however, the critical reality is very different.

Regarding the Prophets, the four books of the Former Prophets narrate the details of the recurring disobedience of Israel culminating in land loss, and the Latter Prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve—move beyond

land loss. Except the Twelve, also known as the Minor Prophets by Christians, the three scrolls of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, share the common theme of judgment and restoration. The pervasive themes of the Twelve are warning and judgment in the beginning and hope and restoration in the end (Brueggemann 2003:264-267).

The Third Canon, the Writings, requires flexibility and the highest interpretive imagination (Brueggemann 2003:272). It is because of its diverse nature, as Morgan (1990:71) says:

When the hermeneutics used by the writings in their use of Torah and Prophets are surveyed, we are unable to find one particular approach to Torah and Prophets that is shared by all and able to win the day. All post-exilic communities are concerned to determine how best to live faithfully in difficult times, but such a common goal does not suggest one way to view Torah and Prophets theologically, socially, or otherwise. Yet, all these textual traditions take the authority of the central texts seriously. In the final analysis, when viewed *together*, it is only this that the Writings share.

Thus, the Writings are in dialogue with the Torah and the Prophets from their historical and cultural contexts as Morgan (1990:113) attests, “The Writings are the result of a dialogue between the written scripture of early Judaism and the needs of different communities attempting to understand the actions and will of the God of Israel.”

4.2.1.2 Themes of the Old Testament spirituality

The following themes provide a skeleton picture of the Old Testament spirituality, which is based on the Torah but extends to the Prophets and the Writings.

4.2.1.2.1 Creation

Bavinck (2004:406) says the following about creation in *Reformed Dogmatics*:

The doctrine of creation, affirming the distinction between the Creator and his creature, is the starting point of true religion. There is no existence apart from God, and the Creator can only be known truly through revelation....This creation is

properly said to be ex nihilo, “out of nothing,” thus preserving the distinction of the world in its dependence on God. The Triune God is the author of creation rather than any intermediary. The outgoing works of God are indivisible though it is appropriate to distinguish an economy of tasks in the Godhead so that the Father is spoken of as the first cause, the Son as the one by whom all things are created, and the Holy Spirit as the immanent cause of life and movement in the universe....The creation proceeds from the Father through the Son and in the Spirit....The purpose and goal of creation is to be found solely in God’s will and glory....A doctrine of creation is one of the foundational building blocks of a biblical and Christian worldview. Creation is neither to be deified nor despoiled but as the “theatre of God’s glory” to be delighted in and used in a stewardly manner. It is God’s good creation.

(a) Creation as the basis of spirituality. The Old Testament declares that God is the source of all that exists. Bavinck (1999:24) says, “The realization of the council of God begins with creation. Creation is the initial act and foundation of all divine revelation and therefore the foundation of all religious and ethical life as well.” He continues that creation is divided into a spiritual and a material realm, into heaven and earth, into things in heaven and things on earth, things visible and things invisible, that the spiritual world is in communion with the visible world, and that the deepest cause of all things do not lie within the circle of visible things (Bavinck 1999:61-66). A Jewish notion of creation is somewhat different from the Reformed position. Kushner (2001:10), a Jewish rabbi, states, “It is not accidental...that classical Hebrew lacks such a distinction [between the material world and the realm of the spirit]. For Jewish spirituality, there is only one world that is simultaneously material *and* spiritual.”

(b) Creation by the triune God. Christian spirituality is Trinitarian spirituality. In creation it is also evident that creation is the work of the triune God. The Scriptures attribute the act of creation to God exclusively (Gn 1:11; Is 40:12f; 44:24; 45:12; Job 9:5-10; 38:2f). Furthermore, Christian theology unanimously attributes the work of creation to all three persons of the Trinity. God created all things through the Son (Ps 33:6; Pr 8:22; Jn 1:3; 5:17; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:3) and through the Spirit (Gn 1:2; Ps 33:6; Job 26:13; 33:4; Ps 104:30; Is 40:13; Lk 1:35). The Son and the Spirit are not the secondary

forces but independent agents who fulfilled the work of creation with the Father (Bavinck 1999: 40).

(c) Goals of creation. At the centre of creation is the love of God, which makes it possible to understand such subsequent themes as covenant, prophecy, wisdom, and eschatology of the Old Testament. The creation story tells us that human beings are the supreme objects of God's love when the loving God created them (Harper 2000:314). While Christian theologians explain creation as an act of God's love and goodness, Bavinck (1999:53) claims that the Scripture takes another position and points to a higher goal that God created man after his image for his glory (Gn 1:26; Is 43:7) and that the nature proclaims his praise (Ps 19:1). Bavinck continues:

[T]he Reformed tradition made the honor of God the fundamental principle of all doctrine and conduct, of dogmatics and morality, of the family, society, and the state, of science and art. Nowhere was this principle of the glory of God more universally applied than among the confessors of the Reformed religion.

Regarding the narrative of Genesis 1:26-28 that describes how human beings have been created in the image and likeness of God and thus share the divine stamp, Bowe (2003:37) claims:

The fact that Genesis 1:27 explicitly defines *adam* as 'male and female' means that our contemporary claims about the mutual dignity of women and men in their capacity to image God are entirely correct and faithful to the biblical revelation. Moreover, this affirmation of human dignity, male and female, is essential to the very fabric of creation itself and its enduring permanence.

Created in the image of God, humanity also is unique. Harper (2000:316) explains the uniqueness of creation as follows:

The uniqueness of self and the preciousness of personality are indispensable elements of Old Testament spirituality. This view of life forms the basis for contrasts between the Israelites and pagan culture. It stands behind the ethical-behavioural allowances and prohibitions of the Law. It is the foundation of

the prophetic call to justice and mercy for even the 'least' persons in a society

In the creation story, there is an essential relationship factor between God and humans. This relationship and intimacy with God, however, does not violate the mystery of God or the autonomy of man (Jones et al 1986:56-57). In his sovereignty God also commanded humans to have dominion over the whole creation (Gn 1:28). Therefore, created in the image of God, human beings have the capacity to relate not only to God but also to others and to all other creation. All these relationships are characterised by love, respect, and service, and in interpersonal relations morality, fairness, and concern (Harper 2000:317). Bowe (2003:41) claims, "*Our well-being deepens as we learn to reverence the rest of creation and to treat all others with the profound respect due to them as creatures, like us, fashioned in the image of God.*"

In the creation narrative, therefore, there are both unity and diversity. Heaven and earth, man and animal, and Creator and creature need to be distinguished from each other. And yet there is a superlative unity in this diversity. He who created all things in accordance to his wisdom upholds and governs them all, and all things pursue the Creator in their respective manner. All parts are connected and influence each other even ethically (Bavinck 1999:56).

Harper (2000:318), with emphasis on the unity of creation, summarises creation as one of the main Old Testament spiritualities:

Old Testament spirituality as revealed in creation is that amazing and awesome mixture of allowance and accountability, liberty and limitation, freedom, and fidelity. Thus our very creation becomes a major element of our spirituality. Such a spirituality saves us from any notions of dualism. Such a spirituality clearly reveals the value and sacredness of life. Through what we might call a spirituality of creation, we see our interconnected-ness, mutual dependency, and moral responsibility. And we recognise that true life is not being swept along by some kind of cosmic energy, but rather is being sustained by an intimate relationship with a personal God.

4.2.1.2.2 Covenant

The creator God, who made persons in the image of God, is not satisfied with general relationship. Through the introduction of covenant, the divine-human relationship is intensified and particularised (Harper 2000:318). Whereas a contract is an agreement to exchange goods or services upon certain terms, a covenant is not about *doing* so much as *being* (Stevens & Green 2003:58).

The Hebrew word for covenant is *berit*. It is the word that captures the heart of Israel's religious beliefs. Covenants of various kinds existed in the ancient Near East. Some were made between equal partners and others were made between unequal partners, such as those treaties common among the ancient Hittites. The lord promised to protect the vassals, who in turn pledged loyalty to their lord. This type of covenant may have become a model for Israelites' covenant with YHWH (Bowe 2003:70). When Israel arrived in Sinai after the Exodus, the complex tradition of covenant and commands begins. In Exodus 19-24 the proclamation of commands by YHWH is followed by the oath of allegiance to YHWH by Israel thereby binding Israel to YHWH in obedience (Brueggemann 2003:61).

Arguing for the covenantal theme of the Old Testament, Bowe (2003:70) continues:

It was at Sinai that God sealed this relationship and established an everlasting covenant with them....Built into the literary structure of the Pentateuch, this covenantal theme applies not only to the encounter between God and Moses at Sinai. It also provides the framework and the theological basis for understanding God's earlier promises made with Noah (Gn 9:8-17) and with Abraham (Gn 12:1-3, 15:5-7, 15:18-21, 17), as well as the continuing reinterpretation of covenant traditions with David in the period of the monarchy and with those who would rearticulate covenant theology in succeeding generations.

(a) Bonding with God. The covenant between God and man reveals a bonding between God and those who entered into the covenant: "I will be their God and they will be my people" (Ex 6:6-7; Lv 26:12). This bonding that began in Gn 9:16 with Noah continues with the patriarchs and reaches its

climax with the nation Israel. Closeness and intimacy are the hallmarks and various covenantal images are presented in the Old Testament: Shekinah glory in the Tabernacle, intimacy between husband and wife as analogous between God and Israel, and a child nursed at a mother's breast (Harper 2000:318). One thing that is noteworthy is the God who says "the whole earth is mine" (Ex 19:5) is the same covenant-making God who takes Israel as his own. Brueggemann (2003:65) says, "This 'scandal of particularity' is decisive for faith in the Old Testament."

However, this covenantal bonding is never automatic and guaranteed. Individuals such as Samson and Samuel and the whole nation experience the absence of God (Jones et al 1986:51-52). The closeness and intimacy must be guarded and maintained with vigilance. Brueggemann (1995:157-158) lists three appropriate human responsive actions.

In response to the One who makes all things new, a faithful human action is *hope*: to live in sure and certain confidence of promises, to function each day trusting that God's promises and purposes will not fail....In response to the One who speaks, faithful human action is to *listen*...to concede that we are subjects to Another who legitimately addresses us by name and tells us who we are....In response to the God who holds fast to us, who holds us accountable and responsible, faithful human action involves *obedient answering*. Obedient answering consists in action that may be summarized as the doing of justice and righteousness, loyalty and graciousness.

Talking about the prophets' passion for justice and righteousness, Heschel (1969:210) says justice and righteousness are what maintain the covenant:

Justice as an interpersonal relationship, involving a claim and a responsibility, a right and a duty, applies, according to the Bible, to both God and man. In its fundamental meaning, *mishpat* refers to all actions which contribute to maintaining the covenant, namely, the true relation between man and man, and between God and man.

(b) Redefining human life. God's act does not end with covenant making but extends to keeping the covenant. As a result of a covenant relationship with God, human life is redefined. Israel received their identity, personhood, and

being from YHWH who held fast to the covenant. They are in a new context of promise and claim, of surprise and amazement (Brueggemann 1995:156, 164). As a covenant people, therefore, Israel had enough faith content and experience to render any movement toward other unnecessary religions. Seifert (1981:16) puts the position of Israel in perspective, “Going to other world religions for decisively different insights is like carrying a lantern to a neighbour’s house to borrow a match. We already have the essential fire in our own keeping.” What is crucial to understand though, is as God’s covenant people Israel had to be engaged in mission. Harper (2003:319) explains this perspective by saying, “The goal has been to incorporate as many as possible into the covenant community. Thus, to be in covenant is to be reaching out.”

Brueggemann (1995:162) comments about missional life eloquently:

Because God is God, there are purposes to which we belong that are larger than our purposes (Isa 55:6-9). Or viewed another way, the Bible never holds to the notion that we exist as prepurpose persons and then may choose a purpose in life. On the contrary, our being called into being as persons already is decisive for our humanness. Biblical anthropology is from the beginning *missional*. Biblical faith asserts that being grounded in this other One who has purposes that are not our purposes characterizes our existence as missional, that is, as claimed for and defined by the One who gives us life. The metaphor of covenant thus poses the central reality of our life in terms of vocation. Vocation means we are called by this One, who in calling us to *be* calls us to *service*.

However, Israel was satisfied with their faith content and did not fulfil their mission imperative thereby God opening up the New Covenant with the Christian church (Harper 2000:319).

(c) Blessing and cursing. The primary intent of the covenant was to ensure blessing upon Israel. Curses are the result of disobedience, Israel’s breaking of the covenant relationship. The ruptured relationship between God and human is restored through Israel’s acceptance of the covenant and living it out, which results in blessings upon them (Harper 2000:320-321). Brueggemann (1995:163-164) talks about “dangerous freedom” of covenant parties, humans

and God. God claims the freedom to act without stricture, and the community of faith also has freedom. Neither is free to exercise freedom that does not take the other into account. Covenant reality indicates living by faith in the Other who made the covenant. Covenantal people live on the edge.

Covenantal people always live at the edge of the curse with real dangers and threats. Covenanted people always live at the brink of blessing, where the break of surprise and gift is about to come. Faith means to place ourselves in that vortex where life is granted, received, and risked.

(Brueggemann 1995:165)

4.2.1.2.3 Community

The Old Testament spirituality treats community as an authentic expression of spirituality. Both the law and the prophets are for the sake of people. There was no such thing as a private spiritual advancement. The patriarchs, judges, prophets, kings, and priests were all for the people. There was no understanding of faith and life apart from the community. Jews are the people who were grounded in the revelation of one God as one nation under one standard (Harper 2000:321-322). Kushner (2001:34) says about the Jewish:

Upon waking in the morning and upon retiring each night, Jews recite the passage from Deuteronomy 6:4 known as the *Shema*: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.' In so doing, they not only proclaim that God is one; they remind themselves that everything and everyone is connected—that it's all One.

The emphasis on community puts forth some important aspects of spirituality. First, the identity as a Jew is formed in the community from the family outward to the entire nation, even to those living outside of national boundary. Secondly, this closely-knit community of the king, the priest, prophets, and people requires interdependence. A breakdown anywhere in the line causes the entire nation to suffer. Righteousness and holiness are not only personal characters but also interpersonal qualities in the community. In this community of mutual interdependence, immorality, injustice, and oppression cannot be tolerated to ensure God's blessing let alone the survival of

community. Thirdly, therefore God raises up judges, priests, kings, and prophets at various times to reveal his will and to sustain the community of his people. Without discernment and will to carry out the will of God, Israel's community is destroyed (Harper 2000:321-322).

The psalms of the Old Testament also emphasise corporate character. Barton (1986:48-49) says:

A great many psalms and prayers are plainly corporate in character...where the speaker, in the first person plural, must be the congregation at worship....[T]his individual is a personification of the community....[M]any of the psalms make much better sense if understood as 'cultic' or liturgical poetry, in which the 'I' who speaks is the voice of the congregation...than if they are treated as religious lyrics for use in private prayers.

The Old Testament teaches us of the necessity of community. There is no sound spirituality which leaves out community. Harper (2000:322) claims, "Community is an essential ingredient for every Christian, regardless of status, maturity, or experience. It is at one and the same time a provider of an essential element in spirituality, and a protector against excesses and pitfalls."

4.2.1.2.4 The Presence of God

Through creation and covenant relationships and in Israelite community God was present. Through the Law, Prophets, and wisdom tradition God was there. Barton (1986:56) says:

The Torah sets out the terms on which God will be with his people; the histories show from concrete examples how his presence can be forfeited, and how gracious must be the God who never lets his absence from an unworthy people become permanent; the prophets look forward to the day when God will never be or even seem absent again; and the psalms reflect on all these aspects of presence and absence as they affect both the worshipping community and the individual at prayer. Many psalms speak of a sense of God's temporary absence, and of a hope for his reappearance.

A good example of his presence is found in the book of Exodus. The Israelite community experienced the presence of God in wilderness after the Exodus. The “Priestly tradition” that refers to a community of interpretation in ancient Israel was primarily concerned with practices of holiness and orderliness that make possible the habitation of YHWH in Israel. To them, hosting the Holy One in the Tabernacle is no small or casual matter, requiring the practice of symmetry, order, discipline, and beauty (Brueggemann 2003:65-66). Brueggemann (2003:66) contends that in our technological and pragmatic society the demanding reality of YHWH’s holiness should not be neglected.

As God is present, he is also absent. Barton (1986:57) continues to argue that the God of the Old Testament is a hidden God:

If even Moses could see only God’s back, there was small hope that anyone else could see his face and live! For practical purposes, therefore, the God of the Old Testament is a hidden God, hidden not through any weakness or inadequacy, but because of his very glory and the unworthiness of his human creatures. Yet the God who is hidden from sight in the cloud of his own glory can be *known* by the person who does not seek to see him, but rather to obey his will: ‘Thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is a contrite heart and humble spirit”’ (Is 57:15).

Harper (2000:324) asserts the essentiality of the Old Testament to challenge us to a deeper intimacy with God and trust his absolute faithfulness as follows:

In creation we are invited to the richness of the cosmos and the sacredness of life made in the image of God. Through the covenant we are encouraged to bond ourselves to the living God, which necessarily calls us into community with all other persons who have done the same. Thus formed, we are challenged to deepen our intimacy with God and to direct our energies toward the service of others.

4.2.1.3 Prophetic spirituality

This section examines the Hebrew canon called “the Latter Prophets.” Christians call these books Major and Minor Prophets.

4.2.1.3.1 Who are the prophets

The prophets were people who had an encounter with the living God, so their influence and power were derived from their direct contact with God and the resultant insight. Their concern was mainly the present, not the distant future: present realities, the implications of present actions, and their consequences in the immediate future. They stood on the middle ground between God and the people—crying out to God on behalf of the people and pleading with the people on behalf of God. They also played an essential social function lending divine legitimisation to the dominant social-political group or challenging the status quo for social changes (Bowe 2003:83-85).

They were summoned by God to an irrevocable calling (Ezk 2:1-2, 3, 8); their lives were bathed in prayer (Dan 9:4-16); they had great courage to confront kings and queens and false prophets, risking their own lives (Isa 22:11-12; Ezk 34:1); they sometimes had honest doubts and complained to God (Jer 4:9-10) ; they were deeply disturbed by the sins of their day—mainly idolatry, immorality, and injustice. They were people of passion (Stevens & Green 2003:66). Heschel (1969:26), a Jewish scholar, looks into the heart of the prophet:

The fundamental experience of the prophet is a fellowship with the feelings of God, a *sympathy with the divine pathos*, a communication with the divine consciousness which comes about through the prophet's reflection of, or participation in, the divine pathos. The typical prophetic state of mind is one of being taken up into the heart of the divine pathos....He lives not only his personal life, but also the life of God. The prophet hears God's voice and feels His heart. He tried to impart the pathos of the message together with its logos. As an imparter his soul overflows, speaking as he does out of the fullness of his sympathy.

4.2.1.3.2 Justice and righteousness

Prophets' hearts were aflame for justice and righteousness. The primary way to serve God for them was not in rituals but through justice, righteousness, and love (Stevens & Green 2003:68). Heschel (1969:210) describes justice as relational:

Ancient Israel 'does not distinguish between right and duty,' and *mishpat*, the word for justice, denotes what a person may claim as well as what he is bound to do to others. In other words, it signifies, both *right* and *duty*. Justice is an interpersonal relationship, involving a claim and a responsibility....In its fundamental meaning, *mishpat* refers to all actions which contribute to maintaining the covenant, namely, the true relation between man and man, and between God and man.

Prophets are those who had breathless impatience with injustice and their ear perceived the silent sigh (Heschel 1969:4, 9). They were convinced that "the most minor violation of the covenant bond was an affront in the eyes of God" (Bowe 2003:85-86). Here Heschel (1969:210) quotes Johanus Pederson who says, "One constantly 'judges' in the daily life, because one must continually act so as to uphold the covenant, i.e., the whole of the common life of the community. Everything in which this kind of judging manifests itself is called *mishpat*."

4.2.1.3.3 In love with God

Finally, they were in love with the people of God. Take Hosea for example. Hosea's marriage to Gomer is a proof of the incarnational medium through which he gave and received a message about covenant love. His love for his wife gave him a glimpse of the heart of God, and the unconditional love of God made him look into his own heart with sorrows of an impossible marriage. For Hosea, knowing God meant courting, betrothal, and the renewal of the marriage covenant, and the word used for this covenant love was *hesed* as in Hosea 6:6 says, "For I desire mercy [*hesed*], not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offering" (Stevens & Green 2003:68-69).

Bowe (2003:105) gives a clear description of the prophets of the Old Testament as follows:

They were persons who had been touched by God in profoundly personal and intimate ways. They felt the coal sear their tongues (Isa 6:6), sensed God's hand touch their mouths (Jer 1:9), and felt the fire of God's word within them (Jer 20:9).

They saw the world through God's eyes, felt its pain through God's heart, and challenged its abuses as if with God's mighty arm. Like YHWH, they could not be deaf to the cry of people in pain; their sensitivity to evil was raw and uncompromising. These were people who found the courage to hope beyond hope and who spent themselves to convey that hope in the face of despair. These were the poets and dreamers, the ones who could see beyond the surface of things into a deeper reality in the present and into a future time still to come. These were the faithful ones who endured affliction, distress, and persecution and who paid a heavy price for their courageous words.

4.2.1.4 Wisdom tradition

The books of the Bible called "the Writing" designate all the books of the Jewish Bible, not part of the "Law and the Prophets." In the Hebrew Bible they are (1) the three great poetic books of Psalms, Job, and Proverbs; (2) the "Five Scrolls" of Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and the Song of Solomon; and (3) a revisionist historical corpus of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and a single apocalyptic scroll, Daniel (Brueggemann 2003:5). The Protestant Bible, however, lists Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon as the Wisdom literature.

4.2.1.4.1 Blessing tradition

In these books, we find a tradition called the blessing tradition, in which God is viewed primarily as the source of blessing and providential care. In the blessing tradition, God does not intervene only at dramatic moments of crisis and need, but is always present in the midst of the world and sustains it, whereas in the saving tradition God acts in history to save and rescue people. The blessing tradition is fascinated with the pursuit of *wisdom* as a central emphasis and is therefore also called the wisdom tradition. Wisdom observes the world and carefully reflects on it to discern the harmony and order in it. It also pursues a practical and comprehensive ethic and behaviour consonant with its context (Bowe 2003:48-49, 109-110). The following discussion involves the Christian Wisdom books such as Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Psalms.

4.2.1.4.2 The book of Proverbs

The book of Proverbs draws its sayings from all different sources to entertain, to instruct, and to edify. They inculcate virtues to live by such as diligence (Pr 10:4), humility (Pr 11:2) or truthfulness (Pr 12:20). The wise choose the right action among the competing ways and many possibilities of life. The wisdom of Proverbs divides the world between the “wise/righteous” and the “foolish/wicked.” The wise show humility, self-discipline, generosity, hard work, and prudence, while the foolish are arrogant, undisciplined, selfish, lazy, and lack judgement. “In the daily rhythms of life each one must choose between the ways of the wise and the ways of the foolish. In choosing the wise path we choose the path of life” (Bowe 2003:114-115).

4.2.1.4.3 The book of Job

Job represents the gnawing questions of the postexilic period, especially the meaning of suffering by the righteous. The normal theological premise is that the good and righteous actions bring reward while sinful living brings punishment. But in the case of Job, this argument did not work. The righteous can suffer. But God did not answer Job’s questions about the meaning of suffering. The only answer was the conviction that God cares for those who suffer and even visits them and stays with those who suffer. Job’s teaching is not about *why* we suffer but about how we must relate to God in our suffering (Bowe 2003:115-117).

One of the lessons that Job learns is that the God he thought he knew is different from the God who had been watching over him all along. A new knowledge of God dawned on him. After all, the mystery of God is the mystery of silence and wisdom (Carney and Long 2005:723-724).

4.2.1.4.4 Ecclesiastes

In Ecclesiastes we hear a sceptical believer. The most repeated phrase of this book, “vanity of vanities, all is vanity!” is used thirty eight times tediously. The speaker recognises the “ambiguities and contradictions of human experience” (Bowe 2003:118). Nothing satisfies and nothing fulfils. Only when one has genuinely given up on everything, one can become a candidate for growth in

grace and is prepared to hear the end of the matter, which is “Fear God, and keep his commandments; for that is the whole duty of everyone” (Ec 12:13).

4.2.1.4.5 Song of Songs

Song of Songs gives us yet another element of wisdom in the Bible. It is the wisdom of love. Both Jewish and Christians interpreted the Song of Songs as the love between the Lord and the people of God or between Christ and the Church. According to Bowe (2003:119), “All scholars toady would agree that the author of the text did not write an allegory. He wrote a meditation, in erotic poetic language, celebrating the joy and ecstasy of heterosexual love.” This actual, tangible, and passionate human love is a glimpse and reflection of the divine love (Bowe 2003:120). Longman III (2005:965) says basically the same thing, “The Song has a clear and obvious relevance to the divine-human relationship. Throughout the Bible, our relationship is likened to a marriage.”

4.2.1.4.6 Psalms

Psalms reveals the Hebrew conviction that wisdom is prayer. Bowe (2003:122) says the following:

Capturing the sentiments of both the individual and the collective soul of its people, the Hebrew Psalter reflects Israel’s faith, her longing for God, her identity as God’s own people. The Psalter constitutes a whole ‘school of prayer,’ so to speak, not in the sense merely of a collection of prayers to be said but, rather, as a *lesson in how to pray*, as an illustration of the many motifs, aspirations, fears, and hopes that can be employed by a community of faith. A full spectrum of the human condition is covered in these prayers.

Psalms are the “mirror” of life. They are the analogy of human experience. They let us gauge our own emotions and reactions through comparison with those of the psalmist and foster a more direct encounter with God (Endres 2002:149-150). Endres (2002:152) continues:

[R]eading, hearing, meditating on, and praying with these texts enables people to clarify their own thoughts, feelings, and desires, and to learn how we may lay bare our desires before God, who desires life and not death. When we see our own

hearts reflected in the cursing psalms, a process of genuine repentance and renewal can begin.

Psalms reveal every human emotion so honestly in the form of prayer that readers get shocked. Human meanness, spite, vengeance, and violence are the indications of both intensity of prayer and human sinfulness (Bowe 2003:122-123). In this way, psalms help people articulate their own experiences and move toward deeper self-knowledge in relationship with God (Endres 2002:151). Nasuti (2001:80-81) calls this “expressive function of the psalms.”

Brueggemann (1995:108) discusses lament psalms that lament and complain against articulate religious problems:

The lament makes an assertion about God: that this dangerous, available God matters in *every dimension of life*. Where God’s dangerous availability is lost because we fail to carry on our part of the difficult conversation, where God’s vulnerability and passion are removed from our speech, we are consigned to anxiety and despair, and the world as we now have it becomes absolutized....A God who must always be praised and never assaulted correlates with a development of “False Self” and an uncritical status quo. But a God who is available in assault correlates with the emergence of genuine self and the development of serious justice.

The perspectives of psalms are both anthropo-centred and Christ-centred. Many early Christians understood Christ’s life through reflection on particular psalms, and the gospel writers found significant religious patterns in such psalms as Psalms 22, 31, and 69 and considered them as prophetic pointers to Jesus’ life and ministry. These Christ-centred approaches to psalms “allow the language of a mediator to stand as analog, Jesus Christ, who prays a psalm or is ‘prophesied’ in a psalm” while human centred approaches “establish suggestive connections between language addressed to God and our experience” (Endres 2002:152-154).

Biblical wisdom is a gift from God, and it begins with the fear of God. There is also a deep humility associated with biblical wisdom, the kind Job

experienced in the presence of the creator God. If we are truly wise, we get to know who we are before God. The wisdom tradition brings us to life fully lived and leads us to find God right in its midst (Bowe 2003:124-125).

4.2.1.5 Summary of Old Testament spirituality

- **Spirituality of creation:** Creation as an act of the Triune God for his glory is the basis of the Old Testament spirituality. The essential relationship between God and man is revealed in the creation narrative.
- **Covenant relations:** Bonding, closeness, and intimacy are the hallmarks of covenant. Justice and righteousness maintain the covenant. As a condition of blessing and cursing, the covenant must be guarded with vigilance, and the privilege of the covenant relationship requires the human party to reach out.
- **Community:** There is no sound spirituality without community.
- **Pervasive presence of God:** From creation through the covenant relationships in Israelite community, God was present. His presence is evident in the Law, Prophets, and wisdom tradition, that is, in the whole Old Testament.
- **Prophetic spirituality:** Prophets, in love with God, experienced the divine pathos. They lived not only their own lives but also the life of God. They were aflame for justice and righteousness, which involve right and duty in a relational context.
- **Blessing tradition:** As opposed to the saving tradition, the blessing tradition, also called the wisdom tradition, is fascinated with the pursuit of wisdom as a central emphasis. Biblical wisdom leads us to find God in our midst and live our life to the fullest.

4.2.2 New Testament spirituality

As was the case with the Old Testament spirituality, there is no single New Testament spirituality. Nevertheless, there is one central undeniable theme that runs through the whole New Testament: the historical Jesus. Thurston defines the New Testament spirituality as “what the early Christians did to put

into practice what they believed....It was what they did to respond to a world filled with the presence of God and the risen Christ” (Thurston 1993:3). The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus required responses, and the New Testament spirituality is the people’s responses to what God was doing in Jesus the Christ (Thurston 2005:58). In this sense, New Testament spirituality is decisively *Christological* (Saunders 2002:155).

Another important characteristic of New Testament spirituality is its *communal* character. Saunders says (2002:158), “Early Christian spirituality was conceived, nurtured, and realized within the body of Christ.” The Spirit was given to edify the body of Christ as Zizioulas (1985:27) contends, “When the Spirit blows the result is never to create good individual Christians but members of a community. This became fundamental for Christian spirituality in the New Testament and was in direct line with the Old Testament mentality.” This communal character of spirituality was in large part due to the influence of the Mediterranean way of life (Malina 1996:64).

The third crucial characteristic of New Testament spirituality is the *eschatological* perspective. Saunders (2002:158-159) says:

Eschatological materials and perspectives pervade the New Testament. The authors articulate the sense that they are living in the last days, when God breaks into the world to inaugurate a ‘new creation,’ in order to cultivate within their audiences alternative ways of seeing reality-transformed imagination. Whether it be Jesus’ proclamation of the reign of God, miracles and healings, Paul’s talk of Spirit and new creation, expectations of Jesus’ parousia, reports of resurrection, the anticipation of a last judgment, or the claim that God’s power has come to definitive expression in the cross of Jesus, we are dealing with eschatological imagination....The eschatological dimensions of spiritual formation in the New Testament....provided Christians with the means to resist the particular worldviews and practices of the cultures in which they lived. By envisioning the end of all that is taken for granted and presumed stable, the eschatological perspectives at work in New Testament spirituality served to ‘undermine the cultural system that masquerades as common sense.’

After all, according to Downey (1997:46),

Christian spirituality is rooted in the person of Jesus Christ and his work, especially revealed in the scriptures, specifically the New Testament....They [individuals and groups] lived the gospel differently because certain values and ideals which it discloses are perceived as more central than others in the task of self-transcendence and personal integration.

I will present gospel spirituality first and then Pauline spirituality.

4.2.2.1 Gospels

There is one Jesus and four gospels, which are testimonies of faith in Christ. The gospels are remembrances and imaginative expressions of profound encounters with the Son of God to mediate him to others as the basis for faith, repentance, and new life. The main element of gospel spirituality is testimony to a decisive revelation of the divine in time, space, and person. This testimony is mediated through the experience of the first followers of Jesus in the form of compelling narrative in the gospels (Barton 2005:608).

4.2.2.1.1 Matthean spirituality

As the first of the New Testament, the book of Matthew is fundamentally biblical and traditional in its shape and texture. Old Testament spiritualities continue in Matthew in regards to divine presence, covenantal morality, wholehearted devotion to the one true God, love of neighbour, coming of God in judgment to reward the righteous and to punish the disobedient, etc. The book of Matthew is thoroughly indebted to the Old Testament and Judaism. However, there is discontinuity with the tradition no matter how precious it is. In Matthew Jesus is the Son of God in whom the promise of God to Israel has been fulfilled and completed. The life of Jesus fulfils the scripture (Mt 1:23; 2:6, 15, 18, 23), and the death of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins ushers in a new covenant (Mt 26:28). Matthean spirituality is christocentric and eschatological as well: following Jesus, doing his commandments, responding to God's presence in Jesus, and living the life of the kingdom of heaven as Christ's disciple in the church characterise Matthean spirituality (Barton 1992:33-34). A further description of Matthean spirituality is as follows.

(a) A sense of divine presence. In Matthew, from the beginning to the end, the presence of God is evident: genealogy, the conception of Jesus, Jesus' baptism, authoritative teaching and working of miracles, transfiguration, death and resurrection. Jesus was *Immanuel* (God with us). In this sense, Matthean spirituality is both theocentric and christocentric. God was identified as the heavenly father and Jesus as the divine Son (Barton 1992:10-12; Barton 2005).

(b) Stress on both interiority and practical spirituality. For Matthew, right motivation and moral action is of primary importance. Rituals are of secondary importance (Mt 23:23). Being perfect (Mt 5:48) requires interiority, which provides foundation for righteous practices and actions. Righteousness (*dikaiosune*) in Matthew is not just a matter of knowing what is right but of doing it as well (3:14; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32). The righteous acts of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting should not be merely to meet the eyes of people but should be genuine. Based on strong interiority, a life of practical spirituality identifies a true follower of Jesus in Matthew. Then the heavenly father will provide the disciple so aligned with God with daily material needs (Barton 1992:20-25; Bowe 2003:140-141).

(c) Vision of the church. Of all four evangelists only Matthew uses the term *ekklesia* to describe Gods' people (Mt 16:18; 18:17). This indicates the importance of corporate characteristic of Matthean spirituality. The people of God are referred to as "brother" and brotherly love and forgiveness are expected (Mt 18:21-1, 23-35). The church as a new community of faith is to "make disciples" of all nations (Mt 28:18-20), and it is the embodiment and reflection of the coming kingdom of heaven (Barton 1992:27-28; Bowe 2003:141).

4.2.2.1.2 Marcan spirituality

The gospel of Mark consists of "the death of Jesus" (Peterson 2000:331). Barton (1992:63) says, "Marcan spirituality is a *dark, strenuous spirituality*. It is a story of passion from beginning to end." For the first eight chapters Jesus is alive and does mighty acts of God: healing, working miracles, casting out

demons, and challenging religious leaders. However, in the middle of chapter eight the tone changes.

In the middle of section the reader sees that this illusion is to be shattered. The figure of power is to be handed over to people who kill him. Yet, even this illusion is to be shattered, for the brokenness of the cross is itself broken by the message, 'He is risen.' And yet the final illusion is shattered. 'Risen' does not mean a return in power and presence to the community. The community must continue to struggle with illusions (with false christs, false messiahs) until they finally 'see' him (13:26; 16:7).

(Donahue1978:385)

In Mk 8:27-10:52, three passion predictions (Mk 8:31-33; 9:30-32; 10:32-34) appear interspersed with Jesus' teaching about "taking up the cross" (Mk 8:34), "true greatness" (Mk 9:34), and the "cost of discipleship" (Mk 10:35-45). These three chapters are the turning point in the book of Mark (Bowe 2003:134). The second half of Mark is dominated by talk of death. As Jesus heads straight for Jerusalem, urgency, gravity, and destination characterise the narrative. "No incident in his life is told with this much detail. There can hardly be any question about the intent of St Mark: the plot and emphasis and meaning of Jesus is his death" (Peterson 2000:332). Christian spirituality is, for Mark, *cruciform*: "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it" (Mk 8:34-35). Barton (1992:49) contends, "This is *the* most important aspect of Marcan spirituality."

Bowe (2003:136) says of the implication of Marcan spirituality well:

Mark's gospel story challenges its readers to embrace the cross as the way of discipleship today. It does not invite us to impose suffering and hardship *on others* in the name of some skewed piety or false sense of sanctity, but it does call on us freely to embrace the cross *ourselves* and to place ourselves in solidarity with all those who suffer. It asks us to renounce every form of domination and power, every kind of violence and abuse against others....The message of Mark's gospel pronounces a scathing critique on all structures of oppressive

power: economic, political, social, ecclesiastical, and personal. Instead, the Jesus of Mark's gospel is the holy and compassionate one whose heart is moved with pity on all who are in need and for whom he gave his life.

4.2.2.1.3 Lucan spirituality

The two-volume work of Luke-Acts is the story of Jesus and Christian origin rooted in Israel for the salvation of the world. From the beginning to the end of both volumes the overshadowing presence of the Spirit with powerful manifestations characterise Lucan spirituality. God is present in the person of his Son Jesus and is present in power at the end of the age as the Holy Spirit (Barton 1992:71-73). The following are the distinctive aspects of Lucan spirituality.

(a) Joy. One of the most prominent features of Lucan spirituality is joy. Morrice (1984:91), who examined the subject of joy in the New Testament says, "It is St Luke's Gospel that is *par excellence* 'the Gospel of Joy.'" "Lucan spirituality is about the joyful acknowledgment of the universal salvation made possible by the dawning of the age of the eschatological Spirit with the coming of the Messiah" (Barton 2005:610). The first two chapters of Luke testify the joy expressed in response to God's grace manifested in two birth stories. In the parables of Luke 15 joy is the recurring theme over the lost sheep, coin, and the found son. The gospel ends with the tone of joy when the disciples return to Jerusalem after Jesus' ascension (Lk 24:52-53). So the joyous mood frames the whole gospel. Barton says explicitly, "Whereas a disciple in Matthew is a learner in the school of Jesus, and in Mark one who follows Jesus 'on the way' in fear and trembling, in Luke a disciple is a joyous, spirit-inspired, recipient of salvation" (Barton 2005:610).

(b) Repentance and conversion. Repentance and conversion are also distinct characteristics of Lucan spirituality. Beck (1989:11) points out, "For Luke, 'repentance and forgiveness' together sum up the Christian good news." Jesus left with these words "that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations" (Lk 24:47), and in the book of Acts the call to repentance for forgiveness of sins is a constant refrain (Ac 2:38; 3:19;

5:31; 8:22). Besides repentance, the conversion theme is also prominent in Luke-Acts. The only occurrence of *epistrophe* (conversion) comes in Acts 15:13, and the majority of uses of *epistrepsein* (to convert, to turn around) appear in Luke-Acts. The summons to “turn around” is typically dominant in Acts (Barton 1992:78). Repentance and conversion indicate a change of heart and life oriented to Jesus and the kingdom of God (Barton 2005:610).

(c) Prayer. Prayer stands out in Luke as one of its main features. Luke depicts Jesus as a person of prayer and takes pains to teach us prayer through the example of Jesus.

All the gospel writers mention prayer, of course, but Luke gives us such wonderful tidbits as: ‘[Jesus] would withdraw to deserted places and pray’ (5:16); ‘At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place’ (4:42); ‘He went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God’ (6:12); and ‘Jesus was praying alone, with only the disciples near him’ (9:18).

(Pura 2005:1879)

Jesus also teaches his disciples the importance of persistent prayer in two parables (11:5-8; 18:1-8). Luke portrays Jesus as a person of prayer, having habitual and deep communion with God, and setting an example of prayer for his disciples is “indelible part of Luke’s gospel narrative” (Barton 1992:90). Prayer is also a characteristic of the apostolic church in Acts. Pura (2005:1880) observes again, “Even a cursory reading of Acts indicates that...prayer and personal worship have a prominent place in the lives of the first Christians.” The apostles and the leaders of the church were people of prayer (Ac 3:1; 8:15—Peter and John; 6:4—the twelve; 7:59-60—Stephen; 10:9—Peter; 16:25—Paul and Silas; 20:36—Paul and the Ephesian elders).

(d) Public spirituality. Lucan spirituality is public in that the grace of God is unrestricted. It reaches out to the Gentiles, to the uttermost part of the earth (Ac 13:47; 26:17-18). The gospel is not only for all the people of Israel (Lk 2:10; 3:18, 21; 6:17; 7:1, 29; 8:47; 9:13; 18:43; 19:47-48) but also for the Gentiles (Ac 2:5-12; 8:26-40; 10:1-48). The gospel requires believers to set

the captives free, to heal the blind, and to rescue the oppressed (Lk 4:18). Believers are not to hoard wealth but to share it with the poor (Lk 6:24-26; 12:13; 16:19-31). Hospitality should be extended to neighbours (Lk 10:29-37) and even to sinners and tax-collectors (15:1-2) (Barton 1992:97-102).

4.2.2.1.4 Johannine spirituality

In the fourth gospel, Jesus is presented as the word of God who was made flesh, the fully adequate expression of God (Schneiders 2005c:386). Here it is made crystal clear what they have said differently and sometimes hesitantly about Jesus in the previous three synoptic gospels: Jesus as God incarnate who reveals God and the way to God uniquely. Thus Johannine spirituality is *thoroughly Christocentric* (Barton 1992:113, 118).

(a) Revelation of the divine glory. In John, “salvation is presented not in terms of expiatory or substitutionary sacrifice but in terms of revelation....[T]he death of Jesus is not kenosis but a glorification, the absolute manifestation of the very being of God as love” (Schneiders 2005c:386). Barton (1992:114) says:

Fundamentally, there is revelation of the divine glory, a call to believe, a way to go which leads to God, the offer of deliverance from darkness into light and from death to life, and a basis for assurance. In other words, John’s gospel provides clear and authoritative answers to questions about God, the world, life and death, truth and goodness, and salvation and judgment.

All of Jesus’ words and actions reveal something about the mystery and the glory of God (Bowe 2003:145).

(b) Personal and corporate spirituality. The fourth gospel has to do with persons in their relationship with God and with one another. The revelation comes in a personal, incarnate form (1:14, 18), and it requires a personal, incarnated response. As the Son, Jesus comes from the Father, abides in the Father, and seeks to do the work of the Father. The relationship between the Son and the Father is unique in its intensity and reciprocity. This unique relationship brings persons into the relationship with God as children of God

(1:12) and heirs of eternal life (3:16). In John there are narratives of personal encounters of people with Jesus: Jesus and Nicodemus (ch 3), Jesus and the Samaritan woman (ch 4), Jesus and the lame man (ch 5), Jesus and the blind man (ch 9), Jesus and his own (chs 13-17), and Jesus and Pilate (18:28-19:16). These personal encounters strongly convey the sense that “believing Jesus is an inescapably personal matter requiring individual decision for or against him” (Barton 1992:114-116). Dunn (1984:13) says the following about the personal characteristic of Johannine spirituality, “John seems to understand Christianity as much more an individual affair, the immediacy of the disciple’s relationship with Christ through the Spirit who constitutes Christ’s continuing presence in the believer (John 14:15-20; 1 John 3:24).”

One thing that is noteworthy about believing Jesus is observed by Schneiders (2005c:386):

[T]he evangelist created a grammatical construction of the verb that is peculiar to this Gospel, ‘to believe *into* Jesus’ rather than simply ‘to believe in’. The preposition (*eis*) with the accusative case suggests a progressive entrance into and growth in the relationship. Jesus says, ‘If you remain [or continue] in my word you are truly my disciples’ (8:31). Believing, in other words, is not notional or intellectual but relational.

However, the spirituality of the fourth gospel is not only personal but also corporate. The gospel is proclaimed for the world (3:16), and the new society thus formed includes Jews, Samaritans, and Greeks. The metaphors used in the book of John also have a strong corporate sense: the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (10:11, 15) and the vine and the branches (ch 15). The commandment of Jesus to love *one another* is also striking compared to Jesus’ command to love your enemies in the synoptic gospels (Barton 1992:116-117).

(c) Mystical spirituality. Johannine spirituality is mystical spirituality in which presence, mutual indwelling, and union predominate rather than dogma or ethics. “Union with Jesus is the source of intimate knowledge of God and strength to live as the body of Jesus in the world” (Schneiders 2005c:387).

Jesus is the fulfilment of our longing as bread of life (6:35, 51), light of the world (8:12; 9:5), gate for the sheep (10:7, 9), the good shepherd (10:11, 14), the resurrection and the life (11:25), the way, the truth, and the life (14:6), and the true vine (15:1, 5) (Bowe 2003:146).

(d) Charismatic spirituality. Barton (1992:130) explains, “Belief in the power of the eschatological Spirit and experiences of the presence of the Spirit in the life of the church are a very important feature of Johannine Christianity.” Jesus is the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit (1:33; 3:34). Individuals are born of the Spirit (3:5-15); the Spirit abides in the believer forever as another helper (14:16); and the Spirit reveals the truth and knowledge to believers (14:26; 16:12-15). Schneider (2005:387) says, “The source of life in John is the *Spirit* rather than the observance of rules or the practice of rituals.”

(e) Ambivalent attitude towards the world. In John, the world is viewed in pessimistic and dualistic terms, especially in the second half of the gospel which shows the negative attitude of mankind to revelation (1:10; 7:7; 14:17, 22, 27, 39; 15:18-27; 16:8, 20, 33; 17:6, 9, 14-26) (Barton 1992:122). Nonetheless, “the world into which he comes is also the scene of the saving mission of Jesus (1:9f; 3:17, 19; 6:14; 8:26; 10:36; 12:46; 16:28; 17:13, 18; 18:20, 37), and his mission to the world is grounded in the love of God for the world (3:16)” (Barrett 1978:161). Furthermore, withdrawal from the world is opposed explicitly (17:15): “I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.” Johannine spirituality prepares believers to live with the tensions of ambivalence to bear witness to the world (Barton 1992:122).

4.2.2.2 Pauline spirituality

Pauline spirituality is based on his profound experience of the Risen Christ. The mystical union between the believer and Christ is made possible through the outpouring of the Spirit. His experience of freedom in Christ and the future hope characterise Pauline spirituality.

4.2.2.2.1 Life in the Spirit

Pauline spirituality is strongly pneumatological. “The Spirit’s activities so widely permeated the apostle’s thought that there is hardly any aspect of Christian experience outside of the sphere of the Spirit” (Dockery 2000:340). The basic assumption of Paul’s theology is that all believers are possessors of the Spirit and that “no-one can respond to the claims of Christ without being activated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit” (Guthrie 1981:551).

Persons are regenerated through the work of the Holy Spirit and they cry out “Abba Father” (Rm 8:14-17). They are guided and illumined by the Spirit, who leads them to the deepest understanding of God (1 Cor 2:13). The renewal of the mind (Rm 12:2) is achieved through the Spirit, and he causes the believer to walk in the Spirit in opposition to the sinful nature of the flesh (Rm 8:4). The believer bears fruits of the Spirit (Gl 5:22-23) and is encouraged to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18). The Spirit is utterly indispensable for Christian living (Dockery 2000:342).

4.2.2.2.2 Corporate spirituality

The Spirit is also given to and for the community for the common good (1 Cor 12:7). “To drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor 12:13), denoting the baptism of the Spirit, shows the basic solidarity of all Christians in the Spirit (Guthrie 1981:563). “It is the Spirit who binds Christians together and enables them to be of the same mind” (Guthrie 1981:562). Bowe (2003:158) says:

Christian identity is a corporate identity and there is no such thing as ‘an *individual Christian*’....To be a Christian is to be a member of the body of Christ. Paul’s insistence on the corporate character of the body and his exhortations to communal living are key to his preaching of the gospel and to the way he responded to almost every pastoral question.

Deidun (2005:480) says the same thing that “Paul’s spirituality has its context in the community of believers and was never individualistic.” Dockery (2000:348) asserts:

An evangelical spirituality must develop its shape from the Pauline guidelines so that the pneumatic experience is neither

totally individualistic, nor is it an out-of-control experience lacking norms or parameters. Instead, an evangelical spirituality must focus upon the corporate experience among the believers that stresses worship, mutual commitment and dependency, transparency and authenticity, responsible freedom and loving obedience.

4.2.2.2.3 Christ crucified and risen

Another important aspect of Pauline spirituality is Christ crucified and risen. The risen Christ is precisely the crucified one. Paul does not make a distinction either between his experience of crucified and risen Christ and his experience of the Spirit. The risen Christ is the life-giving Spirit (Deidun 2005:479). All who are baptised into Christ are baptised into his death and buried with him (Rm 6:4). Then the risen Christ empowers them to walk in newness of life, and they are alive to God in Christ Jesus (Rm 6:5-11). Death, resurrection, and exaltation are the examples to follow not only for Paul but also for all Christians (Phlp 3:7-17). When the believer dies to Christ, he or she becomes a slave to Christ and is freed from the power of sin and the law by the life-giving Spirit (Rm 8:1-2). Paul's enigmatic phrase "in Christ" refers to the field of divine power of Christ which permeates and governs the lives of believers (Deidun 2005:480). Dockery (2000:344) says it well:

As that death was an historical event, so also the incorporation of believers in that death is historical. In other words when Christ died on the cross, all who were to be incorporated in him also died. This implies that when a person puts faith in Christ, he or she is at once identified with a death that has already happened. The identification with death is necessary before there can be a participation in the risen life of Christ, which is life in the Spirit.

4.2.2.2.4 Creative tension in the spiritual life

In Pauline epistles there are tensions which make spiritual life balanced and vibrant.

(a) Visionaries and pragmatists. Bowe (2003:166) talks about two groups of people in Israel's postexilic community:

On the one hand, there were the prophetic visionaries, such as Third Isaiah and Zechariah, whose creative religious imagination envisioned a future time of Gods' inclusive blessings poured out on all. And on the other hand were so-called pragmatists, the scribal leaders such as Ezra and Nehemiah who saw the future of the people linked to their strict living of Torah, their avoidance of intermarriage, and their more restrictive policies of Jewish communal solidarity in the midst of alien world.

This distinction between the visionary and the pragmatic tendencies also existed in the late New Testament period. The letter to Colossians demonstrates the visionary tendency in chapter one by praising the cosmic Christ (Col 1:15-16, 19-20). The letter to Ephesians also reveals this cosmic nature of God's plan of salvation (Eph 1:3-4, 5-6, 9-10). On the other hand, the pragmatic perspective shows in the Pastoral Epistles where the "household codes" of appropriate behaviours of wives, children, and slaves and the regulations and qualifications for Christian ministers are laid down. There is a creative tension "between the voices of pragmatism, boundary maintenance, and social order on the one hand, and the voices of prophetic visionaries, boundary breakers, and imaginative risk takers, on the other" (Bowe 2003:166-169).

(b) Already/not yet. Spiritual life is characterised by the polarities of the already/not yet and indicative/imperative tension. While living in the Spirit as a new creation in Christ, believers still suffer in this age being conscious of their old selves in Adam. Their struggle with indwelling sin continues (Rm 7:14-25) and the flesh continues to wage war against the Spirit (Gl 5:16-21). The kingdom of God of the gospels is in their midst but not fully realised yet (Dockery 2000:346-347).

Pauline spirituality is eschatological spirituality based on the present life in Christ. The believer's perspective is futuristic looking ahead into the blessed future (1 Cor 7:29-31; 1 Th 4:13-18), yet is firmly grounded in the present world where Christian obligation to live a godly life is still present. The future consummation is balanced with a missionary task (1 Th 4:17; 1 Cor 9:23).

(c) Freedom and responsibility. Freedom in Christ comes with responsibility for the community where believers are situated. The basic principle of Christian living is that individual believers must exercise their freedom with love for the community (1 Cor 13:1-13). However, Paul does not condone asceticism (Col 2:20-23). He views ascetic approach to the Christian life as worldly since it appeals to human pride and achievement rather than trust in Christ and dependence on the Spirit. Paul sees his asceticism in sexual matters as a gift to enhance the gospel, and not for greater personal spiritual achievements.

4.2.2.3 Summary of New Testament spirituality

- **Christological spirituality:** The spirituality of the New Testament is fundamentally Christological. It is people's response to what God was doing in Jesus Christ.
- **Communal character:** Early Christian spirituality was conceived, nurtured, and formed within the body of Christ. The Church is a new community to make disciple of all nations. The Spirit was given to believers for the edification of the Church.
- **Eschatological dimension:** The eschatological dimension of the New Testament provided early Christians with the means to resist the particular worldviews and practices of the cultures in which they lived. Paul's spirituality is strongly eschatological based on the present life in Christ.
- **Matthean spirituality** is the continuation of the Old Testament spiritualities and Judaism. Divine presence is manifested in Jesus: Jesus is *Immanuel* (God with us). Interior motives and practical actions are emphasised in Matthew.
- **Markan spirituality** is *cruciform* spirituality which emphasises the dark, strenuous spirituality of Jesus' death.
- **Lucan spirituality** is characterised by overshadowing presence and the powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In Luke the joyous mood frames the whole gospel. Repentance and forgiveness together with conversion sum up the Christian good news in Luke-

Acts. Prayer is emphasised in Luke with Jesus modelling prayer. The Gospel is not only for Jews but also for the Gentiles.

- **Johannine spirituality** is thoroughly Christocentric. As revelation of the divine glory, Jesus made encounters with individuals and proclaimed the good news to Jews, Samaritans, and Greeks. Taking an ambivalent attitude toward the world, John's gospel takes on mystical and Charismatic characters as well.
- **Pauline spirituality** is strongly pneumatological. There is hardly any aspect of Christian experience outside the realm of the Spirit. It is also corporate spirituality in that the Spirit was given to the body of Christ for common good. For Paul the risen Christ is the life-giving Spirit. "In Christ" refers to the field of divine power of Christ that governs the lives of believers. In Christian life, there is a creative tension between visionaries and pragmatists, already and not-yet, and freedom and responsibility.

4.3 Trinitarian spirituality

The doctrine of the Trinity is at the centre of Christian faith. Downey (1997:44) says, "The doctrine of the Trinity functions as the summary of Christian faith, expressing the central Christian conviction that the God who saves through Christ by the power of the Spirit lives eternally in a communion of persons, divine and human, in love." Downey (2005:624) contends that Trinitarian spirituality is "Informed by Scripture, the traditions of Christian spirituality, and the renaissance of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity and its implications for Christian spiritual life in the contemporary Church and world."

LaCugna (2000:274) explains how the focus of the Trinitarian doctrine has changed over time.

It used to be that a new doctrine of the Trinity meant a new way to explain 'God's inner life,' that is, the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to one another....But now both Catholic and Protestant theologians who are working to revitalize the doctrine of the Trinity have shifted away from constructing theories about God's 'inner life.' Instead, by returning to the more concrete images and concepts of the

Bible, liturgy and creeds, it has become clear that the original purpose of the doctrine was to explain the place of Christ in our salvation, the place of the Spirit in our sanctification...and in so doing to say something about the mystery of God's eternal being. By concentrating more on the mystery of *God with us, God for us*, and less on the nature of God by Godself, it is becoming possible once again for the doctrine of the Trinity to stand at the center of faith.

Thus, everything of God's economy—providence, redemption, and consummation—shapes the Trinitarian doctrine: “everything comes from God, is made known and redeemed through Jesus Christ, and is consummated by the power of the Holy Spirit” (LaCugna 2000:275).

The central theme of the Trinity is relationship: God's relationship with us and our relationship with one another (LaCugna 2000:275). This relational mystery or interpersonal communion of the Trinity is expressed in the use of the terms Father, Son, and Spirit which designate relationships with one another and believers. They denote the profoundly relational character of the divine mystery. The relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit as equal, mutual, and interdependent persons inevitably affects human relationships in all spheres bringing them to the equality, mutuality, and interdependence of the divine relationship (Downey 2005:625). Therefore, the Trinity implies first that God does not exist *except* Father, Son, Spirit, and that they exist in communion, that is, shared life. Not only that, the triune God has communion with all creatures in the universe. The whole universe is in communion with God as origin, sustaining ground, and the final goal. Every human being and creature thus are not solitary but in relationship with one another (LaCugna 2000:275-281). McIntosh (2005:181) says, “Trinitarian understanding of God is itself the expression of the *community's* [italics mine] ongoing spiritual life, its encounters with God through Christ in the Holy Spirit.”

After all, Trinitarian rhythm of Christian spirituality is a believer's journey in the Spirit into freedom, love, and generosity of Jesus' relationship with the Father. The Holy Spirit fosters Christian spirituality by opening up within believers a

beginning of transformation towards an infinite sharing of the life of God (McIntosh 2005:179).

LaCugna (2000:281) says well about Trinitarian life:

Living trinitarian faith thus has two meanings: faith that is alive, and living out one's faith. Faith in the God of Jesus Christ can come alive in the doctrine of the Trinity, provided that this doctrine flows out of the images and intuitions of faith. Living out this doctrine and this faith amount to living God's life with one another....God's life does not belong to God alone: God's life is shared with every creature. Living trinitarian faith entails living as Jesus Christ did: with total confidence in God; as a peaceful, merciful, healing, forgiving presence; praying and praising God constantly; welcoming the outcast and sinner. Living God's life means living according to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit—becoming holy and virtuous, and contributing to the unity of the Christian community and the harmony among all of God's creatures.

In practice of Trinitarian spirituality, believers are "*abba* worshipers," "disciples of Jesus," and the "temple of the Spirit" (Stevens & Green 2003:13-44). They are *abba* worshipers. The word *abba* expresses the intimacy and the permanence of the relationship into which believers have been introduced. It takes us to the heart of the gospel. It not only shows Jesus' unique filial relationship with God and his unparalleled intimacy with God, but also reveals his authority to draw believers into the same relationship. Believers are also disciples of Jesus Christ. Believers are known more as disciples than as Christians in the New Testament. The word "Christian" is used only three times, while the word "disciple" is used two hundred sixty-nine times. Stevens and Green (2003:19-20) say:

To be Christian is simply to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Discipleship implies growth, nurture, education, deepening intimacy, shared goals and life-direction, all facets of relationship with a person....So relationship with Jesus is not the means to the end of our spirituality. Relationship with Jesus *is* Christian spirituality.

In the Old Testament, the Spirit is never indwelling in man himself. It comes on him from outside and is often used in empowering judges, kings, prophets, priests, etc. In the New Testament, Jesus was undoubtedly and uniquely man

of the Spirit. His life and ministry are characterised by the presence and empowering of the Holy Spirit, and he gave the Spirit to his disciples as he ascended to heaven. Believers have become the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16). Stevens and Green (2003:44) say, “Surely, the whole heartbeat of New Testament spirituality is that each of us is the temple where the Holy Spirit lives.”

4.4 Historical spirituality

“Christian spirituality is necessarily related to the Christian tradition” (Downey 1997:54). Besides the Scriptures, the history of Christianity is another constitutive discipline that provides the resources, norms, and hermeneutical context of Christian spirituality (Schneiders 1998:3). Again, it is an impossible task to examine two thousand years of Christian spirituality here so it would suffice to examine five major historical spiritualities for the sake of this thesis: the patristic, medieval West, Eastern Orthodox, the Protestant, and Anglican.

4.4.1 The patristic period

The patristic period was the formative time for the fundamentals of Christian doctrine. Although there is disagreement, the Protestant tradition has tended to regard the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451 as an approximate end (Sheldrake 1995:45). This era can alternatively cover AD 100-AD 600, the era of the Roman Empire (Stewart 2005:73).

During this period, the early church first faced the challenge of explaining its relationship with Judaism from which Christianity originated. Biblical interpretation, especially that Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of the Scriptures, was an important issue. Christians claimed that Jesus was the awaited Messiah of the Old Testament and that the history of Israel culminated in the incarnation of God in Jesus. The formation of Christian canon was another critical issue. The precise contents of a Christian Bible were debated, and through various church councils the Christian canon was finalised. The Hellenistic Jewish version of the Bible called Septuagint was the basis of the Christian Old Testament, and apostolicity was the main criterion of the New Testament (Stewart 2005:73-74). Regarding the Old Testament canon, the

early church received from its Jewish heritage the concept of sacred Scriptures that it believed were the revelation of God and the prediction of the Christ event (McDonald 2007:208-209). McDonald (2007:421) also says about the canonisation process of the New Testament as follows:

Ultimately, it appears that the writings that were accorded scriptural status were the ones that best conveyed the earliest Christian proclamation and that also best met the growing needs of local churches in the third and fourth centuries....The significance of the NT writings to the churches is shown by their widespread use in the life, teaching, and worship of those churches, and such use also contributed to their canonization.

4.4.1.1 Patristic theology

The doctrinal polemics of the early centuries were the general atmosphere of this period as the early Christian church worked out the central characteristics of its understanding of God, Christ, and redemption (Sheldrake 1995:47).

4.4.1.1.1 Monotheism, the Trinity, Christology

Monotheism and the Trinitarian concept of God were developed early. The early “Logos Christology” of Justin Martyr (AD 100-65), developed further by Origen (AD 185-254), preserved monotheism that God the Father has the primacy as the one who speaks the Word (*Logos*), the Son of God, who became flesh in Jesus Christ. Outlining a “grammar” of Christian prayer of a Trinitarian nature, Origen taught that prayer should always be addressed *to* God the Father, *through* the Son, and *in* the Holy Spirit. Basil of Caesarea (AD 330-79) and his friend Gregory of Nazianzus (AD 329-90), two great Cappadocian theologians, expanded the Trinitarian questioning further. Gregory based distinction among the persons of the Trinity upon their relationships to each other, rather than upon any essential difference between them, and managed to protect the unity of the Trinity (one God, indivisible) and the distinction of Father, Son, and Spirit within the Godhead (three persons, unconfused) (Stewart 2005:75).

The Arian controversy of the fourth century focused attention on the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. In the controversy of

Arius vs Athanasius, against more cautious Christology of Arius, the Council of Nicea (AD 325) adopted a bolder assertion of Athanasius of the Son's full and equal divinity in the doctrine of the *homousion*—the claim that the Son is of the same “being” (*ousios*) as the Father. In the fifth century, theological debate focused on the relationship between the divine and human natures in Christ. From this context, Marian devotion arose as some attributed to Mary the title “Mother of God” (*Theotokos*). To supporters of *Theotokos*, like Cyril (AD 378-444), bishop of Alexandria, it suggested the fundamental unity of the human and divine nature in Christ. In “Alexandrian” Christology Christ became a single person *from* two natures. It was the council of Chalcedon (AD 451) that affirmed Christ is “one person *in* two natures,” which are united “without confusion, without change, without division, without separation” (Stewart 2005:75-76).

4.4.1.1.2 Biblical and pastoral theology

The unifying feature of the era was the Bible, and theology was biblical theology, that is, an exegetically-based interpretation of the Scriptures to produce a fuller understanding of Christian faith and a deepening of the Christian life in all dimensions. They viewed the Bible from the context of Christian life; their theology was involved in the life of the church; preaching was regarded as the action of the living word of God in the congregation. Thus, the theology of early Fathers was primarily pastoral (Sheldrake 1995:45-46).

Regarding episcopate, Ignatius of Antioch taught that the church is a community of believers gathered around a single local bishop (monoepiscopate), who is helped in his ministry by presbyters and deacons. Soon, his threefold ministry model of bishop, presbyter (later “priest”), and deacon became the norm for the Christian church and was extended in the next century to envision a communion of bishops who all claimed their continuity with the teaching of the apostles. Apostolicity was used not only to validate writings as Scripture but also to make bishops legitimate and authoritative interpreters of the tradition (Stewart 2005:74-75).

4.4.1.2 Liturgical celebration

Baptism and Eucharist were considered as initiation into the community and nurturing of faith. Baptism allowed believers to participate in the Eucharist, which was celebrated weekly on Sundays in obedience to Jesus' command at the Last Supper (Lk 22:19). The Eucharist became the typical form of Christian communal worship and soon became a distinct rite consisting of biblical readings, a kiss of peace, prayers, and the sharing of blessed bread and wine. Early Christians considered the Eucharist as a genuine reception of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the form of bread and wine (Stewart 2005:77). For example, Justin Martyr (*First Apology* 66.2) said:

For we do not receive these things as common bread nor common drink; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior having been incarnate by God's logos took both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food eucharistized through the word of prayer that is from Him...is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who became incarnate.

By the third and fourth centuries, the standard texts for the anaphora, central Eucharistic prayer, was in place characterised by Jewish prayer of thanksgiving, blessing, and petition, but gradually replaced by sacrificial language and symbolism of Christ's death and resurrection (Stewart 2005:79).

Throughout the latter half of the fourth century, the liturgy like meditation on the Scriptures became privileged means of contemplative exercise and ascent. For instance, the mystagogical and catechetical homilies of Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 315-86) and Ambrose of Milan (AD 339-97) presented liturgy as both a means of Christian catechesis and a spiritual exercise through which the soul perceives God and is transformed mysteriously. Thus the liturgical celebrations of the sacraments of baptism, the Eucharist, and ordination came to be regarded as unique occasions of *theosis* (deification) (Dysinger 2005:258).

4.4.1.3 Mysticism

The patristic period is characteristic of mystical theology, mystical exegesis, mystical prayer, and mystical contemplation. Sheldrake (1995:46) says:

The patristic period, in the limited sense of the early Christian centuries, was a formative time both for the fundamentals of doctrine and for what has been called 'mystical theology'....Mystical theology aimed to provide a context for the direct apprehension of God who is revealed in Christ and within us as the Spirit....When we talk about the 'mystical theology' of this period, we must be careful not to confuse it with the later medieval fascination in the West with subjective experience or with the development of a detailed itinerary for the spiritual journey. Patristic 'mysticism' is neither abstract nor systematic. It refers to the personal life of the Christian who knows God as revealed in Christ by belonging to the fellowship of the 'mystery'. This means the mystery of Christ as expressed in the Bible and the liturgy as well as in personal Christian living.

For Origen (AD 185-254), "mysticism was an experience of the inner person and the spiritual senses, a deeper realisation of the mind's capacities rather than an ecstatic surpassing of them." He also encouraged personal and spiritual readings of the Bible. Following Origen, Evagrius of Pontus (AD 345-99), emphasised identifying distracting thoughts and taught pure or imageless prayer. He stressed the rational mind's self-realisation in prayer. However, Pseudo-Macarius from the late fourth-century emphasised the heart rather than mind and was emotionally *warm* compared to Evagrius. These two figures, Evagrius and Pseudo-Macarius were progenitors of later spiritual theologies. John Cassian's (AD 360-432) prayer, however, was both pure and imageless and marked by tears, a combination of Evagrius and Pseudo-Macarius. The synthesis of these two approaches to prayer proved to be of great importance for later development of prayer and spiritual experience (Stewart 2005:80-81).

Dionysius the Aereopagite, from the early sixth century, known as Pseudo-Dionysius, also wrote liturgical prayer which celebrated the apophatic divine darkness (mystical theology) and the radiantly kataphatic creation (the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies) (Dysinger 2005:258). To him the

liturgy was fundamental and central and was a means of drawing believers back to union with God. His symbolic interpretation of the liturgy began a significant tradition of liturgical commentary in the Byzantine world (Stewart 2005:82).

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430) was perhaps the most important person in Western theology, not only during the patristic period, but also during the next thousand years. A major influence on Augustine and his spiritual life was Neoplatonism in which he found a doctrine of the soul—through purification and contemplation it can rise to God—and also man's frailty and his need for some kind of assistance in search for God. The mystical ascent of the soul is a "movement of withdrawal from the world and into oneself, a movement that involves purification and the acquiring of the virtues, leading to contemplation of God" (Louth 1986:136). Augustine's spiritual theology was formed by two principle themes: the primacy of charity (love), both divine and human, and the insights into God's nature and the human search for God. To Augustine, God's presence is spiritual and can be sought by the rational mind, which is also immaterial and spiritual (Stewart 2005:83). Louth (1986:140) says about the significance of love in Augustine's theology, "Augustine sees the importance of love as preventing us from being 'content with the world's darkness which through habit has become pleasant.'" For Augustine, the dynamism of the Trinity is analogous to the intellectual faculties of recollection, contemplation, and love (Stewart 2005:83).

As seen in Augustine's writings, in the patristic period, mystical contemplation was combined with reason and exegesis. Sheldrake (1995:46) argues, "In patristic theology biblical exegesis, speculative reasoning, and mystical contemplation are fused into a synthesis." Biblical exegesis tended to be mystical. Dysinger (2005:257) says that Irenaeus of Lyons (AD 200), Clement of Alexandria (AD 215), and Origen (AD 185) applied middle and Neo-platonic notions of ethical purification (*katharsis*), contemplative vision (*theōria*), and mystical exegesis (*allegoria*) to the Christian Scriptures and to spiritual theology, and yielded methods of biblical interpretation and models of spiritual progress.

4.4.1.4 Martyrdom

After the elements of the New Testament, no other factor has had more lasting importance in constituting Christian spirituality than martyrdom. Up to the period of Constantine, the Church was illegal. Adherence to the Church meant the acceptance of the ban of ordinary society to the extent of direct threat to life and confiscation of possessions. The literature of martyrdom abounds. The Acts of the martyrs are the simple verbal records of official judgements. *Acts of St Justin and his companions*, *Acts of the martyrs of Scillium in Africa*, and *Preconsular acts of St Cyprian* are some examples. There are other theological writings inspired by martyrdom. *The epistles of St Ignatius of Antioch* and *the exhortations to martyrdom* are of that kind (Bouyer 1963:190-192). The spiritual writings of early Christians that mention prayer, the vision of God, and spiritual progress are also strongly coloured by the threat of persecution and possible martyrdom (Dysinger 2005:256-257). Stewart (2005:84) says of martyrs' faith:

Their [martyrs'] commitment was to more than a lifestyle or philosophy. The Acts of ordinary men and women demonstrate that it was the courage of faith, not theological sophistication, that gave martyrs the strength to choose death rather than apostasy....A devotional consequence of persecution was the cult of the martyrs, which began in the form of honouring them in their burial places. In this practice lay the beginning of Christian veneration of saints.

The following document expresses the desire for martyrdom expressed powerfully in the *Epistle to the Romans* (Ign 4-7):

I am writing to all the Churches and state emphatically to all that I die willingly for God, provided you do not interfere. I beg you, do not show me unseasonable kindness. Suffer me to be the food of wild beasts, which are the means of my making way to God. Gods' wheat I am, and by the teeth of wild beasts I am to be ground that I may prove Christ's pure bread. Better still, coax the wild beasts to become my tomb and to leave no part of my person behind: once I have fallen asleep, I do not wish to be a burden to anyone. Then only shall I be a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ when the world will not see even my body. Petition Christ in my behalf that through these instruments I may prove God's sacrifice....At last I am well on the way to being a disciple. May nothing *seen or unseen*,

fascinate me, so that I may happily make my way to Jesus Christ! Fire, cross, struggles with wild beasts, wrenching of bones, mangling of limbs, crunching of the whole body, cruel tortures inflicted by the devil—let them come upon me, provided only I make my way to Jesus Christ....Do not have Jesus Christ on your lips, and the world in your hearts. Give envy no place among you. And should I upon arrival plead for your intervention, do not listen to me. Rather, give heed to what I write to you....My Love [eros] has been crucified, and I am not on fire with the love of earthly things. But there is in me a *Living Water*, which is eloquent and within me says: "Come to the Father." I have no taste for corruptible food or for the delight of this life. *Bread of God* is what I desire; that is, the Flesh of Jesus Christ, *who was of the seed of David*; and for my drink I desire His blood, that is, incorruptible love [*agape*].

It is not death itself that martyrs sought, but it is Jesus Christ with whom they suffered (Bouyer 1963:199).

4.4.1.5 Asceticism

Martyrdom inspired other forms of Christian devotion. Asceticism is the sustained practice of physical and spiritual disciplines. It was a part of early Christian practice reflecting the ascetical orientation of some Jewish groups. It was not always clear to distinguish between unusual piety and elitist sectarianism. The latter are some groups or individuals who separated themselves from the larger church claiming perfection or true Christianity. They emphasised strict fasts, mandatory celibacy, and charismatic leadership. Such were Tatian's *Encratites* (from *enkrateia* or discipline) or the prophecy-oriented Montanists, and they made themselves an alternative church rather than a movement within the church. Ecclesial asceticism can be found in the *Sons and daughters of the covenant* of Syriac Christianity, who practiced celibacy in service to the church. In the fourth century, asceticism was formally integrated into the larger church through the emergence of monasticism and episcopal consecration of virgins. The apocryphal *Acts* and *Gospels* shed light on early Christian asceticism and illustrate the affinities between asceticism and martyrdom, the formative themes of monasticism (Stewart 2005:84-85).

4.4.1.6 Monasticism

The phenomenal success of monasticism in the fourth century was partly due to a popular desire to preserve the spirituality of the church of martyrs. Asceticism within and outside the church also provided a ground for monasticism. Both monks and nuns were new models of spiritual heroism, and their spiritual practices coupled with geographical remoteness reflected their rejection of worldly culture. It was in the monasteries that methods of liturgical and private prayers were formalised that used kataphatic (image-filled) psalmody and silent apophatic (imageless) self-offering alternatively. Antony (AD 251-356) is regarded as the greatest hero and model of monasticism (Dysinger 2005:257).

Stewart (2005:86) describes Antony as follows:

Antony becomes the prototypical monk, renouncing an ordinary relationship with the world for the sake of another kind of relationship, and setting the normal issues of human existence against the backdrop of eternity and the vastness of the desert. Antony withdraws both geographically and psychologically, his ever-greater physical withdrawal echoing his deeper and deeper confrontation with himself and the 'demons' that oppress him. Antony's teaching on the psychodynamics of temptation echoes the tradition of discernment of spirits found as early as the *Shepherd of Hermas* and developed by Origen in book 3 of *On First Principles*.

The desert school of spirituality in fourth century Egypt emphasised rigorous self-examination in order to focus on God past the internal and external forces of subversion. This tradition was systematised by Evagrius of Pontus and passed on to John Cassian in the West and to Gregory the Great. The goal of the monastic movement was not so much moral regulation as freedom from emotional and psychological disturbances for unceasing prayer and love of God and neighbour. Unlike Antony, Pachomius (AD 292-346) abandoned solitude to form a community of monks that prayed, worked, and ate together in a very ordered and cloistered ascetic community. The two models of monasticism, solitary (anchoritic) and communal (cenobitic), found many adherents, and monasticism became "typical Christianity" in the East

dominating spiritual theology and liturgical development. It appeared in the West later (Stewart 2005:86-87).

When the persecutions and martyrdom ceased, it was monasticism that condensed the development of Christian spirituality. However, it should be remembered that the whole church did not become monastic. While monasticism was nurtured in the church, monasticism reciprocally left the teaching which became the common possessions of the whole church (Bouyer 1963:523-524).

4.4.1.7 Summary of the patristic period

- **Doctrinal polemics:** The early Christian church worked out the central characteristics of its understanding of God, Christ, and redemption, and developed monotheism, the Trinity, and Christology.
- **Biblical and pastoral theology:** The unifying feature of the era was the Bible. Its theology was an exegetically based interpretation of the Scriptures for fuller Christian faith and life. Theology was also pastoral involving the life of the Church.
- **Liturgical celebration:** The liturgical celebrations of the sacraments of baptism, the Eucharist, and ordination were regarded as unique occasions of *theosis* (deification).
- **Mysticism:** The patristic period is characteristic of mystical theology, mystical exegesis, mystical prayer, and mystical contemplation. Mystical biblical exegesis, speculative reasoning, and mystical contemplation are also fused into a synthesis.
- **Martyrdom:** The spiritual writings of early Christians that mention prayer, the vision of God, and spiritual progress are strongly coloured by the threat of persecution and possible martyrdom.
- **Asceticism:** Asceticism as the sustained practice of physical and spiritual disciplines was a part of early Christian practice and together with martyrdom provided the formative themes of monasticism.
- **Monasticism:** The goal of the monastic movement was not so much moral regulation as freedom from emotional and psychological disturbances for unceasing prayer and love of God and neighbour.

There are two models of monasticism, solitary (anchoritic) and communal (cenobitic). Monasticism became typical Christianity in the East.

4.4.2 The medieval West (AD 600-1450)

Medieval spirituality was formed in a social environment shaped by deep divisions in social rank, gender status, and wealth with a concentration of power and knowledge on a few. Holiness found its expression in a disciplined life of prayer, asceticism, loyalty to ecclesiastical authority, pastoral care of others, and the thorough keeping of liturgical hours. Medieval spirituality was in general public and communal being tied to a wider range of issues than personal growth. The medieval millennium can be divided into three developmental phases: early medieval (sixth through eleventh centuries); the second phase (eleventh to thirteenth centuries); late medieval (mid-thirteenth through early fifteenth centuries) (Wiethaus 2005:106-110).

4.4.2.1 Early medieval spirituality (sixth to eleventh centuries)

During this period, the patristic synthesis—biblical exegesis, speculative reasoning, and mystical contemplation—from the previous era continued to dominate (Sheldrake 1995:48). At the same time, the Roman Church's adaptation of Roman administrative structures and the steady influx of indigenous practices to Christian spirituality brought forth Western monasticism and the Roman Catholic Church. Two religious leaders of sixth century epitomise the medieval spirituality of this period: St Benedict of Nursia (AD 480-547), the founder of Benedictine monasticism and mysticism, and Pope St Gregory the Great (AD 540-604), a prolific writer, gifted administrator, and pastoral counsellor. Both men integrated Roman and local indigenous traditions and laid the foundation for the growth of medieval spirituality (Wiethaus 2005:110-111).

4.4.2.1.1 Benedictine spirituality

Benedict lived a monastic life and wrote his *Rule* to a fellow Christian who is seeking God in the context of monasticism. The Rule was written in the sixth-century monastery at Monte Cassino which was a lay institution where

Christians came to live a consecrated life without aspiring to sacred Orders. It was only centuries later that the clerical element in Benedictine monasteries became dominant.

(a) *Lectio divina*. One of the major themes of the Rule is *lectio divina*, a daily reading of the Scriptures with meditation and prayer. *Lectio* means “careful, reflective, frequent reading of scripture so that its meaning and application to our individual lives might penetrate to the heart and becomes a living, transforming reality in shaping our inner lives” (Benedict *Rule* 1-13). Daily reading of the Scripture is balanced with daily manual labour. “Idleness is the enemy of the soul. Therefore, all the community must be occupied at definite times in manual labor and at other times in *lectio divina*” (Benedict *Rule* 48.1).

(b) Obedience is another key theme in the Rule. Actually, it permeates the whole of the Rule. The prologue to the Rule says the following:

It is not easy to accept and persevere in obedience, but it is the way to return to Christ, when you have strayed through the laxity and carelessness of disobedience. My words are addressed to you especially, whoever you may be, whatever your circumstances, who turn from the pursuit of your own self will and ask to enlist under Christ, who is Lord of all, by following him through taking to yourself that strong and blessed armor of *obedience* [italics mine] which he made his own on coming into our world

(Benedict *Rule* Prologue.1)

An order from a superior must be obeyed without delaying for a moment, as though it came from God himself. Obedience is also rewarding if it is carried out in a way that is not fearful, nor slow, nor half-hearted, nor marred by murmuring (Benedict *Rule* 5.1-5.4). Spearritt (1986:153) says, “It is a hard saying to many modern ears, but there can be no doubt that total obedience is of the essence of Benedictine spirituality.” “They cannot count even their bodies and their wills as their own” (Benedict *Rule* 33:1).

(c) Humility. This is another core of St Benedict's teachings contained in the *Twelve steps of humility* in the seventh chapter of the Rule. Wiethaus (2005:112) explains the twelve steps:

Geared toward the harmonious cooperation of the monastic community and the liberation of the human spirit from the infantilising push and pull of human 'sins and vices'...the twelve steps of humility paradoxically invert the image of a fierce warrior in stressing absolute mastery over the self and its passions. The steps include fear of God, doing Gods' will at all times, obeying the abbot (as long as the abbot fulfils his responsibilities), patient endurance of suffering, regular confession, ungrudging acceptance of menial work, regarding oneself as lesser than all other monks, following the rule with attentiveness, embracing silence, avoiding laughter, and speaking only with gentleness; in short, conducting oneself with humility at all times.

This following of Christ in humility and obedience is not an ascetical imposition for monks and nuns, but it is the only way for the sinful creation to achieve the joy and fulfilment of Christ (*Benedictine Rule 26*).

(d) Silence. St Benedictine values silence and recommends it. Silence is an expression of humility, and by definition a monk is a disciple and should want to listen more than to speak. Silence characterise the monastery at all times, but especially at night and in all places (Spearritt 1986:154).

4.4.2.1.2 St Gregory

Wiethaus (2005:113) contends, "If St Benedict created the stable foundation of medieval monasteries, St Gregory the Great (AD 540-604) must be credited with bridging biblical and European cultures and forging the parameters of the multicultural encounter that defined early medieval spirituality." His structured reflection on Christian life and doctrine in a dialectic of presence and absence, faith and knowledge, dark and light bridges the gap between the patristic world and the Middle Ages. Almost all the later vocabulary of the West regarding the spiritual life has its origin in Gregory's integration of the vocabulary of Cassian and Augustine (Ward 1986a:278).

(a) *Dialogue*. Becoming a model for later hagiography, *Dialogue* of St Gregory attempted to demonstrate that the Italy of his own era was a second Holy Land filled with amazing wonder-workers evoking the patriarchs and prophets of the Bible. All four books of the *Dialogue* present paradigmatic Christian encounters with indigenous religious practices in narrative form and were widely read during the medieval times. For example, the *Life and miracles of St Benedict*, the second book of the *Dialogue*, was one of the most influential writings of the Middle Ages produced by St Gregory's monastic interests (Wiethaus 2005:113). Gregory (*Dialogue* 2.35) describes Benedict at prayer:

Long before the night office began, the man of God was standing at his window, where he watched and prayed while the rest were still asleep. In the dead of night he suddenly beheld a flood of light shining down from above more brilliant than the sun, and with it every trace of darkness cleared away. Another remarkable sight followed...[T]he whole world was gathered up before his eyes in what appeared to be single ray of light.

(b) The two lives: active and contemplative. St Gregory (quoted by Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, & Bouyer 1968:10) describes the active life and contemplative life as follows:

The active life consists in giving bread to the hungry, in teaching wisdom to him who knows it not, in bringing the wanderer back to the right way, in recalling one's neighbour to the path of humility from that of pride, in giving to each what he needs, in providing for those who are committed to our care. In the contemplative life, however, while maintaining with his whole heart the love of God and his neighbour, a man is at rest (*quiescere*) from exterior works, cleaving by desire to his Maker alone, so that, having no wish for action and treading underfoot all preoccupations, his soul is on fire with longing to see the face of his creator.

Leclercq et al (1968:10-11) explains that although the impression that St Gregory gives is that the active life is for the salvation of others by our labours and the contemplative for our own salvation through the work of prayer, the two lives are two kinds of activity, asceticism and prayer, that are complementary, and both activities have their place in each life. In reality, the

two lives are only two forms of the same charity. That is, both are our means of union with God. Referring to the two lives, Wiethaus (1986:113) says:

Mirroring his own active life, St Gregory stressed the complementary function of action and contemplation. He taught prayer and the meditative reading of Scripture eventually allow the soul to experience divine presence, which in turn prepares and strengthens the soul for the active life.

(c) Continuous conversion. Ward (1986a:279) claims that St Gregory presented one of the main themes of Western spirituality: the continual conversion of the soul throughout life. The whole life of a believer is gradually freed from the bonds of earth and gets to see all things in the light of God in perspective, but the full union with him is fulfilled after death.

The soul illumined by the light of God, sees its own weakness and what is contrary to God in itself and continues more ardently the process of repentance, in a dialectic of self-knowledge and the knowledge of God by love. The teaching permeated the monastic Middle Ages in the West, giving both theology and vocabulary to barbarian Christians for them to use and to develop.

(Ward 1986a:280)

4.4.2.2 High Middle Ages (eleventh to thirteenth centuries)

The demands of an increasing urban educated population increased the need for literacy and instruction coupled with concerns for Christian unity and integrity (Wiethaus 2005:114). The High Middle Ages is characteristic of contemplative textual spirituality and the mendicant movement.

4.4.2.2.1 Contemplative textual spirituality

The eleventh century to thirteenth century saw an enormously analytical attentiveness to processes of contemplative reading, writing, and textual exegesis. This contemplative text-driven spirituality found its expression first in monasteries, soon expanded to cathedral school and universities, and then entered the world of laity. It was also the period of the Twelfth-century renaissance.

(a) Monastic reform. The distinctiveness of this era is a monasticisation of spirituality throughout the church in which ascetic spirituality of the monks became the norm for the devout Christians, especially for the clergy. Poverty, solitude, silence, fasting, and manual work without many of the established structures of monastic houses characterise this reform movement. The movement took two forms: hermits living in solitude, and groups of monks living together in corporate solitude. The most successful group was the Cistercians who wished to follow the *Rule of St Benedict* to the last dot. St Bernard of Clairvaux was the dominant spiritual influence in Europe at this time. (Ward 1986b:285-287).

Bernard's central theme was his specific concern with the analysis of the soul in its relationship with God. His mystical theology of love and knowledge established a school of spirituality of lasting influence. He followed Augustine and Gregory the Great to begin a psychological exploration of the soul, an inner pilgrimage through which the believer could experience the love of God. In his treatise *On the love of God*, Bernard analyses this process with four degrees of love: a carnal love of self, a mercenary love of God for what he gives to that self, a filial love of God out of duty, and a wedded love of God in which the soul loves God for himself and itself. In the commentary to the Song of Songs, Bernard makes the pursuit of love the sole aim of the monk. However, the main emphasis of Bernard is action as the fruit and overflow of the intimacy of the soul with God (Ward 1986b:287-288).

The man who is wise, therefore, will see his life as more like a reservoir than a canal. The canal simultaneously pours out what it receives; the reservoir retains the water till it is filled, then discharges the overflow without loss to itself....Today there are many in the church who act like canal, the reservoirs are far too rare (*Song of songs* 1970 18.3).

Ward (1986b:291) summarises this period as follows:

The changes in monastic spirituality in this period were of profound importance for the devotional life of Europe. Many of those concerned with reform in the Church in this period were also monks of the new orders or under their influence, and saw monastic life as the ideal Christian way. This led to the

monasticisation of Christian spirituality....The contact of monastic spirituality with a wider circle than the monks themselves...led to a greater vigour in the art of prayer, and produced some of the most beautiful devotional works of the Middle Ages.

(b) Twelfth-century renaissance. The twelfth century intellectual renaissance was different from the Renaissance of three centuries later. While the Renaissance was to break with the genius of the Middle Ages in almost every sphere, the twelfth century renaissance was to carry on the monastic and patristic culture. In the eleventh century, the monasteries were the only centres of Christian thoughts. As it is said, “the abbeys remained the repositories of the great Christian ideas.” However, in the twelfth century, although the monasteries were still strong in intellectual life, theologians and thinkers began to appear outside of them, criticising the monks as mere classifiers and copiers. These new scholars read and studied the Scriptures with the view of the mind rather than the heart. They aimed at theological interpretation and literal exegesis. This renaissance was a foreshadow of the Renaissance that destroyed the Church’s monopoly of intellectual life a few centuries later (Leclercq et al 1968:223-225).

During this period, textual spirituality expanded beyond the monasteries to cathedral schools and newly founded universities. The so-called Victorine School of contemplative thought made efforts to systematise and classify religious experiences in light of the Bible with divine and human love at the centre of creation. Some representatives of this academic and textual spirituality are Hugh of St Victor (AD 1100-1141), his student Richard of St Victor, Peter Abelard (AD 1079-1142), and his highly educated wife Heloise (AD 1102-64) (Wiethaus 2005:115). Leclercq and et al (1968:242) claim that the scholastic method of theological research was a new one and foreshadowed the divorce between theology (now definitely science) and mysticism (spiritual life).

(c) Lay spirituality. Textual spirituality also entered the world of the laity, and the laity produced spiritual writings in vernaculars. Women became active in

monastic and lay settings as well despite their minority status in the society. Their writings were accepted as authentic (Wiethaus 2005:116). Sheldrake (1995:72), however, contends that although the monasticism of the Rule of St Benedict, the desire for the apostolic life of poverty, mendicancy, and preaching attracted large numbers of the laity, the new spiritual movement was in part a reaction against increasing clerical domination of official church life and piety. The lay movement in this era was eventually challenged and by the early fourteenth century was effectively condemned. Those groups that were labelled “heretical” were the Waldensians and the Cathars, who maintained a critical distance from the church authority and developed an independent leadership structure (Wiethaus 2005:116-117).

4.4.2.2.2 Mendicant movement

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the sources of Christianity—the Bible and the Fathers—were being read anew due to the system and techniques developed in the previous century. There were also passionate efforts towards the pure ideal of the Gospel (Leclercq 1968:283). In such an atmosphere the mendicant movement was an attempt to break free from the dominance of the monastic elite in spirituality. It was a move from the stability and separation of the cloister into an itinerant way of life of crusade and preaching (Sheldrake 1995:66). The Franciscan Order founded by St Francis of Assisi (AD 1181-1226) and the Dominican Order founded by St Dominic de Guzman (AD 1170-1221) are seen as attempts to channel within the institutional church the evangelistic aspirations which were driven underground in the previous century (Tugwell 1986a:295). Unlike other contemporary “heretic” spiritual movements, the mendicant movement was accepted by the church through the formal recognition of the way of the life of the friars (Sheldrake 1995:74).

(a) The Dominicans. From the beginning, Dominican spirituality was dominated by a concern to be useful to the souls of the neighbour. The primacy of the apostolic job of preaching relativised the normal conventional practices of piety such as prayer, reading, liturgy, and sacraments. In the apostolic life, poverty was adopted as an essential ingredient. Dominic himself

urged his brethren to make even their convents mendicant too. The Dominican Order taught their friars to trust in God rather than to earn their living since large estates or regular paid work would interfere with their work. Perhaps the most important element of the Dominican Order was study. For example, Dominic himself took his first followers to theology classes in Toulouse and sent them to universities in Paris and Bologna. During the thirteenth century study replaced the traditional practice of manual labour of the monks. The Dominicans also had a pragmatic attitude to piety. Poverty, chastity, and obedience were not values in their own right but means to an end, perfect charity (Tugwell 1986b:296-298)

St Thomas Aquinas (AD 1225-74), a Dominican, saw contemplation as the goal of human life and the vision of God as the final fulfilment. But the “contemplation” in Thomas and other Dominicans is not a process of mystical abstraction but ordinary human thought maturing into wisdom through mental discipline and study. St Albert, teacher of St Thomas, and St Thomas regarded the union of our intellect with God as our final union with God (Tugwell 1986b:298-299).

(b) The Franciscans. Modelling an uncompromising return to apostolic simplicity and devotion, St Francis (AD 1181-1226) lived a life of extreme poverty and in strict obedience to the words of Christ. He went around the world preaching the gospel, tending lepers, writing the rule of living, and always praying. To Francis the sufferings of Christ were ever present with him (Moorman 1986:302-303). His prayer on La Verna reveals his longing for the passion of Christ. He prayed in this way:

‘My Lord Jesus Christ, I pray You to grant me two graces before I die: the first is that during life I may feel in my soul and in my body, as much as possible, that pain which You, dear Jesus, sustained in the hour of Your most bitter Passion. The second is that I may feel in my heart, as much as possible, that excessive love with which You, O Son of God, were inflamed in willingly enduring such suffering for us sinners.’ And remaining for a long time in that prayer, he understood that God would grant it to him, and that it would

soon be conceded to him to feel those things as much as is possible for a mere creature.

(Habig 1991:1448)

Francis' spirituality can be summed up as his total obedience to Christ, his prayer at all times, his desire to suffer with Christ, and his love of nature. Thomas of Celano says of his prayer habit:

[H]is safest haven was prayer; not prayer of a single moment, or idle or presumptuous prayer, but prayer of long duration, full of devotion, serene in humility. If he began late, he would scarcely finish before morning. Walking, sitting, eating, or drinking, he was always intent upon prayer. He would go alone to pray at night in churches abandoned and located in deserted places, where under the protection of divine grace, he overcame many fears and many disturbances of mind.

(Habig 1991:288)

St Francis worked closely with a female companion, St Clare of Assisi (AD 1194-1253), as in the case of St Benedict and St Scholastica. Clare founded the female branch of the order called the Poor Ladies or Poor Clares. The friars looked after the needs of fellow-sisters, both temporal and spiritual. The Order grew rapidly, and by AD 1300 there were about four hundred houses (Moorman 1986:303-304). For Clare, poverty was the door to contemplation of Jesus since he himself was poor and served the poor. She resisted the continuous pressure to loosen the poverty of the Order (Holt 2005:90).

The human Christ, the Word made flesh, the attachment of Christ to earthly things, and the sharing in the sufferings and joy of Christ are the characteristics of Franciscan spirituality (Moorman 1986:308).

(c) The Third orders. The Franciscan third order called *Apostoli* was added to Franciscan spirituality and became a powerful stimulus for those not called to the life of religious orders. This lay spirituality—not connected with monks and friars—spread and contributed to Franciscan mysticism seriously (Moorman 1986:307). This so-called “third order” lay movement produced extraordinary teachers who gave oral and written instructions. These

movements flourished either as attachments to the ecclesiastical network or independent movements around charismatic teachers and miracle-workers. The proliferation of these autonomous spiritual movements was curbed by the church authority beginning with the Fourth Lateran Council in AD 1215. The church also implemented the clerical reform, improvement of education, and a stronger emphasis on church rites, especially the Eucharist in an effort to create a unified Christian spirituality. Social problems also prompted the establishment of the Christian lay organisations that took care of orphans, the destitute, chronically ill, and prostitutes. Women's groups, such as the Beguines, were actively caring for the sick and the dying. "Beguine" is a loosely defined term designating religious lay communities of women in Northern Europe, who shared their income and adhered to a common rule of life without supervision of an established order. (Wiethaus 2005:117).

4.4.2.3 Late Middle Ages (Thirteenth to fifteenth centuries)

Late Middle Ages was an era of penitential and apocalyptic themes. Devastating plagues, climatic changes and famines, the Hundred Years War, and a deep institutional crisis of the papacy challenged Christians so much that they reacted with either extremity or calmness. The flagellant movement, the most extreme form of mortification of one's own flesh by whipping it with various instruments, originated in Umbria in AD 1260s because of a sense of imminent social and economic doom. Flagellants led anti-Jewish violence condemning Jewish communities for the plague epidemic. After the second outbreak of the flagellant movement, it was declared heretical by the church. Artistic expressions were also dismal, depicting hyper-realistic images of a tortured Christ on the cross and the re-enactments of the so-called Dance of Death in which a skeleton, that is, Death, leads a group of victims from all walks of life in a round dance. In England, Christian communities also produced liturgical plays with a focus on Christ's suffering and the Last judgement (Wiethaus 2005:118).

4.4.2.3.1 Medieval mysticism

The late Middle Ages saw the continuous development and systematisation of mysticism that diverged into two streams: intellectual and philosophical on

one hand, and affective on the other hand. It was also a division between university trained scholars and lay people.

(a) Meister Eckhart (AD 1260-1328). The Dominican theologian, Eckhart, was a scholar, administrator, preacher, and director of souls. He represents intellectual mysticism. Smith and Davies (1986:317-318) say about Eckhart:

Eckhart's doctrine is essentially mystical, concerned with the possible union between the human soul and God. Eckhart knew that this possibility rests upon the grace of God, freely given; but he maintained that it also rests upon something within the soul itself, its intrinsic similarity or analogical likeness to God. He sometimes stressed this likeness so much that he seemed to obliterate the distinction between creature and Creator....The soul, which can be satisfied only by the transcendent God, mirrors his transcendence by never resting in any finite object.

The lack of distinction between God and the soul in mystical union, which was Neo-Platonistic pantheism, caused him to be accused of heresy (Holt 2005:91). The proliferation of heresies in Cologne at that time, the rivalry between Dominicans and Franciscans, and the bold, easily misinterpreted vocabulary of German language he used for preaching must have worked against him as well (Smith & Davies 1986:316).

(b) Jan van Ruysbroeck (AD 1293-1381). Ruysbroeck drew the two major strands of mysticism, the affective and the intellectual (Holt 2005:93). In his main work, *The spiritual espousals*, Ruysbroeck divides the spiritual path into three stages: the active life of virtue and obedience to the Church, the life of yearning for God or interior life, and the life of contemplation of God. According to him, the true union with God already occurs in the second stage, though intermittently. In this second stage, the inward person may know God without mediation (Davies 1986:322; Holt 2005:93). Holiness in unity, for him, means the discarding of multiplicity or all things opposed to union with the One. It is approaching God with a bare mind. It also means abandoning one's will to God's will and aligning all of one's affection to God without clinging to anything in the world. Finally, it means dying to oneself, "melting" and flowing

into God (Holt 2005:94). Ruysbroeck (1985:146) says of the contemplative life:

Few persons can attain this divine contemplation because of their own incapacity and because of the hidden, mysterious nature of the light in which one contemplates....[A]ll words and all that can be learned or understood in a creaturely manner are alien to and far beneath the truth which I mean. However, a person who is united with God and enlightened in this truth can understand the truth through itself. To comprehend and understands God as he is in himself, above and beyond all likenesses, is to be God with God, without intermediary or any element of otherness which could constitute an obstacle or impediment

Regarding where he stands, Davies (1986:323) says that linguistically and culturally Ruysbroeck belongs to the *devotio moderna* but that his concern with contemplation and union with God draw him into the Eckharitan school.

(c) English mystics. From the years AD 1000 to 1500 a considerable amount of mystical writings have survived. The four are outstanding: Richard Rolle, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of unknowing*, Walter Hilton, and Julian of Norwich. All of them wrote with directness and purpose to help their readers with basic spirituality. Their writing also reflects rich personal testimony and experiential religion and gives a sound introduction to the devotional life (Wolters 1986:329-330).

The Cloud of unknowing, one of the finest spiritual treatises in the fourteenth century is reminiscent of fourteenth-century mysticism. When going to God, what counts is love, not knowledge (Leclercq, Vandenbroucke, & Bouyer 1968:421). The Cloud was deeply affected by the mystical theology of Pseudo-Dionysius. According to Dionysius or Pseudo-Dionysius (after the sixteenth century), God is described in negative terms because he is infinitely more than human postulation. Human language is limited and cannot be used to describe God accurately. Therefore, the Cloud says that God is incomprehensible to our intellect but by love he may be gotten (Wolters 1986:333).

It is my wish to leave everything that I can think of and choose for my love the thing I cannot think. Because he can certainly be loved, but not thought. Therefore, though it is good at times to think of the kindness and worthiness of God in particular, and though this is a light and a part of contemplation, nevertheless, it must be cast down and covered over with a cloud of forgetting. You are to step above it stalwartly but lovingly, and with a devout, pleasing, impulsive love strive to pierce that darkness above you. You are to smite upon that thick cloud of unknowing with a sharp dart of longing love.

(*The cloud of unknowing* ch 6)

Julian of Norwich's (AD 1353-1416) *Showings* accounts her ecstatic vision, sixteen of them. She wrote two accounts of the event, the shorter version and twenty years later the longer version. The longer version of her vision is a comprehensive record of her spirituality with full theological insights. Her greatest emphasis was on the immense love of God for his creation and the human soul. The love of God is expressed the most in the cross and passion of Christ (Wolters 1986:336). She writes about the revelation of love of the blessed Trinity in the eighty-sixth chapter of the longer version of her visions:

And from the time that it was revealed, I desired many times to know in what was our Lord's meaning. And fifteen years after and more, I was answered in spiritual understanding, and it was said: what, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well, love was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why does he reveal it to you? For love. Remain in this, and you will know more of the same. But you will never know different, without end. So I was taught that love is our Lord's meaning. And I saw very certainly in this and in everything that before God made us he loved us, which love was never abated and never will be. And in this love he has done all his works, and in this love he has made all things profitable to us, and in this love our life is everlasting. In our creation we had beginning, but the love in which he created us was in him from without beginning. In this love we have our beginning, and all this shall we see in God without end.

(Julian of Norwich ch 86)

(d) *Devotio Moderna*. The *Devotio Moderna* was a movement that eschewed their concern with contemplation and speculative theology and stressed

simple piety and asceticism. Originating from Gerard Groot, the movement developed through collaboration between lay people and clergy. The unfaithfulness of the monks and the other religious to their vocation, the greediness and incontinence of the clergy, and false mystics tinged with pantheism, led Groot to a realistic conception of spiritual life: conversion of heart, virtue, the endurance of trials, the apostolate, and eternal salvation. For Groot, contemplation was not an intellectual aspect but a practice with the perfection of charity. In practicing virtues, there is no other way than the imitation of the manhood of Christ (Davies 1986:324; Leclercq et al 1968:429-430).

Among the most representative of the *Devotio Moderna* is the *Imitation of Christ*, the work of Thomas à Kempis (AD 1379-1471). Composed of four books, the *Imitation* stresses the interior life and the Eucharist. After the extreme speculation and intellectualism of the era, the church needed to return to the absolute primacy of love, to a simple conformity to Christ, and to a more realistic view and demands of Christian life. According to Thomas, learning is not enough. An uncompromising renunciation of the world is needed. At the centre is the uplifting power of love (Davies 1986:324; Leclercq et al 1968:439). Thomas says:

If you would understand Christ's words fully and taste them truly, you must strive to form your whole life after His pattern....If you knew the whole Bible by heart, and the sayings of all the philosophers what would all that profit you without the love of God and His grace?

(*Imitation* 1.1)

Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or better in heaven or in earth; for love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things....Love is submissive and obedient to superiors; in its own eyes mean and contemptible, towards God devout and thankful; always trusting and hoping in Him, even when it does not taste the savour of God's sweetness; for there is no living in love without some sorrow. Whosoever is not ready to suffer all things, and to stand resigned to the will of his Beloved, he is not worthy to be called a lover. A lover must willingly embrace all that is hard

and bitter for the sake of his Beloved, and never suffer himself to be turned away from Him by any obstacle whatsoever.

(Imitation 3.5)

4.4.2.4 Summary of the medieval West

The medieval millennium was the era of forming a common European spiritual tradition. Vastly different belief systems from various indigenous European traditions, Judaism, and the Mediterranean cultures all forged into Christian spirituality gradually with creative reinterpretation of biblical and patristic traditions. The bold spiritual movements of the medieval West offer rich resources and challenges: a wide spectrum of recorded mystical experiences, radical poverty, and a profound acceptance of suffering and death (Wiethaus 2005:120). According to Sheldrake (1995:49-51, 67-83), the historian, the medieval spirituality can be summed up as follows:

- **Monastic and clerical spirituality.** Monastic spirituality, though challenged during the thirteenth century, dominated the church. The priorities of clerical over lay and majority over minority were characteristic of this time. Lay spirituality emerged but was challenged by the official church authorities, and the acceptance of significant lay movements was not until several centuries later. The mendicant movement, however, found acceptance through the formal recognition of the lifestyle of the friars, especially the Franciscans.
- **Contemplative, textual, devotional development.** The monastic-contemplative approach to spirituality with its effort to transcend time and place marked the early and middle medieval times. In the twelfth-century renaissance, new intellectual and textual content of spirituality was also developed. The growth of mystical, devotional spirituality was the most significant development of the late medieval time with its emphasis on the popular need for the specific—for sacred places and objects. Germany especially was so notable for the proliferation of devotion spirituality and anticlericalism that they accepted the Reformation readily.

- **Subjective mysticism.** Medieval mysticism saw a shift from the objective mystery of Christ in the earlier era to the subjective, experiential, and mystical experience, and this is partly due to the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius. Interest in individuals and subjective feelings drew the attention of medievalists.
- **Radical spirituality.** Dissent, marginalisation, and radical spirituality were also characteristics of the medieval spirituality. The increasing emphasis on orthodoxy and orthopraxis defined by the institutional church and enforced by secular powers provoked the tendency to heretical beliefs and anticlericalism. Marginalised groups developed a substratum of apocalyptic and spiritual poverty movements along with the disadvantaged classes. From the eleventh century onwards, the increasing emphasis on untrammelled poverty, reading the Bible, preaching, and individual spiritual experience were the characters of radical spirituality, whereas the church tended to emphasise law, finance, and government.
- **Division of spirituality from theology.** The period of spiritual, literary, and artistic creativity of the twelfth-century renaissance divided a theologically sophisticated mainstream and popular fervour even more. It was a division of knowledge and affectivity, spirituality from theology. By the end of the Middle Ages, the interior and personal spiritual life moved to a marginal position in relation to culture as a whole.
- **Women spirituality.** Although the number of religious women and female preachers was growing, by the mid-medieval times the clerical status of women and their exercise of spiritual leadership decreased. On a certain level women had greater opportunities for religious roles in the society by the late thirteenth century. However, they were more effectively excluded from the exercise of authority or active ministry than the previous century.

4.4.3 Eastern Orthodox

Based on the traditions of Greek theology and the ecumenical councils up to AD 787, the Eastern Church developed distinctive emphases that differed from those of the West. Its basic theology was strongly Trinitarian based on the early councils. According to Eastern Orthodox, “God is not a monad, but a triad, a mystery of communion in which each Self or hypostasis of the Trinity remains itself even as it exists wholly in the Other” (Wesche 1999:41).

4.4.3.1 Theosis

The nature and aim of Eastern Orthodox spirituality can be summed up as in the patristic principle that God became human without ceasing to be God so that humanity might become God without ceasing to be human. The term *theosis* or *deification* summarises the second half of the principle—God became human that humanity might become God—and signifies the soteriological consequence of the incarnation for humanity. This union with God (Jn 17:21) is possible to obtain when one learns to die in the mystery of Christ, and it is the goal of *theosis*. The *theosis* heals the separation from God, unites believers with God, and liberates them from death through the work of the Spirit of Christ. *Theosis* is a nuptial mystery in which God and humanity become one as bridegroom and bride (Wesche 1999:29-32). Wesche (1999:32) says about the substance of *theosis* as follows:

The significance of the evangelical proclamation that ‘the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us’ lies in the claim that by his incarnation, the Logos has made himself one with the world; by his ascension he has made the world one with heaven; and in pouring out his Spirit on all flesh, he has filled all things with the properties of divinity, the treasures of heaven, that is to say, with the light and life, the wisdom and power of God. Mortality is filled with immortality, corruption with incorruption, darkness with light, ignorance with *gnosis*, nature with Spirit, earth with heaven.

4.4.3.2 Jesus Prayer

The “Jesus Prayer” emerged between the fifth and the eighth centuries deeply influencing the Christian East. It is the remembrance or invocation of the name of Jesus with frequent repetition. The standard form is “Lord Jesus

Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me” with many other variations. The four main elements of the Jesus Prayer are as follows:

- (1) Devotion to the Holy name ‘Jesus’, which is felt to act in a semi-sacramental way as a source of power and grace.
- (2) The appeal for divine mercy, accompanied by a keen sense of compunction and inward grief (*penthos*).
- (3) The discipline of frequent repetition.
- (4) The quest for inner silence or stillness (*hésuchia*), that is to say, for imageless, non-discursive prayer.

(Ware 1986a:176)

In the second half of the fifth century, St Diadochus, Bishop of Photice in northern Greece, was a decisive catalyst of the Jesus Prayer. He was influenced both by Evagrius and by Macarian Homilies: understanding of prayer as the putting away of thoughts from Evagrius and an affective emphasis upon the spiritual senses, feelings, and conscious experiences from the Homilies. The invocation of Jesus, therefore, reaches out beyond language into silence and intuitive awareness, and it also leads to a feeling of warmth in the heart. Between the fifth and the eighth centuries, the Jesus Prayer came to be recognised as a spiritual way and by the fourteenth century it became frequent in the Byzantine and Slav world (Ware 1986a:177-184).

4.4.3.3 Icon

From AD 726 until AD 843, the Eastern Church struggled with the Iconoclast controversy. The use of icons in the church’s worship was formally endorsed in AD 787 (the seventh Ecumenical Council), but the definitive restoration of icons to the church was not until AD 843. The dispute was about the legitimacy and the veneration of icons. Iconoclasts (icon-smashers) argued that worship should be restricted to the mind alone, whereas iconodules (icon-venerators) claimed that the making of icons is in some way a divine work (Ware 1986b:196).

To the Eastern Orthodox the icon is not a mere piece of decoration but a part of liturgy. It is a channel of grace, a point of meeting, and a means of communion. Through the icons of the Mother of God (*theotokos*), the angels,

and the saints, the church walls become windows to eternity. The Orthodox home also becomes “heaven on earth” when lamps are lit, incense is offered, and the family prayers are said before an icon corner or shelf. Through the liturgical function of the icon, Orthodox Christians experience God not only as truth and love, but also as beauty (Ware 1986b:197-198).

4.4.3.4 Apophatic and cataphatic

Two different spiritual paths have been identified in believers' approach to God: apophatic and cataphatic. Apophatic stresses silence, darkness, passivity, and the absence of imagery, whereas cataphatic emphasises images and the positive evaluation of creation or human relationships as contexts for the self-revelation of God. Thus cataphatic theology is interested in God's movement outward or self-manifestation in the cosmos, Scripture, and liturgy, and apophatic theology is concerned with the inward movements to God in the process of denial. These two ways are not mutually exclusive but intricately linked (Sheldrake 1995:199-206).

In regards to methods of prayer, the apophatic way is understood as still, imageless, or even truly contemplative prayer, and the cataphatic way attempts to imagine God using one's imagination and emotions (Holt 2005:75). In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, cataphatic prayer employed the imagination, poetry, music, symbols, and ritual gestures. Praying to the holy icons was a cataphatic way of prayer. On the other hand, apophatic prayer, expressed in the practice of the Jesus Prayer, transcended images and discursive thoughts as commended by Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrius, Dionysius and Maximus (Ware 1986b:198). These two different approaches were used in the West as well.

4.4.3.5 Synergy

The word “synergy” (cooperation) was coined by Clement of Alexandria to express the workings of two energies: grace and human will. The idea of synergy has represented the doctrine of the Orthodox Church in these matters. It is first expressed in asceticism and mysticism. The ascetical life is a life in which virtues resulting from human effort, although accompanied by grace, prevail, whereas the mystical life is a life in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit

dominates over human efforts. In other words, in mysticism, infused virtues lead acquired ones. The Greek Fathers distinguished between the “acting” of man and “acted upon.” Generally, the spiritual life is a synthesis of the ascetical and mystical life with love as perfection (The essentials of Orthodox spirituality 2000:109-111)

Contemplation is the state believers reach as a result of quieting their souls and the “prayer of simplicity.” It is both acquired and infused. It is acquired if the acts of contemplation are of human efforts and infused if divine grace produces it. Infused contemplation leads to the mystical life, the culmination of contemplation. Thus contemplation and mystical union are identified with Christian perfection, which is love (The essentials of Orthodox spirituality 2000:111-114).

An Eastern theologian, Gregory Palamas (AD 1296-1359), a defender of *hesuchia* (stillness), stated that union with God is primarily by God’s grace but that the vision of God cannot be attained in this life without hard work. There should be synergy, cooperation between divine grace and human will (Holt 2005:83-84).

4.4.3.6 The holy mysteries of God

The mystery (*mystērion*) of the Orthodox Church is the sacrament of the Latin Church. The mystery, as means of grace, has such an important place in the Orthodox Church that it may be called a “mystic” Church. The Orthodox Church fears familiarity and wants a mystery to remain as a mystery. The three essential mysteries that lead to God are baptism, chrisma (confirmation by unction), and Eucharist, and they are in an ascending order. As the very texture of spiritual life, the baptismal, Pentecostal, and Paschal graces are the realities beyond the signs (*The essential* 2000:114-120).

The call to baptism is the invitation of Christ...to the Eucharistic wedding feast. This is a call to be united to the death of Christ (see Rom 6:3) and so to pass over to the eschatological marriage feast, the eucharist. In the eschaton, that is, on the shores lying on the other side of the waters of death, one partakes of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4), this is the

body and blood of Christ, in a never ending celebration of life in the Spirit of Christ....As one becomes ever more mindful of the movement from baptism to eucharist taking place in one's own interior depths, and as one becomes ever more adept at separating one's true self from the snares of egoism and worldly attachments, one learns how to overcome the world in Christ, and to live the life of Christ's eschatological heavenly kingdom in the world....In the transformation of the Eucharistic gifts, the Logos becomes one with the communicants, deifies them, and sends them out into the world—this is the mystery of Pentecost—to be the salt of the earth, bearing witness, in the process of their own transformation in the way of the cross, to the mystery of Christ as the mystery of *theosis*: union with God in divine love.

(Wesche 1999:36-43)

4.4.3.7 Summary of Eastern Orthodox spirituality

- **Theosis:** The aim of Eastern Orthodox spirituality is theosis—God became human so that humanity might become God. Theosis is a nuptial mystery in which God and humanity become one as bridegroom and bride.
- **Jesus Prayer:** Having emerged between the fifth and the eighth centuries, Jesus Prayer deeply influenced the Christian East. It is the remembrance or invocation of the name of Jesus with frequent repetition. The standard form is “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”
- **Icon:** To the Eastern Orthodox the icon is not a mere piece of decoration but a part of liturgy. It is a channel of grace, a point of meeting, and a means of communion. Through the liturgical function of the icon, Orthodox Christians experience God not only as truth and love but also as beauty.
- **Synergy:** There should be cooperation between divine grace and human will. The spiritual life is a synthesis of the ascetical (human effort) and mystical (gifts of the Holy Spirit) life with love as perfection.
- **Spirituality of the mystery:** The mystery, as means of grace, has such an important place in the Orthodox Church that it may be called a “mystic” Church. The three essential mysteries that lead to God are

baptism, chrisma (confirmation by unction), and Eucharist, and they are in an ascending order.

4.4.4 Protestant spirituality

It is hard to define Protestant and Catholic spirituality in single dimensional terms since these two traditions have developed since the Reformation, and both of them appreciate the plurality of the interpretation and practices of both traditions. Nonetheless, the following can be said as distinct but not exclusive characteristics of Protestant and Catholic spirituality. Primarily, the Protestant spirituality emphasises sole dependence on God, God's word, and eschatological hope. Images or ritual forms that get in the way of the Word of God are questioned, and the expounding of the Scripture and meditation on the Word requires a response of faith. The central task of the Christian is to receive the Word, and ethical purity replaces ritual purity. The Catholic spirituality, however, involves concrete, sacramental instruments as mediation of the gospel message. Rituals actualise our relationship with God, and the sacraments fulfil the proclamation of the Word. Both ethical and ritual purity are the expressions of the presence of God. Secondly, the Catholic spirituality emphasised the unity of the community, images, and mysticism. If the Middle Ages were more concerned with a system of mediation through the Church, sacraments, and the intercession of saints, the Protestant Reformation adopted the immediacy of communion with God. Thirdly, while Catholic spirituality maintained a double standard by which the highest kind of spirituality is found in religious communities with a total focus on God and a detachment from worldly concerns, Protestantism favoured a single standard of holiness based on justification by faith rejecting the "works-righteousness" of monasticism (Sheldrake 1995:206-210).

4.4.4.1 Reformation spirituality

The fundamental mark of Reformation spirituality is the principle of divine monergism, that God initiates and accomplishes everything in the work of salvation. The two vital elements of the Reformation spirituality are the depravity of human will and the unconditional love of God (Sheldrake 1995:210). Sheldrake (1995:210-211) continues:

In light of God's sovereign initiative, the theological bases for Reformation spirituality, as opposed to traditional Catholic spirituality, may be reduced to four classical slogans: *grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone and Scripture alone* [Italics mine]. These, it has been argued, are stronger than merely alternative emphases because the Reformers believed that humans were quite incapable through sin of even *desiring* to be reconciled. God, therefore, completely overrides corrupt human will in order to redeem....The 'God emphasis' of the Reformers therefore completely reverses the conventional ideas of spirituality whereby the soul seeks God, ascends to the spiritual plane and the sinner can and must strive to come to God. On the contrary, God alone seeks, strives and descends to us.

Tripp (1986a:342) lists the following as the determinative of Reformation spirituality: the view of individual salvation as the prime purpose of the Incarnation; an all-pervasive sense of personal and corporate sin; a terrible urgency in the awareness of moral responsibility, especially in association with a preoccupation with personal eschatology. All these elements are based on the humanity of Jesus, specifically his sufferings.

Luther's emphasis on justification and Calvin's intensive treatment of sanctification are also two hallmarks of Reformation spirituality. Lovelace (2000:215-217) says that it was the absence of justification as a theological category in pre-Reformation spirituality that made Reformers react against western Catholic spirituality. Luther felt that the spirituality of all Catholics was affected by this justification gap since they believed they were justified in the process of being sanctified. They were unaware of the imputed righteousness of Christ.

4.4.4.2 Lutheran spirituality

In AD 1517, Martin Luther (AD 1483-1545), an Augustinian monk, posted ninety-five theses for debate at the University of Wittenberg. He taught that grace is free and cannot be earned by works or merits since Jesus Christ merited all the grace needed for justification on the cross. Thus, Christians can only trust in God's promise of justification and respond to God in gratitude (Raitt 2005:124).

4.4.4.2.1 The Word

For Luther, the scriptural Word is both outward and inward, an external sign and inner experience. The *Logos* is the inner Word, God himself, but for us to understand and absorb it, the Word must assume concrete shape and come in flesh. That concrete external Word is Christ. Christ is God's external Word to man (Hoffman 2000:128). When a sinner trusts in Christ, "the absorption of the Word makes the soul a sharer in everything that belongs to the Word" (Luther quoted by Tripp 1986b:345). Only the Word communicates the Spirit, and only through the Holy Spirit can God's Word open up to a person (Hoffman 2000:128-129). Luther emphasised preaching on the Scripture, putting the liturgy in the vernacular and translating the entire Bible into German all as ways to enhance an encounter with the Word of God (Hanson 2005:416).

4.4.4.2.2 Mystical Christ

Luther used such expressions as "the mystical Christ," "mystical incarnation," "mystical theology," and "mystical eyes" when he depicted life in God. He quoted Bernard of Clairvaux that "mystical theology" is "experimental and experiential." For Luther, mystical theology was experience of God (Hoffman 2000:127). Hoffman (2000:127-128) continues to say of the mystical theology of Luther:

It is the inner, spiritual side of Christian faith. It is what prayer leads to. It is the awesome and joyful knowledge, beyond purely rational knowledge, that God is present. It is heart rather than head, but never the one without the other....Luther's frequent use of the adjective 'invisible' points to his trusting knowledge that faith always moves into dimensions not approachable by reason and logic but available to inner experience. Like the mystics, he assumes the reality of a supernatural or supernormal realm....[M]ystical knowledge was part of Luther's spirituality, but it was not free-floating; it was rooted in the justifying *kerygma* of Scripture.

Faith is also an "experiential knowledge" for Luther since "faith causes the heart to be carried away to dwell in things that are invisible." Christ is historical in that he walked on the earth, but this historical Jesus is at the same time mystical Christ as the cosmic Lord and mystical Presence. This

double understanding of Christ being both historical and mystical has another important dimension in relation to believers. While Orthodox Lutheran dogmaticians speak of the Christ-*for-us* as the basis of faith, Lutheran pietists emphasise Christ-*in-us*. These two sides of the gospel proclamation, the Christ-*for-us* of Lutheran orthodoxy and the Christ-*in-us* of Lutheran pietism are both found in Luther. Luther advocated both the justifying for-you and the sanctifying in-you in his theology. Faith as both historical and inner realities are interlocked for Luther and should never be separated (Hoffman 2000:123-131). Luther's spirituality is Christ-centred faith: union with Christ received by faith (Lovelace 2000:216-217).

4.4.4.2.3 Sacraments

The saving power of God in Christ is present in the Church, not only through the Word, but also through the sacraments. Luther recognised only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, although he taught that private confession should continue. He emphasised that baptism is significant lifelong since the Christian is to die to sin and rise to new life daily. Weekly Lord's Supper was the norm in Wittenberg, and in the Lord's Supper Christ's body and blood are believed to be present in, with, and under the bread and wine (Hanson 2005:416). "In Luther's spirituality the word is never separated from the sacraments but is embodied in baptism and the Lord's Supper" (Krey & Krey 2007:183).

4.4.4.2.4 Alternative model to ascent

Luther had serious reservations about monasticism and the ascent model of the Christian life, such as Moses' ascent up Mount Sinai to meet God face to face. For Luther, there are no purgatory, pilgrimages, shrines, and relics that all smack of works-righteousness. The grace of God was viewed as primarily forgiveness, utter dependence on God for salvation, and the equal holiness of service, all of which were basically shaped by Paul's imagery of dying and rising with Christ daily (Hanson 2005:416; Raitt 2005:125).

4.4.4.2.5 Priesthood of all believers and vocations

Luther taught that the function of priests is to go to God, pray for others, and teach them about God. Every believer has such priestly responsibilities although ordained pastors should preside over the public worship service of the Church. Against the notion of vocation as the call to a holier life as a priest or member of a religious order, Luther said God calls people to serve others through their constructive social roles as family members, workers, or civil leaders. The service of a simple farmer is as holy as that of a priest. Luther thus undercut some of the traditional rationale for a special religious life and elevated the significance of ordinary daily life (Hanson 2005:416). For Luther, celibacy is a work and contrary to God's command to increase and multiply. Luther himself married a former nun and urged other religious people to follow his example (Raitt 2005:124).

4.4.4.2.6 Moral life

The ethical and the spiritual are interconnected. For Luther, the moral life is rooted in the mysterious presence of the Cosmic Lord. This inner union of believers with Christ—the mystical element in justification by faith—is the foundation of moral life. The spiritual communion with Christ brings forth active service in life and the doing of justice. In the world, true Christians play a central moral role since Christ is always present with believers in invisible, but real and powerful ways (Hoffman 2000:133). Luther (Hoffman 2000:133-134) says about the moral role of believers through prayers:

This is a paradox: Christians look like 'poor beggars,' but...it is because of Christians and their prayers and actions that 'power, honor and goods' exist among people. The unrepenting world does not understand this and 'thanks the Christians poorly for it.' When 'the Christians' words and wonders cease...God will end it all; it will all be consumed by fire.' Until that happens, those who are spiritually 'glued' to the Lord are called to 'suffer the stench' from those who do not know the Christ, 'in the same manner as the legs carry the paunch and the reeking belly.'

4.4.4.2.7 Prayer

In prayer, Luther recommended the petitions of the Our Father (the Lord's Prayer) and the use of the Psalms for petition, praise, and thanksgiving. Prayer should not be offered to the Virgin Mary since she is unable to answer prayer. Saints cannot respond to prayer, nor is masses or prayer efficacious for the dead. Christ is the sole mediator of prayer (Raitt 2005:124-125). For Luther prayer is the act of faith *par excellence*, and the powers of darkness attack prayer most sharply. His doctrine about prayer is "without the Word of God the enemy is too strong for us. But he cannot endure prayer and the Word of God." In prayer sinful persons rise so far above themselves that they give the primacy to the honour of God's name, the triumph of God's kingdom, and fulfilment of God's will over the matters of our own safety and deliverance (Tripp 1986b:345-346).

4.4.4.3 Reformed spirituality

The heart of the Christian life is the deeply confident affirmation of experiential faith in God and response to his gracious initiative in both the private relationship with him and corporate expressions of faith. This belief of the Reformed spirituality can be traced back to Swiss Reformation in the sixteenth century led by Huldrych Zwingli (AD 1484-1531) in Zurich and by John Calvin (AD 1509-64) in Geneva. The Protestant denominations are generally called Reformed if they originated on the European continent and Presbyterian if they started in the British Isles (Rice 1991:8-9).

4.4.4.3.1 The spirituality of Zwingli

The primary figure in the Reformed tradition was Huldrych Zwingli. His reform efforts resembled those of Luther, but Zwingli went further.

(a) The supremacy of the Scripture. While Luther allowed whatever is not forbidden by the Scripture, Zwingli taught that only what the Scripture permits is allowed. The piety of Zwinglian Protestant thus was extremely Biblical. The Word of God was the only source and sustainer of the new life in Christ. Zwingli instituted a weekday service called the *prophesying* to promote familiarity with the Word, and the weekday service was as important as the

Sunday liturgy. It was a sort of adult Bible study where the participants shared their understanding of the Word with each other. Zwingli insisted on the scriptural knowledge which is the source of the right knowledge and would cast out ignorance (Hageman 2000:139-140; Raitt 2005:125).

In Zwingli's theology and spirituality, prayer is direct from the heart and needs no intermediary. Since Christ is the sole mediator, there is no need of the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of the saints. Erasmus may have influenced him to oppose to the cult of saints. In prayer many words are not necessary, ostentation hypocritical, and the best prayer is a silent prayer for both the individual and the congregation (Dent 1986:348-349).

He also dispensed with all forms of church music including choirs and organs, reduced public prayer to bare minimum, and relegated the Eucharist to a quarterly celebration to remind the believers of the atoning death of Christ, all to emphasise the supremacy of the Word (Hageman 2000:139).

(b) Predominant pneumatology. For Zwingli, the Spirit opens up the heart of the believer, and true religion is totally dependent on the inbreathing of the Spirit, without which man turns to idolatry. The Scriptures themselves therefore must be approached through the work of the Spirit. There is no conflict between these two. The process of justification is also inward and spiritual (Dent 1986:347). For Zwingli, this inward work of the Spirit is essential and even precedes the work of the Scriptures:

If you want to speak on any matter, or learn of it, you must first think like this: Before I say anything or listen to the teaching of man, I will first consult the mind of the Spirit of God: 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.' Then you should reverently ask God for his grace, that he may give you his mind and Spirit, so that you will not lay hold of your own opinion but of his. And have a firm trust that he will teach you a right understanding, for all wisdom is of God the Lord. And then go to the written word of the Gospel.

(Zwingli 1953a:88-89)

(c) Theocentric emphasis. For Zwingli, believers are those who have the Spirit of God, know that Christ is their salvation, and rely on the Word. They do not sin, and unbelief is the only mortal sin. This theocentric emphasis is applied to not only the individual believer and the community of the elect but also to the whole life in society: political, social, and even military life. Christian teaching and moral expectations reach into all aspects of life (Dent 1986:347; Raitt 2005:126). This fundamental theocentric emphasis of Zwingli is well expressed as follows:

Only the eternal and infinite and uncreated God is the basis of faith. Hence the collapse of all that foolish confidence with which some rely upon most sacred things or the most holy sacraments. For it is in God that we must put our firm and sure trust. If we were to trust in the creature, the creature would have to be the Creator. If we were to trust in the sacraments, the sacraments would have to be God....For true piety is the same everywhere and in all men, having its source in one and the self-same Spirit.

(Zwingli 1953b:247)

4.4.4.3.2 The spirituality of Calvin

Calvin read deeply in the Fathers of the Church. He was also influenced by a Lutheran pastor named Martin Bucer, and it is quite possible that Zwinglian spirituality of Geneva forced him to consider many new questions.

(a) Union with Christ. Calvin's spirituality is based on gratitude for all God has done in Christ (Raitt 2005:127). According to Wilhelm Niesel, one of the best modern interpreters of Calvin, the real centre of Calvinism as a living faith is not predestination or the eternal decrees but the union of Christ with believers. It is the basic reality upon which all other spiritual benefits rest. It is baptism that assures us that we are united with Christ and share in his blessings. The understanding of baptism as a sign of the decision of the convert has brought about consequences for different understanding of the Church and sacraments (Hageman 2000:142).

(b) Faith as inner and outer expressions. Calvin saw the life of faith as unity in both inner and outer expressions (Rice 1991:11). The assurance of the

believer's union with Christ is to be expressed not only in inward feelings but also in outward lives. Ethical life is emphasised in Calvin's spirituality (Hageman 2000:144).

It also needs to be stressed that Calvin did not use the words *justification* and *sanctification* sequentially, as is often the case. He saw them as dual gifts coming from the relationship with Christ. From the time of baptism, the believer is not only made right with God through indwelling Christ but is also enabled to grow continually into the grace and likeness of Christ. The believer's union with Christ and his growth into Christ are closely intertwined (Hageman 2000:144-145):

For Calvin (3.20.1-14), prayer is the chief exercise of faith and we receive God's benefits from it. The rules of prayer are (1) 'reverence'; (2) 'we pray from a sincere sense of want, and with penitence'; (3) 'we yield all confidence in ourselves and humbly plead for pardon'; (4) 'we pray with confident hope.'

The believer's relationship with God is summed up by prayer and a fusion of deep humility with complete confidence (Tripp 1986c:356).

(c) The Church as our Mother. The chapter one of Book Four of the *Institutes* begins with the title "The true Church with which as Mother of all the godly we must keep unity." For Calvin, the Church precedes the individual, and by baptism we are brought into the Church. It is also in the context of the Church that we grow up into Christ by the means of grace. The lonely individual striving alone to achieve sanctification has no place in Calvin's spirituality. It is in the Church that Christian growth takes place and that always as the gift of God in Christ, not as a result of human effort (Hageman 2000:145-146).

Within the Church, the primary agent for spiritual growth is the preaching of the Word. For Calvin, reading and preaching of the Word is what Christ uses to share himself with believers, strengthening and deepening their commitment and assurance. For Reformed spirituality, the Word is the centre of the life of the Church and Christian growth. Calvin differs with Luther here

in that for Calvin the Word empowers the believer for a righteous life, but for Luther the assurance of forgiveness is the final result of the real presence of Christ in the Word (Hageman 2000:146-148).

(d) Importance of liturgy. Calvin departs from Zwingli here by claiming that liturgy is more than preaching and includes prayer, praise, and the celebration of Eucharist. The real purpose of worship is to glorify God, and the real way of glorifying God is by obeying him. Liturgical activities thus enable believers to give God glory in their secular service. For Calvin, Eucharist is the *visible* form of the Word, whereas preaching is the *audible* form of the Word (Hageman 2000:148-150). Gerrish (1982:111-112) puts Calvin's thoughts well: "The very nature of its symbolism suggests to Calvin that the Lord's Supper is a matter of nourishing, sustaining and increasing a communion with Christ to which the Word and baptism have initiated us."

Calvin's spirituality is well summarised by Hageman (2000:151):

What was the spirituality of John Calvin? Once we have been received into God's new people by baptism, we are given everything that Jesus Christ is and has and are enabled to appropriate it in increasing measure by sharing Christ in the preaching of his Word, in the receiving of his Supper, in the liturgical life of his body, the Church. From the power and the strength which we receive in these ways, we are enabled and expected for obedient service to God in the world which is under his promise.

4.4.4.4 Later Protestant spirituality

The spirituality of Calvin flourished in seventeenth century Scotland among a group known as the Aberdeen Doctors and in Puritan New England. According to *The practice of piety* of Charles Hambrick-Stowe, Puritan piety contains two contradictory strains, one anti-sacramental and the other Calvinistic (Hageman 2000:152-153).

4.4.4.4.1 Puritanism

The name "Puritan" was first applied to those who did not think that the Elizabethan Settlement did not go far enough to reform the English Church.

They were not separatists, though not satisfied with the established Church. Most Puritans were influenced by Calvinism, and they developed Calvin's emphasis on sanctification further. For Puritans, conversion was a necessity not achieved without agony or struggle, and assurance of salvation was crucial. Leaning toward ascetic legalism to create a distinctive Protestant spirituality against Counter-Reformation piety, Puritans sought to attach patristic and medieval spirituality to the Reformation spirituality of justification by faith. They wanted to rule out cheap grace. The goal of Puritanism was the power of godliness as opposed to a form of godliness denying its power. They opposed lifeless traditionalism or heterodoxy (Lovelace 2000:218-219; Wakefield 1986:438-439).

Following the tradition of Zwinglian reformation and the Reformed churches of the mid-sixteenth century, Christians are never without the Church for one moment, and God's covenant is with the Church, which is formed by God's act in Christ not by a mystical hierarchy of supposed succession from the first apostles. Infant baptism was accepted following Luther, Calvin, and the Book of Common Prayer, and the Lord's Supper was a permanent obligation for Christians. The Lord's Day was to be devoted wholly to the exercise of religion, and play and work were considered unlawful. At home, the whole household must assemble for worship twice a day, and inordinate affection between husband and wife and parents and children were feared for resulting in detachment in family relationships (Wakefield 1986:440-443).

For Puritans, meditation was central to prayer, and a sermon is also a meditation. The sacraments as visible words were a supreme medium of meditation. However, contemplation beyond mediation was suspected and irrationalism was feared. The mind was a doorway to God. Spiritual guidance was provided not only through sermons but through private counselling as well (Wakefield 1986:443-444).

4.4.4.4.2 Pietism

The great religious movement of revitalisation between the Reformation and the Enlightenment within Continental Protestantism was pietism. It stirred and

renewed the Protestant church, both Lutheran and Reformed, during seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, in Germany first, then the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and even the United States. Pietism was the response of sincere Christians to the religious and moral lassitude in Germany after the devastating Thirty Years War (AD 1618-48). They criticised the government-controlled churches and called for the separation of church and state. Pietism is also a reaction to the dry intellectualism of Lutheran and Reformed orthodoxy. Thus the pietists emphasised pure life as opposed to pure doctrine, doing over knowing, and experiential knowledge of pastors to awaken their hearers. In pietism the new birth, that is, regeneration and conversion, was a focus. Experiencing a breakthrough from sin to the new life of Christian perfection is identified with becoming partakers of the divine nature, and the goal of conversion is the real moral transformation of the believer the evidence of which is works of love. (Lotz 1986:449-450).

The founder of German Pietism is Philipp Jakob Spencer (AD 1635-1705), whose *Pia Desideria* (Pious longing) became the seminal text for German Pietism. Then, A H Francke (AD 1663-1727) made Halle a centre of Pietism, and Count Zinzendorf (AD 1700-60) founded the Hernhut Brotherhood in AD 1722 and welcomed Moravian refugees. Zinzendorf proclaimed a “religion of the heart” based on intimate fellowship with the Saviour, and he also gave a profound influence to John Wesley. Pietism found its new expression in Wesleyan Methodism. Freidrich Schleiermacher (AD 1768-1834), the father of modern Protestant theology, was also a Pietist influenced by Spencer (Raitt 2005:132; Lotz 1986:450-451).

About the contribution of Pietism, Lotz (1986:452) says the following:

While Pietism often encouraged and sometimes ended in subjectivism, separation, legalism, anti-intellectualism, and mystical-ascetic flight from the world, it must be given credit on the whole, and in its mainline representatives, for the rise of Protestant ecumenicity and mission-mindedness; for significant impulses to philanthropic and educational work; for renewal of the pastoral ministry and preaching office, as well

as for a remarkable efflorescence of hymnody and devotional literature; and, not least, for restoring the emphasis on *personal* Christianity (faith as decision) in opposition to 'nominal' Christianity, and for saving the institutional church (the *community* of the faithful) from dissolution by a radical religious individualism that might otherwise have won the day.

4.4.4.4.3 John Wesley and the Methodism

John Wesley (AD 1703-1791) was the most prominent figure of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival. He was influenced by both Anglicans and Pietists. Although he was a man of one book, the Bible, he read widely. Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and the *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call* of William Law influenced him the most. The influence of the Moravians was also significant in the conversion of Wesley. The pious group he established was known as Methodists or the Holy Club. After conversion he preached the common doctrines of evangelical faith such as salvation by faith and new birth through the Holy Spirit. He emphasised the Arminian doctrine of God's universal love, the prevenient grace, present assurance through the Spirit, entire sanctification, and perfect love (George 1986:455-457; Raitt 2005:132). Since humans are able to resist the divine initiative with the freedom of prevenient grace, the path to perfection is a growth in obedience to the divine initiative. God permits a freedom of choice to humans, but because of sin it is not a freedom of choice between good and evil, but rather between resistance and submission to the divine initiative (Watson 2000:178).

Wesley put great emphasis on the means of grace for spiritual life and listed them. The instituted means are prayer (private, family, public), searching the Scriptures (reading, meditating, hearing), the Lord's Supper, fasting, and Christian conference. The prudential means are the Society, Class and Band meetings of the Methodist system, watchnight, love-feasts, and Covenant Service. Though he laid emphasis on the Spirit, his spirituality was not of a Pentecostal or enthusiastic type. Various Holiness Movements are rooted in Methodism of which Wesley is the founder (George 1986:457-458). Watson (2000:207) analyses Methodist spirituality as follows:

For in the final analysis, Methodist spirituality is nothing if not a responsiveness to the divine initiative. And on this, Wesley's word remains definitive and timely: as we yearn for the Spirit to move in our lives and across the world, let us wait, 'not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily, as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God.'

4.4.4.4 Awakening spirituality

Living in the eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards (AD 1703-58) embodied the rationalist ideal of the early modern period. He believed that humans could use reason to know about God and God's universe but must employ the affections to know God. The affections must be turned on by God's divine agency and only when God instils the soul with a "divine and supernatural light" could the justified comprehend God's beauty and respond to it through growth in holiness. He connected the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and Enlightenment philosophical ideas with God's saving activity (Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:143). To Edwards, the divine and spiritual light was "a true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of God and Jesus Christ and of the work of redemption and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel." He taught that this spiritual light is conveyed to the mind by the word of God, and the sense of the divine excellency of Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit (Faust & Johnson 1935:102-11). Such preaching, his deep piety, and fervent devotion based on the Reformed or Calvinist tradition prepared the way for the Great Awakening in New England in which Edwards played a major role (Handy 1986:474-475).

Awakening spirituality was not simply perfecting individual spirituality but waiting on God in corporate prayer for Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit to invigorate the Church to attack the kingdom of darkness. Awakening spirituality was also consciously ecumenical. Discernment of the Spirit as work across denominational boundaries of Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Arminianism is a mark of eighteenth- and nineteenth- century evangelicalism including Awakening spirituality (Lovelace 2000:221).

Bass and Stewart-Sicking (2000:143) says about the development of evangelical Protestantism as follows:

Other eighteenth-century Protestants, notably John Wesley and George Whitefield, developed Edwards's insights and initiated a popular trans-continental revival movement which emphasised the emotive aspects of faith through a felt experience of being 'born again.' A Christian spirituality thus seated in the heart—rather than in the head—would eventually shape much of Anglo-American evangelical Protestantism.

4.4.4.5 Summary of Protestant spirituality

The Protestant spirituality can be summarised as sole dependence on God, God's word, faith response to the Word, ethical purity instead of ritual purity, justification by faith instead of works-righteousness, and eschatological hope. Reformation spirituality's four main characteristics are *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *solus Christus*, and *sola scriptura*.

- **Lutheran spirituality:** Lutheran spirituality emphasises Christ-centred faith (Christ-for-us and Christ-in-us). The Word is embodied in baptism and the Lord's Supper. Priesthood of all believers is claimed. The inner union of believers with Christ is the foundation of moral life.
- **Reformed spirituality:** The heart of the Christian life in Reformed spirituality is the deeply confident affirmation of experiential faith in God and response to his gracious initiative in both the private relationship with him and corporate expressions of faith. This belief can be traced to Zwingli and Calvin.
- **Zwinglian spirituality:** Supremacy of the Word, predominant pneumatology (the Scriptures must be approached through the work of the Spirit), and theocentric emphasis (only the eternal, infinite and uncreated God is the basis of faith) are the focal elements of Zwinglian spirituality.
- **Spirituality of Calvin:** Calvin's spirituality is based on gratitude for all God has done in Christ. Union of believers with Christ is the real centre of Calvinism. Some essential characteristics are as follows: (1) the assurance of the believer's union with Christ is to be expressed not

only in inward feelings but also in outward lives; (2) believer's relationship with God is summed up by prayer—a fusion of deep humility with complete confidence; (3) the Church as our Mother precedes the individual, and by baptism we are brought into the church in whose context we grow up into Christ by the means of grace; (4) the preaching of the Word is the primary agent for spiritual growth; (5) liturgy is more than preaching; Eucharist is the visible form of the Word, whereas preaching is the audible form.

- **Puritan spirituality:** For Puritans, conversion was a necessity, and assurance of salvation was crucial. Leaning toward ascetic legalism to create a distinctive Protestant spirituality against Counter-Reformation piety, Puritans sought to attach patristic and medieval spirituality to the Reformation spirituality of justification by faith. Christians are never without the Church for one moment; the Book of Common Prayer and the Lord's Supper are permanent obligations for Christians; and the Lord's Day is to be devoted wholly to the exercise of religion. For Puritans, meditation is central to prayer, and a sermon is also a meditation.
- **Pietism:** Pietism was a revitalisation between the Reformation and the Enlightenment within Continental Protestantism. Reacting to the dry intellectualism of Lutheran and Reformed orthodoxy, Pietists emphasised pure life as opposed to pure doctrine, doing over knowing, and experiential knowledge. In pietism, regeneration and conversion were the focus, and the goal of conversion is the real moral transformation of the believer resulting in works of love.
- **Methodist spirituality:** John Wesley emphasised the Arminian doctrine of God's universal love, the prevenient grace, present assurance through the Spirit, entire sanctification, and perfect love. A growth in obedience to the divine initiative is the path to perfection.
- **Awakening spirituality:** Awakening spirituality was waiting on God in corporate prayer for Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit to invigorate the Church to attack the kingdom of darkness. Awakening

spirituality was also consciously ecumenical across denominational boundaries of Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Arminianism.

4.4.4.6 Anglican spirituality

The Caroline age (AD 1594-1728) forms the foundation and first flowering of the Anglican tradition although Anglicanism traces its root to the New Testament and the Fathers (Thornton 1986:432).

Anglican spirituality is distinctively corporate, liturgical, and sacramental. Although the Bible is central to Anglican spirituality and is read regularly and extensively, the Bible itself is not the basis of Anglican spirituality. Its basis is the *Book of Common Prayer*, which is the means by which the corporate, liturgical, and sacramental life of the Church are participated in by both clergy and laity (Guthrie 2000:161-162). As an ascetical system in the line of the Rule of St Benedict and liturgical composition, the Prayer Book is a symbol of domestic emphasis and provides spiritual stimulus, moral guidance, meditative material, and family prayer (Thornton 1986:435). The Anglican Church is also pragmatic in that the basic thing Anglicans have in common is neither a doctrinal position nor a religious experience but participating in what the Church does as a Church. They are concerned with (1) whether the sacraments are presided over by validly ordained ministers; (2) with what vestments may be worn on occasions of public worship; (3) with whether the persons proposing to vote in a parish meeting have been baptised, received communion at least three times during the past year, and supported the parish financially (Guthrie 2000:159-160).

In Anglican spirituality, personal devotion and meditation are not central. The centre of the spiritual life is participation in the corporate, liturgical, and sacramental life of the Church. The Church itself in its entire life and liturgy is the principal spiritual director. There is no special class of believers who possess knowledge or techniques or status that common people do not have (Guthrie 2000:166-168). Thornton (1986:433-434) says:

The patristic doctrine of priesthood is also maintained but not the professional and sacerdotal clericalism of the Middle Ages. The emphasis is upon the *unity of the Church* with the lay intelligentsia playing a leading part. The Prayer Book is neither Missal, Breviary nor lay-manual but *common* Prayer for the whole Church.

From the Caroline age emerged moral theology that is characteristic of interrelation of faith, prayer, and conscience, which points to moral maturity and responsibility. The “true piety with sound learning” of the Caroline age, however, developed into the scholastic principle of synthesis between faith, reason, and revelation in the little group called the *Cambridge Platonists*, and moved further towards learning against piety, reason against affective feeling, and transcendence against immanence (Thornton 1986:437).

4.4.4.7 De-traditionalisation

During the past centuries Christianity experienced enormous challenges in Europe and North America. Christian tradition became less acceptable in the face of philosophical, scientific, political, and social changes. Responding to these massive cultural changes, Western Christianity nevertheless retained its vital sense of the sacred against the forces of “secularisation”—secular forces and social organisation replacing religious belief and institutions (Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:140). According to Dupré (quoted by Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:140), the roots of modernity is traceable back to the fourteenth century nominalism which emphasised God’s inscrutable otherness and argued that it is impossible to speak about God’s reality through analogies from the natural world. Thus philosophy and science came to be regarded independent of theology and faith. When this nominalism combined with a rising humanistic thought that stressed human creativity, a new modern thought pattern emerged.

The basis of modernity is separation of science and religion along with the rivalry of reason versus revelation. This separation is not necessarily a process of secularisation but is called by contemporary cultural theorists as “de-traditionalisation”—a set of processes by which societies that were once shaped by univocal authority became multivocal cultures where authority

shifts to individuals (Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:139-140). Bass & Stewart-Sicking (2005:141) continues:

Through the past three centuries, the displacement of external authorities has nurtured a profound sense of the self in relation to God, allowed for an enlarged vision of human community and creation, and prompted serious re-engagement, re-appropriation, and re-working of Christian traditions.

Christian spirituality in modernity is characteristic of the multitude of spirituality, a shift from univocality to multivocality (Bass & Stewart-Sicking 2005:154).

4.4.5 Major streams of spiritual traditions

Richard Foster (1998), a Quaker, identified and classified the traditions of Christian spirituality for the last two millennium into six major streams in his book *Streams of living water*: (1) the Contemplative Tradition—the prayer filled life; (2) the Holiness Tradition—the virtuous life; (3) the Charismatic Tradition—the Spirit-empowered life; (4) the Social Justice Tradition—the compassionate life; (5) the Evangelical Tradition—the Word-centred life; (6) the Incarnational Tradition—the sacramental life.

Foster defines the Contemplative Tradition as “beautiful of soul,” “fire and love,” “the steady gaze of the soul upon the God who loves us,” and “an intimate sharing between friends,” the last one from the words of Teresa of Avila. Foster calls this stream “a rocky, desert spirituality” and includes in it the fourth century Desert Fathers and Mothers, Benedictines, Poor Clares, Julian of Norwich (AD 1342-1413), John of the Cross (AD 1542-1591), Moravian Movement, Pietist Movement, Thomas Merton (AD 1915-1968), and Henri Nouwen (AD 1932-1996), to name a few.

Secondly, the Holiness Tradition of Christina life and faith “focuses upon the inward re-formation of the heart and the development of the ‘holy habits’” so that we can “rely on these deeply ingrained habits of virtue to make our lives function appropriately and to bring forth substantial character formation.” According to Foster, a divinely transformed heart produces right action,

therefore “holiness *is* a bodily spirituality.” Cistercians, sixteenth century Roman Catholic Reformation, Puritan Movement, Holiness Movement and John Wesley, Keswick Movement (19th-20th centuries), and Dietrich Bonhoeffer are some examples of the Holiness Tradition.

Thirdly, the Charismatic Tradition centres upon the power to *do*, whereas the Holiness tradition centres upon the power to *be*. “The Charismatic Stream of Christian life and faith focuses upon the empowering charisms or gifts of the Spirit and the nurturing fruit of the Spirit,” and “the nurturing fruit of the Spirit makes the empowering gifts of the Spirit a blessing and not a curse.” Foster classifies Montanist Movement (2nd-3rd centuries), Gregory the Great, Franciscans, Pentecostal Movement (20th century), and Charismatic Renewal (20th century) as the Charismatic tradition.

Fourthly, the Social Justice Stream of Christian life and faith stresses “justice and shalom in all human relationships and social structures.” *Mishpat* (justice), *hesed* (compassion), *shalom* (wholeness, unity, balance), these three are perspectives of the Social Justice Tradition. Foster claims, “The Church must forever stand as the conscience of the state, insisting that it fulfil its divinely appointed function of providing justice and order in society.” He includes John Woolman (AD 1720-1772), David Livingstone (AD 1813-1873), Salvation Army, Dorothy Day (AD 1897-1980), Mother Teresa (AD 1910-1997), Martin Luther King, Jr (AD 1929-1968), and Desmond Tutu (AD 1931), to name a few.

Fifthly, the Evangelical Tradition focuses on the proclamation of the evangel, the good news of the gospel. According to Foster, the three themes of this tradition is the faithful proclamation of the gospel, the centrality of the Scriptures, and the confessional witness of the early Christian church as a faithful interpretation of the gospel. This tradition gives us a clear theology of salvation, that is, *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), and *solus Christus* (Christ alone). Included in this tradition are Athanasius (AD 295-373), Ambrose of Milan (AD 339-397), Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430), Dominicans, Protestant Reformation, Roman Catholic Missionary Movement,

Great Awakenings (18th-19th centuries), Protestant Missionary Movement, and Billy Graham (AD 1918-).

Lastly, the Incarnational Tradition is concerned about the relationship between spirit and matter: God is manifest to us through material means. The most fundamental arena for the Incarnational Tradition is the arena of everyday life: homes and families, work, and society in large. Foster (1998:266) says,

It [the Incarnational Tradition] saves us from a spirituality divorced from the stresses and strains of ordinary living. We cannot retreat from the 'secular' world in hopes of finding God elsewhere. Indeed, the very presence of God is manifest in the smallest, most mundane of daily activities.

Some examples of this tradition are Eastern Orthodox Iconography, Renaissance (14th-16th centuries), Classical Movement (17th-18th centuries), Romantic Movement (18th-19th centuries), and Professional Christian Societies (20th century).

These six streams—Contemplative, Holiness, Charismatic, Social Justice, Evangelical, Incarnational—are flowing *together* to form a mighty movement of the Spirit, and these streams constitute the contours and shapes of a new gathering of the people of God (Foster 1998:273).

4.4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the biblical and historical spiritual traditions have been examined. Truly, the biblical and historical spirituality is varied and diverse. They are deep and wide. As I conclude the chapter, I would like to mention the following. First of all, the spirituality of each era was developed distinctively by the needs of the time. Sheldrake's words (1995:218) ring true.

Spiritual traditions are not merely accidental 'instances of enduring truth', but arise and develop in accord with historical circumstances. This is...a theological as well as a historical truth for the realm of spiritual experience is not cut off from the concreteness of the world and history

Secondly, there have been healthy tensions between two opposing ideas such as intellectual vs affectionate, kataphatic vs apophatic, clergy vs laity, and contemplative vs active to name a few. These tensions provide a healthy balance to those who pursue spirituality. Thirdly, the love of God has always been the final goal or objective of spiritual pursuit.

Now with the insights and perspectives of this chapter, I will turn to the integration of horizons discovered in chapters 2, 3, and 4 and then to the final forward movement.

CHAPTER 5

INTEGRATION & STRATEGY FOR TRANSFORMATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As I began this research, I had three objectives: (1) understanding the spirituality of the Kikuyu pastors of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa through thick description; (2) studying biblical and historical spirituality which provides the normative¹ perspectives; (3) writing an alternative understanding of the spirituality of Kenyan pastors through critical dialogue in order to bring about dynamic transformation (1.1.2).

In chapter 2, I described the unique, individual spirituality of my research participants. In chapter 3, the spirituality of Kikuyu pastors informed by such traditions as mission Christianity, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, East African Revival Movement, and charismatic movement was discussed. Since spirituality is holistic in nature, the cultural anthropological model was used to describe not only religion but also worldview and cultural subsystems. In chapter 4, biblical and historical spirituality was examined. In this chapter, integration of previous chapters and strategies for transformation will be presented.

Browning's (1996:51-52) third movement, systematic theology, is a fusion of horizons between the vision implicit in contemporary practices and the vision implied in the practices of the normative Christian text. In this stage two main questions are asked: (1) what new horizon of meaning is fused when questions from present practices are brought to the central Christian witness?

¹The Scriptures and the Christian history provide the resources, *norms*, and hermeneutical context of Christian spirituality (Schneiders 1998:3). Berling (2006:39) contends that Scripture and the history of Christianity are two constitutive disciplines that supply the positive data of Christian religious experience, as well as its *norm* and hermeneutical context (1.2.6). Browning (1996:49) also uses the word *normative* when he discusses historical theology: "What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis as honestly as possible?" (1.3.2.1.2). However, it needs to be understood that the biblical and Western historical spiritualities need a dialogue and interaction with African culture/religiosity/theology/spirituality to be applied to the African context as a meaningful perspective—providing new norms for the context.

and (2) what reason can be advanced to support the validity claims of this new fusion of meaning?

At the end of chapter 3, the four questions were captured for integration and transformation (3.7.3):

- 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?

5.2 INTEGRATION

For integration and the fusion of horizons, I will use the narratives of the research participants, the Kikuyu culture and tradition, Christian traditions, and the perspectives of biblical and historical spiritualities.

5.2.1 Would mission Christianity including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa continue to be an effective form of Christianity in Kenya and among the Kikuyu?"

Mbiti (2002:233) states that “mission Christianity has not penetrated sufficiently deep into African religiosity....[Mission Christianity means] a set of rules to be observed, promises to be expected in the next world, rhythmless hymns to be sung, [and] rituals to be followed.” He claims that mission Christianity is deeply rooted in Euro-American culture bearing not only the stigma of colonialism, foreignness, westernism and paternalism, but also the potentialities and strength of organisation, institutionalism, links with the historical traditions of Christendom, financial resources, personnel from overseas, an increasing ecumenical concern, and a deliberate attempt to relate Christianity to modern problems in Africa (Mbiti 2002:233-237).

I have found that mission Christianity contributed to the Kenyan context as follows: (1) demise of traditional socio-economic-religious structure; (2) development of *kusoma* spirituality (education, health, civilization); (3) the formation of basic Christian spirituality; (4) bestowal of new status on women; (5) creation of denominational Christianity (3.5.3.7). Mission Christianity is one form of many expressions of Kenyan Christianity, which include Orthodox, African Initiated Church (AIC), and the Charismatic and Pentecostal Church. When mission Christianity was brought in to Kenya, Kenyans including the Kikuyu did not have much choice but to follow this form of Christianity clothed in Western attire. It is time to re-evaluate the legacy of mission Christianity to meet the real needs and deep desires of Africans.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa, as one expression of mission Christianity, has all the characteristics of the mission Christianity of the previous paragraph. Besides, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa is organised, flexible, and reforming church dominated by the Kikuyu tribe.

5.2.1.1 Narratives and traditions

Out of the five contributions that the mission Christianity made to the spirituality of Kenyans, three are considered positive: development of *kusoma* spirituality; formation of basic Christian spirituality; and the bestowal of new status to women. However, the demise of socio-economic-religious structure is considered negative, and the creation of denominational spirituality is debatable.

Denominational spirituality created division, but in the case of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, it fostered tribal identity and cohesion as Kikuyu dominant church. My research participants are loyal to their denomination. The Presbyterian Church is their identity, and it seems that my research participants will continue to be a part of their denomination. However, there are strong voices of the need for reform within the denomination for the sake of survival and further development.

The orderliness, development-consciousness, cohesiveness, and transfer system (this one can be debated) of the Presbyterian Church can be enumerated as their strength. The slow procedure within the denominational structure and tribalism seem to be the two major concerns for further progress. Stewardship is another area in which the Presbyterian Church experiences difficulty. Since the Presbyterian Church became de-centralised and each presbytery is responsible for its finances, some presbyteries suffer lack while others enjoy surplus. In stewardship, the Presbyterian Church started teaching its congregations to tithe rather than pledge. It has yet to be seen whether the Presbyterian Church would succeed in these reform efforts (3.5.4.6.2 and 3.5.4.6.3). These areas of concern are all related to ministry and not theology.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa has Reformed theology. The Presbyterian Church received spiritual influence from two major streams—Scottish Reformed and American evangelical traditions. These Reformed and evangelical traditions provided a Protestant theological foundation. However, the conservative Reformed tradition from Scotland caused the Presbyterian Church to become rigid in religious practices and the young generation to leave the church. Recently, the Presbyterian Church is changing from rigidity to liveliness (3.5.4.6.1).

When the characteristics of the Kikuyu tribe and the Presbyterian Church are compared, there are resemblances. First, the Kikuyu virtues of hospitality, generosity, and humility are compatible with biblical values. Secondly, the elder system of the traditional Kikuyu society and that of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa match—signifying the Kikuyu Presbyterian Church has a positive governing structure at least among the Kikuyu (2.4.1). *Kusoma* spirituality provided desire for higher education for my research participants, which is another affirmative sign of further development of the denomination and the research participants.

The impact of the East African Revival Movement laid another essential foundation for the Presbyterian Church. The idea of salvation on a personal

level and Christian morals are contributions of the Revival movement to mission Christianity. The East Africa Revival Movement was the first major renewal movement within the mission churches, and the Revival created a new ecumenical sense across denominational and tribal lines (3.5.5.6; 3.5.5.7).

In regards to the spirituality of my research participants, it is anchored on the relationship with God (engagement with God; growing to be godly; going with God), and their spirituality encompasses faith actions as well (2.3). These two aspects of their spirituality agree with the first two characteristics of spirituality—understood in the context of relationship with God and integration of all aspects of human life both religious and human (1.2.6). My research participants' understanding of spirituality was not far off.

As discussed above, mission Christianity has strengths and weaknesses. Mbiti's critique that "mission Christianity has not penetrated *sufficiently* [italics mine] deep into African religiosity" may be correct. Perhaps mission Christianity has not changed the whole religious world of the Kikuyu as the study of worldview has shown (Fig 3.3)—worldview and religions are closely interwoven. It may be correct to say that Christianity was superimposed on African religiosity with a new religious orientation in such a way that a new religious conviction/form—Christianity—replaced the old conviction/form. However, the basic religious orientation of the Kikuyu or worldview stayed. I stated in chapter 3 (3.4.3) that in the case of the changes of the Kikuyu worldview, they may fall somewhere in between submersion and conversion according to Kraft's (1996:437-439) worldview change patterns. Submersion occurs 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. This is somewhat true to the Kikuyu. They have a new religious form—Western Christianity—but their religious world has been retained: holistic perception of reality and God-centred universe. Another process called conversion occurs 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. Therefore, the changes which the Kikuyu went through fall somewhere in-between submersion and conversion. *The Kikuyus are changing*: they have a modified worldview configuration and a new religious form—mission Christianity, which is trying to penetrate deep into African religiosity by becoming more contextual. The result has yet to be seen.

5.2.1.2 Interaction with biblical and historical spirituality

Chapter 4 has brought in biblical and historical dimension of Christian spirituality. Biblical spirituality was defined as (1) the spiritualities that come to expression in the Bible and witness to patterns of relationship with God that instruct and encourage our own religious experience; (2) a pattern of Christian life deeply imbued with the spiritualities of the Bible; (3) and a transformative process of personal and communal engagement with the biblical text (Schneiders 2002:134-136). Besides the Scriptures, the Christian history provides the resources, norms, and hermeneutical context of Christian spirituality (Schneiders 1998:3).

One aspect of the Old Testament spirituality is community (4.2.1.2.3). There is no sound spirituality apart from community. In traditional Kikuyu culture, the society was communal and so was the worldview of the Kikuyu (3.4.1.2; 3.4.1.6). There was no place for individualism in the Kikuyu tribe, and the interests of the community preceded those of the individual. After Western civilisation and Christianity invaded African society, the idea of communalism started being affected by Western individualism. However, the worldview analysis of the research participants revealed that most social values have been somewhat retained in such areas as the group identity of self, value of relationship, and the value of cooperation (3.4.3).

The Old Testament spirituality teaches valuable lessons here. Both the law and the prophets are for the sake of people (Ex 20:1-21; Lv 25; Dt 28-30; Is 1-6; Jr 3:15; 5:18; Hs 3:1-5). The patriarchs, judges, prophets, kings, and priests were all for people (Gn 18:16-33; Lv 8-9; Jdg 2:10-18; 1 Ki 3:4-15). The

identity of Jews was formed in the community from the family outward to the entire nation (Gn 17:1-14; Lv 20:22-26). The righteousness and holiness are not only personal characters but also interpersonal qualities in the community (Jr 7:5-8; 22:8, 9, 17; Am 2:6-12). To ensure God's blessings in the community of mutual interdependence, immorality, injustice, and oppression could not be tolerated. Israel's success depended on the discernment and fulfilment of the will of God (Ex 20:1-23:19) (4.2.1.2.3).

The New Testament spirituality was also communal. Early Christian spirituality was conceived, nurtured, and formed within the body of Christ (Ac 2:42-47). The Church was a new community to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:18-20), and the Spirit was given to believers for the edification of the Church (Eph 4:11-13) (4.2.2.3).

Therefore, communal spirituality is that which mission Christianity needs to pursue despite pressure of individualism from Western culture and civilisation.

Historical spirituality has some other lessons for mission Christianity. The Reformed spirituality can be summarised as follows: the heart of the Christian life in Reformed spirituality is the deeply confident affirmation of experiential faith in God and response to his gracious initiative in both the private relationship with him and corporate expressions of faith (4.4.4.5). Two points that are worth being mentioned are "experiential faith in God" and "both the private relationship with him and corporate expressions of faith." The experiential faith in God was a lesson which East African Revival Movement taught already, and it continuously needs to be encouraged.

Zwinglian emphasis on the supremacy of the Word and theocentric emphasis may also need to be made in the minds of Kenyan Christians, as one of my research participants commented, "We are to teach [the Word]. Otherwise, we shall perish. There will be no Presbyterian Church of East Africa if it doesn't change." Calvin's union with Christ, believer's relationship with God through prayer, and the church as the context of spiritual growth are also crucial

teachings that are relevant to mission Christianity which claims to be of the Reformed tradition.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa may also reap benefits if they pay attention to the spirituality of pietism. Pietists emphasised pure life as opposed to pure doctrine, doing over knowing, and experiential knowledge. In pietism, the goal of conversion is the real moral transformation of the believer resulting in works of love. Mission Christianity may have “pure” doctrine, and now they may need to focus on pure life. Moral transformation of believers is what Kenyan society may need the most where the pragmatic sense of African morality still prevails. The African Traditional Religion’s purely utilitarian and anthropocentric idea of sin as an offence committed against neighbours needs to be countered with biblical sense of sin as offence against God.

Foster (1998) identified six major streams of spiritual traditions (4.4.5). Perhaps mission Christianity would belong to the Evangelical Tradition, which focuses on the proclamation of the gospel. In fact, modern Protestant Missionary Movement that spawned mission Christianity in Kenya is an example of the Evangelical Tradition.

In summary, the future of mission Christianity seems to depend on whether it fosters the communal, experiential, Scriptural, and moral aspects of spirituality

5.2.2 What is the relationship between charismatic spirituality and the contextual spirituality of East Africa?

In chapter 3, charismatic spirituality is shown to be closely linked to African Independent Churches. These African Independent Churches comprise nationalist/secessionist churches, spirit churches, and charismatic churches. The first two types of African Independent Churches desired to achieve “African expression of Christianity” as a result of a culture clash between the African and the European. The third type of African Independent Church, which is called charismatic churches, sprang up in 1970s, and it opposes other African Independent Churches because of their “pagan” practices

(3.5.6.1.3). This research is concerned about the third type of African Independent Church as an expression of charismatic spirituality.

Contextualisation encompasses contextualization of biblical message, theology and/or ministry. It is a “hermeneutical bridge” into the real-life contexts of ordinary people (Kraft 2005:112). It is also called “enculturation.” In regards to the context of the research participants, chapter 3 described worldviews, religious traditions, and socio-economic-political subsystems extensively. The question of the relationship between charismatic spirituality and contextual spirituality is about whether charismatic spirituality is able to provide adequate answers to issues and problems of Kenyans and the Kikuyu.

5.2.2.1 Narratives and traditions

Two of my research participants are charismatic Presbyterians, and the other three are just sympathetic to the charismatic movement. The Presbyterian denomination is getting more adherents to the charismatic movement within the denomination and has incorporated lively praise and prayer to their worship services. Anderson (2004:201-202) claims that Pentecostal and charismatic spirituality in Africa is a contextual spirituality since it provides for solutions to both spiritual and other human problems. Appealing to African worldviews—holistic perception of reality and spirit-centred universe—and providing more adequate explanations and answers to the problems of life, charismatic spirituality appears to be more contextualised than older mission churches or African Traditional Religion (3.5.6.3).

Referring to the charismatic movement in Africa, Bediako (1995:66), a renowned African theologian, states that the significance of the movement of the African Independent Church (including charismatic movements) is that it points to the directions in which African Christianity is moving and to the trends of the African response to the Christian faith in African terms. Hocken (2003) analyses charismatic renewal of 1970s: the new charismatic churches are different in theology, emphases, and style from the African Independent Churches; they are more evangelical in their theology and less liturgical, and hostile to the syncretism of many African Independent Churches. The similarities of the charismatic churches to Western Pentecostal-charismatic

patterns can also lead to an overlooking of more African features of other Africa Independent Churches.

In chapter 3, it was stated that the Pentecostal and charismatic experiences demand interpretation of the experiential dimension of spirituality over and against an emphasis on textuality in religious life, and that their experience of God is through the Spirit. Their liturgies are primarily oral, narrative, and participatory (3.5.6.3). However, concerning textuality Hocken (2003) states, “Charismatic renewal has been consistently marked by a great love and thirst for the Scriptures.” He is confirmed by one of the research participants: “The Pentecostals are really trying to teach. [They] realise that signs and wonders are temporary, and they are teaching [the Word]. This is a recent phenomenon.” The charismatic churches also emphasise ministries of healing and deliverance, taking seriously the power of witchdoctors and spiritism (3.5.6.2). All the above elements of charismatic spirituality—oral, narrative, participatory, healing and deliverance, and experience—are genuine expressions of African religiosity.

Magesa (2003:38) claims that the charismatic movements “address the real needs of the people” and “strike a deep religious chord in the heart of African peoples.” Magoti (2003:95) explains that “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” and that “they are not ashamed to belong to a culture that cherishes the charismas of its members and values prayer as a free and communal expressions of peoples’ inner feelings or emotions” (3.5.6.4).

Not all African scholars condone the charismatic movement. Mugambi (2003b:141) criticises these evangelistic charismatic churches of Western influence as having resulted in cultural alienation. He also argues that the recent Pentecostal and charismatic movements hold the assumption that the early missionary achievements were not “biblical” enough and that mission churches were not able to match these evangelistic and charismatic initiatives. As if the said assumption is true, from 1990s young people started moving away from mission churches to charismatic churches. One of the research

participants confirmed this by saying, “People are moving [to other churches]. Hundreds of them are with the Jesus is Alive Ministry [one of the charismatic churches].”

The relevance of the charismatic movement in Africa is that the charismatic spirituality acknowledges and takes seriously the spiritual world and power, which seem real to Africans. Although the affiliation of charismatic churches to Western Pentecostal-charismatic movement may not make them “truly” African expression of Christian spirituality, it appears that charismatic spirituality is addressing holistic human experience in contemporary African context.

It is to be noted that the features which were once thought to be the characteristics of charismatic churches are also found in mission churches. The distinction that once existed between mission churches and African Independent Churches has become less meaningful (Bediako 1995:66).

5.2.2.2 Interaction with biblical and historical spirituality

From biblical spirituality, Pauline spirituality is distinctly pneumatological. According to Paul, there is hardly any aspect of Christian experience outside of the realm of the Spirit. Paul’s enigmatic phrase “in Christ” also refers to the field of divine power of Christ that governs the lives of believers (4.2.2.3). Johannine spirituality has also a charismatic dimension. Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit; individuals are born of the Spirit; and the Spirit abides in the believer and reveals the truth to believers. The source of life is the Spirit rather than the observance of rules or the practice of rituals (Schneiders 2005:387).

In historical spirituality, Zwingli emphasised pneumatology. It is the Spirit who opens up the heart of the believer, and the Scriptures must be approached through the work of the Spirit. As a Reformer, Zwingli’s pneumatology was inward work of the Spirit (4.4.4.3.1). Foster (1998) identifies the Charismatic Stream of Christian life and faith as a focus on the empowering charisms or gifts of the Spirit and the nurturing fruit of the Spirit (4.4.5). The pneumatology

of charismatic spirituality, however, focuses on spiritual gifts and power rather than the inward works of the Spirit.

Another element of charismatic spirituality is eschatological expectation (3.5.6.3). The New Testament has eschatological dimension which provided early Christians with the means to resist the worldviews and practices of the cultures they lived in. Paul's eschatology is strongly based on the present life in Christ (4.2.2.3). The eschatological element of charismatic spirituality must provide future hope for African Christians riddled with problems of the present life. It also counters the present-oriented, pragmatic African Traditional Religion.

It requires caution to equate charismatic spirituality with contextual spirituality, but considering the present context of Kenyan Christianity, charismatic spirituality may be claimed as a competent model of contextual spirituality—providing biblical answers to both religious and human problems through the Scriptures and the Spirit.

5.2.3 How can spirituality shape and influence the socio-economic-political context more than it being influenced by the context?

The socio-economic-political context is intricately bound up with religion and worldview influencing and being influenced by each other. All together they form a comprehensive life experience, which may be called spirituality. As seen in chapter 3, the socio-economic-political-religious context was completely disturbed by the missionary movement and colonialism. Afterwards, Kenyan society has never been the same. Family structure and function, relationships, the notion of marriage and dowry, the meaning of initiation, education system, economy, and governing structure have all changed. Western religion, civilisation, and culture were the forces of change. The changes in subsystems in turn started influencing religious practices. The church started dealing with such social problems as urbanisation and poverty, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, corruption, and political matters. Now, the question is how Christian spirituality can affect and shape the socio-economic-political subsystems in such a way that there would be a transformation in these areas.

5.2.3.1 Narratives and traditions

One research participant (Sam) commented: “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” (3.6.4). Another research participant (Paul) said, “It is Westernisation that the church must deal with. It is not traditional religion.” It seems that the church’s and the individual Christian’s role to become “salt and light” of the world is challenged the most by secular Western cultural influences. In Kenya, a Christian TV channel airs worship services of American Pentecostal churches without discretion, and one research participants lamented the Americanisation of Kenyan churches. Especially, the youth are most affected by Western secular pop culture, thereby adopting foreign ideas and behaviours at random.

Economically, all my research participants feel constraints. Lack of resources for survival and development impacts their life and ministry. Instead of focusing on ministry, some worry about their survival. In the case of slum churches, the economic constraint is a stumbling block for further development. Sometimes overseas donation is the only way out. The church and individual Christians must deal with such social issues as orphans, HIV/AIDS, single mothers, street children, unemployment, prostitution, etc.

Politically, Kenyans churches keep a neutral stance. One research participant (Paul) said that Christians wanted to know the church’s official position in political matters. Another research participant said that the church needed to be involved in politics. As Abeledo (2002:115) states, it is not possible for a Christian to avoid becoming involved in politics. Kenyan politics is tribal politics. The church is not an exception. In political matters, church’s stance is divided along tribal lines. The Presbyterian Church of East Africa is Kikuyu-dominant church, and Kikuyu research participants do not seem to be critical of the current government whose president is also a Kikuyu.

Although societal problems seem large, the church and Christians engage in them in a way they can do with their available resources. Initiation was an important ceremony in the Kikuyu, and as seen in chapter 3, the cessation of

this ritual caused not a small disturbance in mission churches. Recently, the Presbyterian Church started holding substitute meetings in which young boys and girls go away from their home and are taught Christian morals, responsibilities as an adult, and biblical lessons of marriage and sex.

In gender issues, as seen in chapter 3, mission churches raised the status of women. Women's guild is an influential organisation within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and women pastors are more in demand. Seminaries also accept more women applicants than before, and women are more active in the church than men. Young Presbyterian pastors follow biblical gender roles rather than traditional ones (2.2.2.3; 2.2.2.7.2). Women pastors are generally satisfied with their roles in the family and ministry. However, the Kenyan society at large needs more awareness of gender equality. Women and children are still abused, and the severe cases of abuse are reported in the newspaper oftentimes.

The research participants shared their ideas of how Christianity and the church could influence society. The research participants agreed that the Kikuyu must share their resources with others. If Kikuyu Christians start sharing their resources within the church, for their community, and for the less privileged, then the needy, the poor, the sick, and the society at large will find relief. Some Kenyan churches are engaged in ministry for HIV/AIDS affected, orphans, single mothers, street children, the unemployed, prostitutes, etc. In the case of the Presbyterian Church, they may have to improve in their involvement in social matters. The Kikuyu tribe is the most influential group in Kenya. They are politically conscious, commercially competent, and educationally more advanced than any other tribe (Okullu 1974:46).

One research participant (Paul) said that the church needs a holistic approach to ministry, discipleship, and stewardship training and that the Kenyan society needs God-fearing leaders who have integrity, character, responsibility, patriotism, etc. He asserts that these leaders will give influence to others socially, politically, and spiritually (2.2.2.7.1). Leadership is a critical issue in the present context.

Another research participant (Sam) said, “Tribalism is a big problem.” According to him, Kikuyus are capitalists and very good learners, and they should influence others since they are blessed of God. He wants to be identified as a Kenyan and not a Kikuyu. It is a very challenging task, but if Kenyans shift their primary identity from the tribal one to the national identity, the society will take a definitely different shape (2.2.1.5). Perhaps the church should play a leading role. The problem is that the church is also divided along tribal and denominational line. Would an ecumenical movement work in this context?

Still another research participant (Mary) said, “In society majority are Christians only by name. They do not follow Christian teachings but their own selfish gain. They are not caring for other brothers and sisters.” She pointed out the disunity caused by different educational, economic, and social levels in her congregation and district prayer groups (2.2.5.6).

5.2.3.2 Integration with biblical and historical spirituality

Prophets were those who stood in the middle between God and the people—crying out to God on behalf of the people and pleading with the people on behalf of God. They played an essential social function lending divine legitimisation to the dominant social-political group or challenging the status quo for social changes (Bowe 2003:83-85). In discussing socio-economic-political issues and how spirituality can influence them, prophetic spirituality needs to be heeded.

Prophets’ hearts were aflame for justice and righteousness, and they were convinced that even small violation of the covenant was an affront in the eyes of God. They constantly “judged” in the daily life (4.2.1.3.2). Since prophets were in love with God, they saw the world through God’s eyes, felt its pain through God’s heart, and challenged its abuses as if with God’s mighty arm. Like YHWH, they could not turn a deaf ear to the cry of people in pain. They found courage to hope beyond hope and conveyed that hope in the face of despair. They endured affliction, distress, and persecution, and paid a heavy price for their courageous words (Bowe 2003:105). The Kenyan society needs

prophetic voice. The church needs to play the role of the prophet. Christians need to take a bold action toward resolving societal problems. Spirituality needs to find its expression in actions (4.2.1.3).

Marcan spirituality seems relevant as well. Mark's gospel calls the believer to embrace the cross and to place ourselves in solidarity with those who suffer. It also asks us to renounce every form of domination and power, and every kind of violence and abuse against others. Marcan spirituality criticises all structures of oppressive power—economic, political, social, ecclesiastical, and personal (Bowe 2003:136).

Corporate and communal spirituality needs to be emphasised in dealing with socio-economic-political matters. To be a Christian is to be a member of the body of Christ. Israel's success or failure affected the whole covenant community.

For Christian spirituality to affect the society, both visionaries and pragmatists are required. Whereas prophetic visionaries, such as Third Isaiah and Zechariah, envisioned the future in post-exilic times, scribal leaders (so-called pragmatists), such as Ezra and Nehemiah, led people to concrete actions. Paul's eschatological spirituality looks ahead into the blessed future, yet is firmly grounded in the present where Christians are responsible for living a godly life. This kind of balance between vision and action, and between the future hope and present responsibility is what the Kenyan Christianity needs. People who live in absolute poverty and those who are socially marginal need to hear the voice of hope, and those who are blessed must share their blessing with the less privileged (4.2.2.2.4).

Trinitarian spirituality can also give an impact to socio-economic-political realms. The central theme of Trinity is relationship: God's relationship with us and our relationship with one another (LaCugna 2000:275). The relationship of Father, Son, and Spirit as equal, mutual, and interdependent persons inevitably affects human relationships in all spheres bringing them to the equality, mutuality, and interdependence of the divine relationship (Downey

2005:625). Living Trinitarian faith entails living as Jesus Christ did: with total dependence on God; as a peaceful, merciful, healing, forgiving presence; praying and praising God; and welcoming the outcast and sinner. It is also living according to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit—becoming holy and virtuous and contributing to the unity of the Christian community and the harmony among all God’s creatures (LaCugna 2000:281). To live in harmony in the Christian community and with all of God’s creation, Christians need the Trinitarian perspective (4.3).

In Kenyan society where nominalism is a problem, the Puritan teaching of power of godliness as opposed to a form of godliness without power has a voice (4.4.4.4.1). The real moral transformation of the believer, which is the goal of conversion in Pietism, is also what Kenyan spirituality needs to focus on (4.4.4.4.2). Awakening spirituality’s waiting on God in corporate prayer for Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit to invigorate the Church to attack the kingdom of darkness seems essential to the transformation of the church and the society in Kenya.

From Foster’s (1998) six streams, the Social Justice Stream seems to have the most relevance to the issues of the society. The Social Justice Stream stresses justice, compassion, and wholeness, and the Church must be the conscience of the state and fulfil its divinely appointed function of providing justice and order in society. The Incarnational Tradition also provides an invaluable insight since this tradition focuses on our daily lives: “The very presence of God is manifest in the smallest, most mundane of daily activities” (Foster 1998:266) (4.4.5).

In summary, first of all, prophetic spirituality seems what the Kenyan church needs the most. The church needs to raise its prophetic voice. The church also needs to foster solidarity with the poor and the oppressed as Marcan spirituality suggests. Secondly, the whole Kenyan society must try to preserve their African corporate identity and shun Western individualism as biblical corporate spirituality teaches. The church of God is a community of believers. Thirdly, both vision and action are required in the present context to develop

sound Christian spirituality. Fourthly, Trinitarian spirituality's relationship aspect with other human beings and God's other creation will bring harmony to society at large. Fifthly, moral transformation of Pietism and Awakening spirituality's spiritual battle against the kingdom of darkness will bring vitality to the church of God and the whole society. After all, spirituality detached from life's concrete actions is dead spirituality.

5.2.4 What would the biblical and historical spirituality suggest to the spiritualities of the research participants?

I would like to enumerate the spiritualities of the research participants. Sam's spirituality is evangelistic, charismatic spirituality. He has a strong conviction in teaching the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul has an interdenominational perspective and envisions holistic ministry. He wants to bring reform to society through raising and equipping leaders. He is rather a teacher and an administrator than a parish minister. Grace has gone through difficult times in her life. Through these difficulties, she has developed patience and resilience. She has compassion for the less privileged in society and does what she can in her parish. George supports both the ministry of the word and charismatic ministry. He advocates the African expression of Christianity and African values. He believes that the church should play a major role in the socio-economic-political context. Mary is an enduring, godly woman. Like Grace, she has experienced prejudice and discrimination as a woman pastor. Both of these women showed the strength of Kikuyu women as strong, resilient, and accommodating.

From the research, I have found that male pastors have strong convictions of what they want to do or what needs to be done in ministry while women pastors' interests were rather in the parish ministry. The voices and pains of women pastors seem unheard or not-paid-attention-to in a male-dominated structure. In regards to African expressions of Christianity, the more Kikuyu the research participants are, the more they are assertive of African expressions.

5.2.4.1 Definition of spirituality by research participants

Spirituality is a way of life for Sam. He says:

When someone accepts Jesus Christ as his own personal saviour, his entire life is devoted to God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He is not living into two worlds, the flesh and the Spirit....I continue to desire to be *wholly engaged with God* [italics mine] and every step I take and whatever decision I make I have to ask God to guide me and show me the way.

For Paul, spirituality is a state of being, which shapes the conducts and behaviours of a person. A spiritual person exhibits spirituality when he/she practices Christian disciplines such as prayer, fasting, and Bible study.

Grace defines spirituality as follows:

Spirituality means God-oriented. It is growing in a godly manner from one glory to another. That is *focusing directly to God and growing everyday towards God* [italics mine]. Spirituality should not be stagnant but it should be something that you become more godly every time and everyday.

George says, “What you are...precedes what you do,” and “Spirituality is a question of bringing forth results.” He also thinks importantly of nurturing and discipleship based on the Bible. For Mary, “Spirituality is faith: how it is growing and *how you are going with your God* [italics mine] and the fellowship you have with your God throughout your life.”

The above definitions of spirituality by the research participants show that their understanding of spirituality is predominantly Reformed spirituality (refer to 4.4.4.3). According to Reformed spirituality, the heart of the Christian life is the deeply confident affirmation of experiential faith in God and response to his gracious initiative in both the private relationship with him and corporate expressions in faith. This is what my research participants have. To be more precise, the three major elements of Zwinglian spirituality have been found in them: supremacy of the Word; predominant pneumatology (the Scriptures must be approached through the work of the Spirit); and theocentric emphasis (only the eternal, infinite, and uncreated God is the basis of faith). The

research participants also show Calvin's spirituality, which has the following characteristics: believer's union with Christ expressed in both inward feelings and outward lives; relationship with God through prayer; the Church as our Mother; preaching for spiritual growth; liturgy (not very much emphasised in the case of the research participants).

5.2.4.2 Perspectives from biblical and historical spirituality

It seems that my research participants are well-informed of their theological tradition, Reformed theology and spirituality, and they are convinced of them. My question is what biblical and historical spirituality, which were discussed extensively in chapter 4, suggest and offer something that would benefit the research participants and their spirituality.

From the biblical spirituality, Trinitarian spirituality (4.3) may have something to offer to the research participants. As McIntosh (2005:179) states, the Trinitarian rhythm of Christian spirituality is a believer's journey in the Spirit into freedom, love, and generosity of Jesus' relationship with the Father. The Holy Spirit fosters Christian spirituality by opening up within believers a beginning of transformation towards an infinite sharing of the life of God. Stevens and Green (2003:13-44) explains Trinitarian spirituality that believers are *abba* worshipers, disciples of Jesus, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. The intimacy and the permanence of the relationship between the Father and the believer, nurturing and deepening intimacy between the master and the learner, and the presence and empowering of the Holy Spirit are what characterise the practice of Trinitarian spirituality and what will contribute to the holistic spirituality of individuals including the research participants.

From both biblical and historical spirituality, a healthy balance can be proposed to the research participants for further enrichment and progress in their pursuit of spirituality. Two opposing ideas such as intellectual vs affectionate, kataphatic vs apophatic, clergy vs laity, contemplative vs active, and empowerment vs fruit-bearing will provide a healthy tension and balance for seekers of deeper spirituality. Historical spirituality has ample examples of the above spiritualities from which to imitate and model. While pursuing one's

own spiritual tradition, one can look into other traditions to see how other people pursue the same God. That would enlarge the horizon of the seeker.

5.2.5 Summary of the integration

- The future of mission Christianity depends on whether it fosters the communal, experiential, Scriptural, and moral aspects of spirituality.
- Despite charismatic spirituality's limitations of foreign attachment and expressions, Kenyan Christians identify with charismatic spirituality since they address both religious and human problems in African terms.
- To influence society, the Kenyan church needs to raise their prophetic voice. They also need both vision and action. Moral transformation of Christians is essential.
- Individual Christians can be benefited from exploring other spiritual practices to which they are not accustomed in order to find a healthy balance and to deepen their spirituality.

Now, I would like to enter the final stage of this research process with suggestions for transformation.

5.3 STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMATION

In this final stage of the practical theological process, strategies for transformation will be presented with substantiation. Browning (1996:55-56) suggests the four questions that are asked in this stage:

- 1) How do we understand this concrete situation in which we must act?
- 2) What should our praxis be in this concrete situation?
- 3) How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?
- 4) What means, strategies, and rhetoric should we use in this concrete situation?

In chapter 1, one of the elements of my research paradigm was social constructionism, which argues that realities are constructed together and alternative understanding is reached socially through interaction with other

human beings. The social construction process takes us forward through transformative dialogue (1.3.4).

In order to construct realities for alternative understanding and/or transformation I formed a group of 3 pastors, who are all “encultured informants” (Rubin and Rubin 1995:66). I call this group a focus group, and we met twice: first to formulate strategies and the second time to discuss questions and confirm our findings. One (Paul) is an original research participant while the other two (Peter, Silas) are new participants. The reason I chose two new participants at this stage is to obtain new perspectives that might differ from the original research participants. These three are all Presbyterians: one is genuine Presbyterian (original research participant); another one is affiliated with a charismatic church but still a Presbyterian; the third one was involved with charismatic movement but returned to the Presbyterian Church. They are all lecturers at an interdenominational theological institution.

I will begin with the first question of Browning, the understanding of the concrete situation.

5.3.1 Understanding of the concrete situation

The concrete situation of the research context was discussed extensively in chapter 3. In this section I will summarise the situation briefly. The research context was Kikuyu PCEA pastors in Nairobi. Therefore, they are all Kikuyus and have retained the Kikuyu culture to a varying degree. Mission Christianity disturbed their traditional lifestyle and belief system from the bottom, and they are living in a modernised context. Their worldviews still remain but are in the process of changing. Their religion is Christian, and some traditional values have been retained that are compatible with biblical values. They are struggling to find their African identity while maintaining their Christian beliefs. Cultural subsystems underwent tremendous changes, and they are endeavouring to cope with the new systems.

The first part of this chapter was the interaction and integration of horizons found in the research context and the biblical and historical spirituality. The fusion of horizon achieved is as follows:

- The future of mission Christianity depends on whether it fosters the communal, experiential, Scriptural, and moral aspects of spirituality.
- Despite the charismatic spirituality's limitations of foreign attachment and expressions, Kenyan Christians identify with charismatic spirituality since they address both religious and human problems which Africans can relate to.
- To influence society, the Kenyan church needs to raise their prophetic voice. They also need both vision and action. Moral transformation of Christians is essential.
- Individual Christians can be benefited from exploring other spiritual practices to which they are not accustomed in order to find a healthy balance and to deepen their spirituality.

5.3.2 Praxis for transformation

The following are concrete suggestions for the transformation of the research context.

5.3.2.1 Mission Christianity's effectiveness

For mission Christianity including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa to continue to be an effective form of Christianity, we propose the following strategies.

5.3.2.1.1 Inter-denominational and inter-tribal dialogue

One of the lessons from biblical and historical spirituality was communal spirituality. To foster communal spirituality, different denominations and tribes need to build bridges to each other through intentional dialogue. Community was an essential element in the traditional African culture and religion as seen in chapter 3. When Christianity was introduced to Africa, individualism replaced community to a large extent. Mission Christianity also developed along tribal lines: the Presbyterian among the Kikuyu, the Methodist among

the Meru, Africa Inland Church among the Kamba, etc. The Kikuyu tribe itself was further divided by different denominations such as Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic, etc. Since tribalism and denominationalism are strong in Kenya, dialogue may not be an easy task. In fact, tribalism is one of the worst vices Kenyans need to overcome. However, if mission churches make a deliberate effort to cultivate communal spirituality across tribes and denominations, they will be able to restore the essential African identity, that is, community and will be more contextualised and effective in their service to Africans.

Mbiti (2002:241) says that a humble cooperation between mission Christianity and the African Independent Church will also obviously enhance the impact of Christianity in Africa. Promoting ecumenism, Mugambi (1995:172) states that the challenge is “to revive the process of promoting visible expressions of united Christian witness, fellowship and service—between and amongst Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals, Charismatics, Orthodox and independents” and that ecumenism cannot be conducted in isolation from the total life of the church. In speaking about ecumenism, Kobia (2003:141) warns about ethnic propensity, that church leaders have to come to terms with their denominational or ethnic identity before they can act ecumenically or nationally since they tend to tilt conveniently towards ethnicity in times of serious crisis. Kobia (2003:106) asserts:

Ethnicity must be deconstructed from being seen as a source of conflict so that it may become a resource of consent. The biggest challenge in this regard is how to make Africans and people of the world affirm diversity of identity as a gift of variety that is complementary rather than conflictual. This is an invitation to a broader ecumenical space in which diversity is celebrated.

“The growth of tribal churches and semi-ethnic groupings is rather disturbing” (Kobia 2003:143). As *Abba* worshipers, disciples of Jesus, and the temple of the Holy Spirit (5.2.4.2), it would be fantastic if Luo Pentecostals and Kikuyu Presbyterians could worship the Triune God together.

5.3.2.1.2 Restoration of community within the church

The focus group participants claimed that mission Christianity robbed people of the communal aspect of their Christian life. Therefore, it is essential that the church restores community life first within the church and in the wider community. According to the focus group, there is no strong community in the church. People finish worship on Sunday and go to different places to satisfy their need of community. When church members encounter such problems as marital conflicts or financial crises, most of the time they turn elsewhere instead of seeking help from the church community. In the district prayer meeting, they replicate what they do at church on Sunday—Bible reading, preaching, and singing hymns. So the relationship within the district prayer group is rather mechanical, and African life is hardly there. There is little to look forward to. That is why most men do not go there; it is mostly women who go to the district prayer meeting. However, if a meal or a drink is served, more people tend to attend the district prayer meeting. Eating together at the district prayer meeting promotes fellowship, and it is a characteristic of African life. The district prayer meeting as a small group meeting can be a real Christian community where Christian life is lived out and Christian faith is witnessed. The issue of community needs to be strengthened in the small group meetings, and these meetings will provide opportunities for the exercise of faith and gifts. In Acts 2, we see the church life of the first century AD—sharing their possessions, worshiping and praising God together, and eating together with sincere hearts. It was genuine fellowship, and this is what we need to aim at.

Magesa (2000:173) suggests the following for the meaningful small group community: (1) the leadership emerges from within the community; (2) the ordained leadership of the church is seen as a vital resource for the life and witness of the community; (3) the communities do not seek to grow too large; (4) they meet wherever is convenient; (5) their Christian witness is oriented towards what is happening within the wider human community of which they are part; (6) when they meet together, it is to give thanks to God and study the Bible in the light of their experiences during the week. From the points above, the second one needs to be qualified. Although the ordained leadership such

as pastors or elders play a vital role for the life of community, lay leadership is not to be ignored. Lay leaders can play a vital role as much as ordained ministers.

Gutiérrez's (2003:42) words ring true in the African context as well: "The following of Jesus is not, purely or primarily, an individual matter but a collective adventure. The journey of the people of God is set in motion by a different encounter with the Lord but an encounter in community: 'We have found Messiah.'" This community spirit and the restoration of community in which an individual finds a meaning of existence among others is the restoration of African identity, value, and dignity. African community life seeks to develop integrity and wholeness of life as an essential notion of abundant life (Kobia 2003:103-115).

5.3.2.1.3 Contextualisation (Africanisation of Christianity)

Contextualisation is essential for Christianity to be relevant in contemporary Africa. So far, mission Christianity has not succeeded in this area to a large extent. It smacks of Western culture. Therefore, what appears to have been lost in the African culture must be redeemed through the contextualisation of message, theology, and ministry. Then more culturally adequate spirituality will be a possibility. More intentional effort of contextualisation is required. What is to be achieved through contextualisation is African Christian identity.

As a concrete expression of contextualisation, we propose ethnomusicology as one of the options. Biblical messages can be transmitted through original Kikuyu, Kiswahili, or English tunes. Traditionally, moral messages were transmitted mostly through songs from generation to generation. This ancient method is still an effective means of communication even in modern Africa. In Nairobi, a Kikuyu FM station airs Kikuyu tunes, and these Kikuyu tunes have been brought in to the Presbyterian Church. People like it! Therefore, it would be effective if Christian morals and messages can be taught and disseminated through African ethnic music. Kraft (1996:265) confirms this practice by stating:

Music (often including *drama and dance*) is another important vehicle of enculturation....Both in non-western and western societies, the words of songs are powerful conveyers of the values of the society. Something sung to a catchy tune or beat is much more likely to be repeated than something merely spoken. In addition, something sung to a catchy tune or beat is more likely to be regarded positively than something merely spoken. Knowing this, those who want to influence young people regularly package their message in songs.

Christian ethnotheology (Kraft 1996:95) can be another form of contextualisation; it is a “discipline that springs naturally from the kind of integration of anthropological insight with Christian belief and commitment.” Kraft argues that a shift from a western academic philosophic mode to a cross-culturally perceptive mode for analysing scriptural data would greatly benefit Christians from all non-western cultures.

Since Africans have the Scriptures translated in many of their African languages and African Christian theology is being developed recently, there is a good chance that Christianity in Africa may become Africanised indeed. Christianity rooted on the African religio-cultural heritage and in the universal Christian gospel will be the form which Africa needs (Waruta 2000:145). The importance of contextualisation lies in the fact that although African Christians may have publicly detached themselves from traditional rituals and practices as my research participants did, the positive values and ideas embodied in those expressions remained part of the their African Christian experience (Mugambi 2000:106). Therefore, the issue of contextualisation needs ongoing reflection and implementation.

5.3.2.1.4 Holistic approach to ministry

From the interaction and integration of horizons in the first part of this chapter, I stated that the experiential dimension of spirituality must be fostered. In this regard, we propose holistic approach to ministry. We have bodies to be clothed and fed, and we experience God holistically through both body and spirit. The Kikuyu culture and worldview is holistic. So are spirituality and practical theology. As we experience God, we need to experience God in all dimensions of life. In the same way, we need to empower Africans socially,

economically, and politically and build their educational and economic capacity so that their lives can be developed holistically. In that sense, the development projects of ecumenical movement must be all-embracing and all-encompassing for reconstruction and transformation of society.

When mission Christianity came to Africa, it brought medicine and education along with the gospel (3.5.3.4). Mbiti (2002:273) claims that although mission Christianity is not succeeding in the areas of individual transformation, mission Christianity is consciously attempting to respond to human needs and the concerns of the community.

5.3.2.1.5 Biblical teaching and discipleship

In order to foster biblical spirituality, correct biblical teaching and understanding is crucial. A focus group participant (Peter) stated that in mission Christianity, the understanding of Christianity has been legalistic rather than Spirit-empowered and Christ-centred. The focus group participants themselves criticised, “people are good on Sundays but during weekdays they compromise,” and “the teaching of the Scripture is not being lived.” Mugambi (2002:91) calls this phenomenon as the “Sunday cult.”

A church becomes a cult when Christians isolate and insulate themselves from the challenges of the society in which their Church has to make a practical impact in order to be faithful to the demands of Christian mission. In the process of the modern missionary movement, this often happened....For six days they would live according to their customs, and on Sunday....they would go to the mission station where they would sing new hymns and become involved in a strange ritual.

It seems that the Sunday cult still remains in the contemporary Kenyan society. It means that the Bible has not taken a deep root in the lives of some Kenyan Christians. According to Kraft's (1996:453) term, this phenomenon is called “dual allegiance.” People live in a dual world—African traditional and Christian or secular and Christian. Discipleship training and continuous biblical teaching may help Christians to grow more mature in this situation and give a total allegiance to Christ.

5.3.2.2 Charismatic spirituality's contextuality

It was stated earlier in this chapter that the charismatic movement is a competent model of contextual spirituality. However, there are some elements that need to be addressed according to the focus group. First, as was mentioned in the integration section (5.2.2), charismatic spirituality does not appreciate African music necessarily. African music is “anathema” to them. Usually they sing American songs and look American because of American tunes and style of singing. Secondly, because of poor economic status materialism is a driving force, and gold and wealth appear to be equated with spirituality. Thirdly, sometimes they use the Scriptures to suit their purpose. Thus, a sound biblical basis is needed. Fourthly, spiritual warfare and deliverance ministry they engage in are syncretistic oftentimes—cultural and traditional beliefs added to the biblical teaching. Although the impact of charismatic spirituality tends to be shallow for the reasons above, African people identify with charismatic spirituality because charismatic churches engage in the ministries which Africans can relate to.

According to Kraft (1996:452-454), there are three encounters: allegiance, truth, and power. Allegiance encounters have to do with relationship—to rescue people from wrong allegiances and to bring them into relationship to Jesus Christ; truth encounters are about understanding—to encounter error and/or ignorance and to bring people to correct understandings; power encounters are about freedom—to release people from satanic captivity and to bring them into freedom in Jesus Christ. Evaluating Pentecostal and charismatic churches, Kraft states that they need to be careful not to go to extremes in their emphasis on power and that power demonstrations are not in and of themselves get the whole message across. They are means, not ends. The teaching of truth and the constant challenge to greater allegiance need to go together with power encounters. Then charismatic spirituality perhaps can be an effective, competent form of African Christianity.

5.3.2.3 Christian spirituality's influence on the socio-economic-political context

For Christians and the church of God to influence society, we propose the following strategies.

5.3.2.3.1 Reconnection to society

Mission Christianity gave birth to present social and political leaders. It created social norms and economic classes. However, the church did not give directions as it would have been expected but failed somewhere. There was discontinuity, and the Kenyan society is at crossroads. The church has also had a tendency to become partisan. For example, when the abortion bill was discussed in the parliament in 2006, the voice of the church was not strong enough. It was the Christian Medical Association that took up the fight against it. The church did not speak with one voice either at the crisis following the presidential election in 2007. It was reported in *Daily Nation* (14 Feb 2008) as follows:

Church leaders were partisan prior to the elections, making it impossible for them to forestall the political crisis facing the country. In a candid appraisal of their performance, the leaders under the umbrella National Council of Churches of Kenya said they did not speak with one voice, could not agree on the way elections should be managed and identified with their people on the basis of ethnicity. 'Religious leaders failed to stay on the middle path, they took sides and were unable to bring the unity needed when the crisis arose,' NCKK secretary-general Peter Karanja said yesterday.

Now is the time for the church to be reconnected to society. The church needs to raise its prophetic voice and engage in the society by crying against social injustice and taking actions through mobilisation, civic education, and advocacy on legislative issues affecting ordinary citizens such as anti-abortion, children's right, inheritance by women, etc.

One area which the church must address is African women's social condition, argues Nasimiyu-Wasike (2000:190-196). Although African women played a significant role in political struggles for independence in Africa, their full

participation in the continued struggle for total liberation was deterred by state authorities. Socially, African women experience numerous injustices—gender-discrimination, ethnocentrism, racism, and economic exploitation—that cause massive human suffering and hunger. Women and children are most affected by socio-economic-political manipulations and injustice. Therefore, the church should stand in solidarity with women and the victims of the present male-dominated African society. Actually, African women are speaking out and articulating their perspective, which has been suppressed for so long that the community has not known that it is there.

The Kenyan church must also find solidarity with the poor and the sick. Hunger, malnutrition, and disease exist in Africa as a reality, and the church must address these issues. The church and Christians should take care of those who are affected by the disintegration of the traditional African society. Liberation theology of Latin America is somewhat relevant in the African context as well. Although Kenyan Christians were not oppressed in the same way as those in Latin America, they had their share of oppression. Poverty and HIV/AIDS are real issues in Africa. Gutiérrez (2003:98-106) argues that conversion will have to have both a personal and social dimension and that “if we love others, we love them in their social context.” Solidarity with the poor in society necessitates us to break with our former ways and to find deeper dimensions of a personal, social, material, and spiritual life.

It is also critical that the church revive the traditional component of mission hospitals as part of the ministry of healing and wholeness in the midst of dysfunctional health-care system and the high cost of private health services. Grassroot congregations situated at a local community and is involved with the social affairs of the community are effective means of practicing Christian spirituality in Africa (Kobia 2003:140-157).

5.3.2.3.2 Development of relevant theology

The Kenyan church needs to develop socially and politically relevant theology. According to the focus group, theological institution and the church are not connected. The seminaries and Bible schools do not necessarily address the

needs of people. Furthermore, although you attended seminary, the church system is too powerful and pastors need to conform to the rigid church system to survive. Pastors of a local parish do not have the capacity to implement what they believe is true. The following are some concrete options of relevant theology in the African context.

First, *meaning equivalence theologising* of Kraft (1996:456) can be a relevant concept. Since different theologies are conditioned by different perspectives of people, he argues that “it is my contention that Christians from every society are allowed and should be encouraged to reflect from their perspectives and organise those reflections in whatever ways are appropriate to their society for use within that context.” This model is also called ethnotheology.

Secondly, *reconstruction* of theology is a viable model. In the African context, liberation and inculturation (contextualisation) have been two major topics of theology. Mugambi (2003a:17) states:

The liberation paradigm highlighted the necessity for the Church to become an agent of socio-political liberation, while the inculturation paradigm emphasized the necessity of the African Church to become ritually contextualized, even though the ecclesial structure would remain foreign.

However, while admitting the essential parts that liberation (with a focus on *war* against the oppressor) and inculturation (with a focus on *domesticating* the missionary brands of Christianity in Africa) played in African Christian theology since 1980s, Mugambi (2003a:6, 26-31, 103) asserts that these two theological foci are not enough to ground the church in the culture of African community. His proposition of *reconstruction* as a new paradigm in African Christian theology through theological introspection and self-criticism can be an appropriate theological model in Africa. Theology of reconstruction starts from the foundations laid by those who struggled for liberation from colonialism, racism, and super-power ideological propaganda and builds a new consciousness that looks into the future while taking into consideration of all the available resources of the present time. The method of theology of

reconstruction, therefore, is multi-disciplinary, ecumenical, and inclusive. It, therefore, includes social sciences and humanities as an integral part of theological education and ministerial formation in African theological institutions. Mugambi's reconstruction is not limited to theological reconstruction but extended to social reconstruction—making the African cultural and religious heritage the basis of economy, politics, ethics, aesthetics, and ontology.

Thirdly, *theology of Sokoni* (*sokoni* literally means “at the market place”) is another competent form of doing theology in the current context. Focusing on the paramount values of relationship, community, participation, mutuality, and equality of African culture, Kobia (2003:167-168) suggests *Sokoni*. The concept of *Sokoni* is a traditional market place where Africans learn the value and art of dialogue. It is not a building, but a place full of people drawn together by the unifying force of Christ and the give-and-take of community life. *Sokoni* was used as the theme of the World Council of Churches' Justice and Peace and Creation conference on theology of life which was held in Nairobi in 1997. It symbolises the totality of community life and space; the symbolism of the village market is not a space of chaos but the sanctuary of life, the place of dialogue with past and future where new ideas are born. In a way, *Sokoni* provides a space for paradigm shifts in which a new spirituality is gained that is broader and deeper than piety or religiosity since *Sokoni* provides a new way of thinking and doing theology at a place in which life abounds and history is constantly being made. Kobia (2003:169) continues that “doing theology in the market place of life and in the presence of the community encourages one to bridge the gap between reflection and action.”

5.3.2.3.3 Change of the church system

The church system needs to change as well, especially governance in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. According to the focus group, a more congregational structure is desirable than the current Presbyterian structure. The focus group also argued that the economic system of the Presbyterian Church was not able to support the ministers for lack of accountability and transparency on the part of deacons and elders and that tithing was not fully

practiced. Formerly, members of the Presbyterian Church were taught to pledge instead of tithe. According to the focus group, Kenyan churches are slow to change from the mission ecclesial system to a more biblical system.

Mugambi's (2003a:31-110) reconstruction of theology applies to the reconstruction of ecclesial structure as well, which inductively respond to the needs of African communities with efficacy. In order to fulfil that role, the Church itself requires internal re-structuring and provides exemplary leadership. The administrative structures of mission churches have remained until today under the direction of the ecclesial headquarters in Europe, USA, Canada, etc—allowing the mission churches to maintain their ties with their respective confessional families. However, these structures may be irrelevant to the cultural needs of local African Christians. The focus group argues that although officially being autonomous, the mission churches were in indirect control and influence of their mother churches overseas. Thus, churches in Africa must restructure their ecclesial system to properly respond to the aspirations of African individuals and communities in both rural and urban areas resulting in social transformation.

In this regard, Kraft's (1996:456-457) *meaning equivalence churches* can be a solution. He states about the foreignness of structures in mission churches:

The organizational, leadership, educational, and worship structures are usually foreign....Sunday mornings too often find nonwestern Christians meeting at a foreign time in a foreign building, seated in a foreign way, singing translated songs to western tunes guided by western instruments, followed by a western-type monologue presentation called a sermon. Such church custom....came from foreigners who simply imported their cultural practices and imposed them on people, whether or not they conveyed the intended meanings. In most parts of the world, Christianity is distinctly foreign.

Meaning equivalence churches, however, would look and sound like they belong to the receiving society. Local Christians would get the impression that God accepts them within their own cultures. This form of Christianity ensures *culturally appropriate transformation of a people's way of life*, which means

that as God changes cultures, both God and Christians shape customs and cultures to be more adequate vehicles for their communication and interaction (Kraft 1996:457).

5.3.2.3.4 Restoration of moral authority

“The world has swallowed the church,” commented a focus group participant (Peter). The focus group argued that before Christianity came to Africa, Africans had “better” morals. The focus group explained as follows. In terms of morality, human sexuality was extremely controlled in the traditional Kikuyu society. Polygamy was openly practiced, and adolescent sexual activity was checked by the traditional society. Sexual intercourse was allowed only after marriage in the Kikuyu traditional society. When mission Christianity was introduced to the Kikuyu, they were taught monogamy. If any man practiced polygamy, he was stigmatised in the church, and the polygamous practice went underground in the form of men having concubines and mistresses. This kind of covert sexual activity is still prevalent in the Kenyan society. In the case of the youth, since the traditional system of check was eliminated, they engage in sexual intercourse before marriage (3.6.2.1). The focus group agreed that in this kind of atmosphere the restoration of morality is the most urgent in the Kenyan society.

In terms of ecclesial or pastoral authority, pastors used to have the same status as that of government officials such as district officers and chiefs. People asked pastors of their opinions. These days, however, community does not ask pastors of their opinions. Pastors and the church have lost moral authority to lead society due to compromise and political partisanship. This situation needs a change.

Waruta (2000:142-144) suggests that one way for the church to change and lead in its moral and religious teachings is through a new commitment to African values and through inculcating to modern Africans some pride in being a Christian who is not ashamed of being African. In fact, “Africans are gradually showing that they want to be Christians—African Christians.”

Moral reform is not limited to personal and ecclesial practices but should extend to political, economical, and structural readjustment in society. Political corruption, economic exploitation, structural oppression need to be addressed and corrected by transformed morality of African Christian spirituality. It is ironical that many of African countries heavily infected by corruption boast of a high percentage of Christian population (Kobia 2005:59-61).

5.3.2.3.5 Summary of socio-economic-political context

In conclusion, Christian spirituality's influence on society at large requires that "scriptural data be looked at in terms of perspectives and questions appropriate to *that* context" (Kraft 1996:458). Christian spirituality in Africa must be interpreted and developed in the context of African cultural and religious milieu for the transformation of African church and society. This is true to the postfoundational and practical theological process with their emphasis on the context. Historically, Christian spiritualities developed in a certain context with a certain focus as the people of God interacted with him in their culturally appropriate ways to meet their human and religious needs. In Africa as well, proper Christian spirituality will have to be developed to meet the needs and expectations of African people in their socio-economic-political context. A focus group participant (Paul) cries, "Whereas the fundamentals of faith need not change, the way of doing ministry must change in response to the glaring needs of people."

5.3.2.4 Deepening of individual spirituality

For individual Christians to enrich their spirituality, we propose the following strategies.

5.3.2.4.1 People of action

The Presbyterian Church has been more contemplative than action-oriented. They did not want to be seen as "people of action." The focus group participants agreed that they needed to engage in more actions such as charity. The handicapped, single mothers, HIV/AIDS infected and affected, AIDS orphans, the elderly, street children, to name a few, can be assisted by Christians of all denominations. Environmental issues must also be addressed,

such as tree planting and sanitation projects. The church must fight on behalf of the voiceless and marginalised. As Mwombeki (2004:93-94) states, “The church is a social institution which is intentionally positioned to serve society....[T]he experience of Christianity in East Africa has been that the church actually understands itself as called to serve society through different social services.” Christians from the contemplative tradition can balance their spirituality by intentionally engaging in social actions.”

5.3.2.4.2 Empowerment of laity

The church ministry cannot and should not be run by clergy alone. Lay volunteers are needed. In case of the Presbyterian Church, it is not uncommon that one pastor is in charge of several congregations in a parish, and it is difficult to give proper pastoral care to all congregations of the parish. On the side of lay people, they are less motivated if only clergymen run church ministry. Lay people need to be empowered for both personal and church growth. In this context, a focus group participant (Paul) suggested the legalising of ministry of the laity. Through the training and commissioning of a team of volunteer lay leaders, the ministry of preaching and nurturing can be carried out by them under the supervision of ordained ministers. That way, the minister will be able to major in fulfilling the sacramental life of the church and the equipping the lay volunteer preachers.

Schwarz (1998:22) of *Natural Church Development* asserts the importance of empowerment of lay people in church growth as the first principle of healthy church: “[T]he leader assists Christians to attain the spiritual potential God has for them. The pastors equip, support, motivate, and mentor individuals, enabling them to become all that God wants them to be.” This kind of attitude is what the African church and her leaders need for healthy development of their church. Pastors need to help lay people to develop their potential, and lay leaders also have to encourage their pastors to run ministry with confidence and conviction.

5.3.2.4.3 Opening up to the power and gift issue

The Presbyterians have emphasised the fruit of the Spirit more than the power of the Spirit. On the other hand, charismatics have emphasised the gift and the power of the Spirit more than the inward works and the fruit of the Spirit. Both are necessary for sound Christian life. “We do not need to be schizophrenic,” said a focus group participant. It is hopeful that the Presbyterian Church is opening up to the power and gift issue, and they need to encourage both inward and outward workings of the Spirit for the development of the balanced spirituality of Kenyan Christians.

Schwarz contends gift-oriented ministry as an essential characteristic of healthy church growth and joyful Christian living:

The role of church leadership is to help its members to identify their gifts and to integrate them into appropriate ministries. When Christians serve in their area of giftedness, they generally function less in their own strength and more in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus ordinary people can accomplish the extraordinary!....[T]he discovery and use of spiritual gifts is the only way to live out the Reformation watchword of the ‘priesthood of all believers.’

What is to be noted is that the “gifts” here does not necessarily mean “signs and wonders” gifts, but the comprehensive list of the spiritual gifts of the Scriptures (Rm 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:1-31; Eph 4:11-12).

5.3.2.4.4 Learning from inter-religious devotional practice

For us to engage in inter-religious dialogue, we need to know our beliefs, and with such confident grounding in our theological conviction, we can engage in inter-religious dialogue. Although we do not adopt the beliefs of other religions, we may be able to learn from their practices. We may learn generosity from Catholics; devotion to service and reverence for God from Egyptian Coptic Church; devotion, community, and compassion from Islam.

5.3.3 Five dimensions of practical theology

The five dimensions which were used in descriptive theology are employed again here to validate the praxis.

5.3.3.1 Visional level

The most pressing issue of African theology/spirituality is the culturally relevant expression of Christian message. Africa is grappling with this issue since Christianity came to Africa in Western garb, and much of what mission Christianity brought still remains within its churches. African worldview and religiosity are still a vital part of African life. Without understanding African religiosity, mission Christianity will not be able to penetrate the depth of African reality. Therefore, the questions of contextualisation, liberation, inculturation, and reconstruction are all essential since they address African identity, worldview, and history.

The Scriptures and the history of Christianity provide the norms and hermeneutical context of spirituality. However, Christian spirituality's first tenet—understood in the context of relationship with God—becomes more lucid when African religiosity is understood.

5.3.3.2 Obligational level

Traditional African society had morals of its own. When Christianity was brought in to the African society, the social structures were destroyed with its morality. The traditional moral education pattern was replaced with mission Christianity's new education system. Such social phenomena as urbanisation, westernisation, and secularisation shattered African communal life from its foundation, and individualism crept into the African society. Currently, there is no traditional communal moral teaching nor has Christian morality penetrated into the depth of African Christians. There is a crack between traditional morality and Christian morality through which Africans, especially the young generation, fall. Therefore, there is an urgency to establish morals that would sustain society. Christian spirituality is transformative.

5.3.3.3 Tendency-need

Cultural or anthropological understanding of Christian message, theology, and ministry is prerequisite for African Christian spirituality. The desires and the needs of Africans in their unique social and cultural context is what Christian spirituality needs to consider. Community, human dignity, participation,

liberation, equality, development, etc are all genuine needs of African society, and it is in this context that further development of relevant spirituality becomes possible.

5.3.3.4 Environmental-social

Christian spirituality addresses environmental issues. However, social constraints such as poverty, political instability, and ineffective governance in the church, government, and societal organisations along with the degradation of environment pose serious threat to African people. Therefore, spirituality must address these constraints, and the church must be engaged in these areas. Holistic approach is essential. Christian spirituality integrates all aspects of human life—religious, human, and non-human.

5.3.3.5 Rule-role

In the context mentioned above, Individual Christians and churches are agents of transformation. Collaboration between clergy and laity, balance between contemplative and social-justice tradition, dialogue with other churches, tribes, and religions are some concrete actions that can be suggested to African Christians. Christian spirituality fosters interdisciplinary, interreligious, ecumenical, and cross-cultural dialogue.

5.3.4 Communication

Transformation strategies are not only for the local community where inquiry began, but also for the wider community (1.3.2.1.3). Therefore, the knowledge, insight, and perspective that have been gained through this research should be relevant to other wider contexts.

Narrative method has been used in this research, and the same narrative can be used to implement the strategies. The research participants and I have experienced widening and deepening of understanding throughout this research as we interacted with one another. Continuous dialogue in wider contexts will facilitate changes of perspective and understanding and ultimately transformation in the lives of those who will be involved in the process. Narrative and social construction are powerful tools for

transformation. Postfoundational theological positioning and engagement of the practical theological process that have been practiced in this research can be another effective means of communication. Interdisciplinarity brings about different perspectives together, and the practical theological process ensures contextual and biblical interactions possible resulting in new praxis. Critical hermeneutics between African spirituality/theology and biblical spirituality/theology would be a truly meaningful communication for understanding and transforming contemporary African Christian spirituality in the wider African context.

Practically speaking, the results of this research can be disseminated in seminary classrooms, pastoral seminars, and through publications. Implementation of the strategies can be done in a local parish, on the denominational level, or in inter-denominational forums.

5.3.5 Summary of strategies for transformation

In this chapter the following have been proposed for strategies for transformation.

In regards to mission Christianity:

- Through inter-denominational and inter-tribal dialogue different denominations and tribes need to build bridges to one another.
- It is essential that the church restores community life within the church and in the wider community.
- Contextualisation of Christianity in the form of ethnomusicology and ethnotheology will redeem what African culture has lost and affirm African religio-cultural heritage while being truthful to the universal Christian message.
- Holistic approach to ministry is the most relevant form of ministry in the African context since it coincides with African worldview and Christian spirituality.

- Persistent biblical teaching and discipleship which enable spiritual growth will be one of the most effective tools that bring about personal allegiance to Christ.

Charismatic spirituality:

- Charismatic spirituality will fare better with sound biblical teaching, affirmation of African music, balanced approach to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and non-syncretistic methods in spiritual warfare and deliverance ministry.

Christianity in the socio-economic-political context:

- By raising its prophetic voice the church needs to be reconnected to society: It must promote solidarity with the poor, the sick, and the marginalised, engage in social affairs of the community, and take actions through mobilisation, civic education, and advocacy on legislative issues affecting ordinary citizens.
- African Christianity needs to develop relevant theology: *meaning equivalence theologising* (ethnotheology) of Kraft, *reconstruction* of African theology by Mugambi, theology of *Sokoni* by Kobia can be appropriate models.
- Churches in Africa must restructure their ecclesial system to properly respond to the aspirations of African individuals and communities. The restructuring includes organisational leadership, governance, educational, and worship structures.
- Moral reforms that affirm biblical and African values should be performed personally and ecclesially first and expanded to the spheres of political corruption, economic exploitation, and structural oppression.

Deepening of individual spirituality:

- Christians from the contemplative tradition can balance their spirituality by intentionally engaging in social actions.

- Pastors need to empower laity and help them to develop their potential while laity does not ignore encouraging their pastors to run ministry with confidence.
- Both inward and outward works of the Holy Spirit must be encouraged for the balanced development of spirituality.
- Learning from inter-religious devotional practice will expand the horizon of Christians for their own benefit.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH PROCESS

In the beginning of this research, I had a desire to know about the spirituality of Kenyan pastors, which has become the title of this dissertation. I had some understanding of the subject of spirituality and some knowledge of the research field as a missionary. Now that I have finished my research and have grown in my understanding of the research context, it can be said with honesty that my previous knowledge of the context was superficial. Almost everything I did during the research process was new to me, and it provided me with new insights—methodological study, proposal, research paradigm, interview, reading, reflection, writing, etc. The whole research process has been a tremendous growing experience.

Primarily, I grew in my understanding of the subject of spirituality. Although it is shameful to admit it, I thought that spirituality was spiritual growth. The interviews with the research participants and the readings of the relevant literature led me to a deeper understanding of spirituality. Secondly, the whole process of practical theology provided me with a new tool to approach a context with new perspectives. Thirdly, I came to appreciate the importance of Africanness for Africans. I entered the research arena with little appreciation of African culture/identity/religion but came out with much appreciation. Fourthly, my relationship with some of the research participants has grown through the research process, and we now have better understanding of each other. I started out as an outsider and was careful not to impose my outsider's views on the research context. Looking back, there were interactions between my perspective and those of the research participants about the research context, which turned out to be beneficial to the research. Fifthly, through the research process I dialogued with many authors as I read books of the relevant research sub-topics. I gained knowledge about these sub-fields such as cultural anthropology, African Traditional Religion, Protestant missions in East Africa, charismatic movement,

etc. Finally, as a missionary I came to have more confidence in approaching the field of my work—pastoral training—since I now have a better understanding of African pastors and their contexts than before the research began. I can say with humility that all these efforts were transforming moments for me primarily and the research participants secondarily. I also hope that the findings of this research would contribute to contemporary African Christian spirituality.

6.2 REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research paradigm I used in this research includes four elements: postfoundational theology, practical theology, narrative, and social construction. Theologically speaking, postfoundational theological position provided me with a comfortable ground where rationality and interdisciplinarity were used with freedom. I employed a cultural anthropological model to describe the research context. Cultural anthropology interacted well with the subject of spirituality since both were holistic. Sociological perspectives also provided invaluable insights to the description and interpretation of the research context.

The practical theological process of Browning—descriptive, historical, systematic, and strategic practical—guided the progress of my research writing. Descriptive theology with the help of social science allowed me to describe the research context in thickness. The worldview, religion, and the subsystems of cultural anthropological model (Fig 3.4 modified from Kraft's) were a valuable tool for the description of the context. Historical theology gave me an opportunity to delve into biblical and historical spirituality, which provided an important grid to evaluate the context with. Through the processes of systematic and strategic practical theologies, different horizons and perspectives interacted with one another and produced valuable forward movements.

I used narratives as the main method to gather information and to generate experiences of the research participants. Through the narratives, I heard the stories of the research participants, which even surprised them oftentimes as

old experiences generate new meanings. I listened to all their stories with enthusiasm and excitement. As for me, I also discovered that my own narratives generate new experiences for me.

Social construction was another valuable method for this research. Since realities are formed socially, unpacking stories and formulating realities socially was a precious experience for me and all the research participants. Especially, the focus group and I were all excited about constructing future realities together. Without this element of social construction, my research would have produced limited understanding and biased results. I am deeply thankful to the participants including the focus group.

6.3 CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH

In chapter 1, the subject of spirituality was examined in detail. The definition, historical development, different approaches to, and the characters of spirituality were discussed, and this study gave me a solid foundation for the understanding of spirituality. Then I presented the research paradigm—postfoundationalism, practical theology, narratives, and social construction. I contend that these four elements would be a competent model for practical theological study as long as the researcher is truthful to the paradigm. Postfoundationalism is a theological positioning. Practical theology provides a model for theological progress and reflection. Narratives and social construction are methodology and methods.

Chapter 2 is a unique description of the spirituality of the research participants. These stories are the spirituality of each research participant since spirituality is holistic and comprehensive. It entails both religious and non-religious discourses. At the end of the description of each participant's spirituality, common themes that influenced their spirituality emerged. They were Kikuyu culture, early Scottish mission, The Presbyterian Church of East Africa, The East African Revival Movement, charismatic movement, and socio-economic-political issues. On the basis of these common themes questions were formulated for the description and interpretation of the research context.

Chapter 3 is a description and interpretation of spirituality informed and nourished by different traditions identified in chapter 2. In this process I employed an anthropological process. Cultural anthropology seemed to be a viable model for this process. Kikuyu worldview was examined first of all. It was found that the traditional Kikuyu worldview is changing although the basic configuration remains. Kikuyu religion was also discussed with the general characteristics of African Traditional Religion (ATR). The spirituality of the research participants reflected some influence of the ATR although none were exposed to it. African religion and culture are almost inseparable. Then Christian mission with its history, legacy, and influence on the research context was discussed. The Protestant mission laid a basic Christian foundation on the research context. The Presbyterian Church of East Africa was examined with its origins, development, and the current status. The East African Revival Movement, the first revival movement in the mainline churches, was discussed. Charismatic and Pentecostal movement in Kenya was examined with their contribution to African Christian spirituality. With their pneumatological approach to African spirituality/religiosity, it has made an impact on the spirituality of the research context. Lastly, the Kikuyu surface culture—social, economic, political subsystem—was presented. Traditional structures, changes, and contemporary phenomena of socio-economic-political context were discussed with their impact on the research participants.

From chapter 3, questions were captured for interaction and further development of the research theme. Those questions were: (1) Would mission Christianity including the Presbyterian Church of East Africa continue to be an effective form of Christianity in Kenya and among the Kikuyu?; (2) What is the relationship between charismatic spirituality and the contextual spirituality of East Africa?; (3) How can spirituality shape and influence the socio-economic-political context more than it being influenced by the context?; (4) What would the biblical and historical spirituality suggest to the spiritualities of the research participants?

Chapter 4 was the study of biblical and historical spirituality. Both Old and New Testament spirituality were presented first. Trinitarian spirituality could

not be omitted so it was inserted next. Then historical spirituality was examined chronologically. The patristic period followed by the medieval West and Eastern Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican spirituality, and major streams of spiritual traditions compiled by Richard Foster were presented.

Chapter 5 was integration and making strategies for transformation. The four questions raised at the end of chapter 3 were taken up again. Interactions between narratives, cultural and religious traditions, and biblical and historical spirituality produced new horizons. On the basis of these new horizons, strategies for transformation were made socially. When these strategies are implemented individually, ecclesially, and socially, I trust that meaningful transformation would result.

6.4 CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

I want to critically reflect on my research journey now. The most obstacles I had were my own cultural and theological biases. My Korean-American cultural background and Presbyterian theological understanding might have been reflected on this research. I tried not to bring in my perspectives but it was not possible. Therefore, I decided not to struggle with them since I thought that my perspectives would be another voice interacting with those of the research participants. Being an outsider might have been a hindrance to understanding the research context in depth, but it may have worked as an advantage since the research participants might have shared something that they would not have shared with fellow Kenyans. They taught me!

Interviews with the research participants went well. They all cooperated with me and wanted to help with the research. I am not so sure how many of them owned the research with me, but they seemed to enjoy the interviews, although they were time-consuming. Communication with the research participants was a hard part. Only one of the research participants used email and that only occasionally. Therefore, I had to meet the research participants personally every time, and that was time-consuming. Interviewing, listening to tapes, and transcribing the interview tapes were not easy at all. I had someone who transcribed the interview tapes, but I had to check the

correctness of transcription myself. To do that for twenty interviews of two hours each was a long and hard process. The total interview manuscript amounted to about 450 pages, which made it impossible to include it at the end of this dissertation. Another huge obstacle was lack of access to relevant literature in Kenya. I had to buy all the essential books from overseas, and I even travelled to the US to use the library of Biola University, CA. They had almost all the books I needed, especially for biblical and historical spirituality.

The subject of spirituality was holistic and comprehensive, and I wanted to explore it all. Perhaps that was the hardest part. I wanted to open every jar on the table and see what was inside. If I did the research again, I would narrow the research arena down to a single subject. I would choose a subject or dimension of spirituality—now that I know more about it, and that way the research would be a less demanding and more pleasant experience. However, I have no regrets. I wanted to go across the whole field of spirituality of the research context, and I am positive that I have achieved my purpose.

6.5 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

When I first began this research, little literature was available about the research context—spirituality of Kenyan pastors. There were researches done decades ago about the Kikuyu, but there was little done about the contemporary context of African Christian spirituality let alone Kikuyu spirituality. African scholars discuss African Christian theology and its relevant forms. However, as far as spirituality is concerned, not many researches have been undertaken in the East African context. I hope that this research would fill the gap a little, and that more researches would be done about the context.

What may need to be done further is a research about the whole Kikuyu tribe. This research was about Kikuyu “pastors.” Perhaps “spirituality of the Kikuyu” could be a relevant topic of the next research. Another fascinating topic of further research would be “contemporary African Christian spirituality” which covers the whole continent of Africa—East, West, and Southern Africa—with a purpose of finding some contemporary phenomena in the area of Christian spirituality.

Overall, this research process and experience were worthwhile and rewarding, and I hope that this work would become a stimulus for further researches on the African context.

APPENDIX 1

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

University of Pretoria, Department of Practical Theology, Pretoria 0002, Republic of South Africa Tel (012) 4204111

Name of the researcher: Sung Park P.O. Box 1049-00621 Village Market, Nairobi, Kenya Tel 254-20-3007510; 254-737-945508

Title of the study: Spirituality of Kenyan Pastors: a practical theological study of Kikuyu PCEA (Presbyterian Church of East Africa) pastors in Nairobi.

Purpose of the study: This study is undertaken as a requirement of a PhD degree at University of Pretoria.

Procedures: The method of the research will be interviews on the basis of narrative methodology. The interviews will take approximately two hours each, and the total of three or more interviews will take place. The researcher will ask the research participants questions, and a tape recorder will be used to record the conversations. When the researcher finishes writing up the conversation, he will send the document to the participant for review, correction, and comment. There will be a small compensation at the end of the research to show appreciation to the participants. This participation is totally voluntary, and the participants may withdraw from participation in the study at any time if he or she so desires without any negative consequences. The data of the interview will not be used against them at all. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the participants, and all information will be treated confidential. Throughout the research process all the participants will have an access and say to the writing of the research document.

I agree to the above statement and give my consent.

Participant
Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher
Signature _____

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEWS WITH THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Sam

First interview: 29 September 2005

Second interview: 5 October 2005

Third interview: 6 December 2005

Fourth interview: 18 October 2006

Fifth interview: 5 December 2006

Paul

First interview: 23 June 2005

Second interview: 1 September 2005

Third interview: 12 November 2005

Fourth interview: 7 December 2006

Grace

First interview: 16 September 2005

Second interview: 23 September 2005

Third interview: 20 December 2005

George

First interview: 15 June 2005

Second interview: 30 August 2005

Third interview: 3 October 2005

Fourth interview: 5 October 2006

Mary

First interview: 19 September 2005

Second interview: 3 October 2005

Third interview: 5 December 2005

Fourth interview: 6 October 2006

Fifth interview: 14 December 2006

The names are pseudonyms.

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEWS WITH THE FOCUS GROUP

Participants: Paul, Peter, Silas

First interview: 4 March 2008

Second interview: 27 March 2008

The names are pseudonyms.

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