UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

PROBLEMS OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE

AGĨKŨYŨ IN RELATION TO AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW AND

ECCLESIAL INSTRUCTIONS: A CASE OF KĨAMBAA SUB-COUNTY, KĩAMBU COUNTY

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original Study and has not been submitted to any College or University for academic credit.

Information from other sources and my main respondents has been duly acknowledged.

Signed: ………………………….   Date……………………….

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The Study has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

Fr. Prof. P.N. Wachege – First Supervisor

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DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to my parents Dad Benjamin Kipkalum Kaptum and Mum Grace Wanjikũ Kaptum together with my supportive siblings Jemutai Kipkalum, Jerotich Kipkalum, Cheserem Kipkalum and Jepkorir Kipkalum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFER -   African Ecclesiastical Review.

CCC-   Catechism of the Catholic Church.

DB -   Dictionary of the Bible.

DBT -   Dictionary of Biblical Theology.

DFT -   Dictionary of Fundamental Theology.

DNT -   Dictionary of the New Testament.

EBT -   Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology.

IDB -   Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.

KCCB -   Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops.

NCE -   New Catholic Encyclopedia.

NDCT -   A New Dictionary of Christian Theology.

NJB-   New Jerusalem Bible.

NJBC -   New Jerome Biblical Commentary.

RCC –   Roman Catholic Church.

TDNT -   Theological Dictionary of New Testament.

ABSTRACT

   The study examined the problems of Christian family life among the Agĩkũyũ in relation to African world-view and Ecclesial instructions on family basing itself in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County. It aimed at empowering Christian families to effectively handle the difficulties that they encounter in living their family life so that they can achieve a fulfilling Christian family life. It is both anthropological and theological. On one hand, the anthropological section scrutinizes the social organization, cultural, social and religious values of the Agĩkũyũ relevant to the family and on the other hand the theological section explicates the relevant Church Doctrines and theological reflections on family life. The two were merged with the intention of the realization of a true African Christian family life.

   The main goal of the study was to investigate the problems Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter in Christian family life in the light of African world-view and ecclesial instructions on family. It was achieved by first investigating the problems encountered in living a Christian family life then explaining the nature and expected royalty of African harmonious world-view items on family in general and Christian family life in particular. Furthermore, the study discussed significant ecclesial instructions on family life that can be exploited for the common good of the family and welfare of Christian family life as well as how respect for African harmonious world-view items and Church teaching on family can be fruitfully utilized in addressing today's problems to Christian family life.

   To examine the research further, the Study was guided by three interrelated theories which are General cum Special Revelation theory propagated by scholars like Latourelle where he explicates the issue of "external and internal testimony" on family through the Holy Spirit, Rahner who explains how God manifests Himself to families through Jesus Christ and Dupuis where he expounds how God reveals Himself to people through His creation so that Christians can understand God's plan for family members. The other theory that guided the study was mediation theory propagated by Boff and Boff. The theory complemented the above theory which did not provide the methodological approach to the primary and secondary data accompanied by way forward. Then there was the third theory that helped in sourcing from the Bible scientifically called redaction criticism theory propagated by Biblical forthright scholars like Bornkamm, Fuchs and Kasemann. The theory provided a critical manner of sourcing from the Bible and Tradition.

   The overall hypothesis of the study was that Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter problems in Christian family life that deserve to be handled in the light of African world-view and ecclesial instructions on family. It was supported by specific hypotheses that there are problems confronting the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County in living Christian family, then a proper understanding and realistic adherence to African harmonious world-view items on family in general and Christian family life in particular is of immense importance to the study. Moreover, there are significant ecclesial instructions on family that can be employed for the common good of the family and welfare of Christian family life and that respect for African harmonious world-view items and Church teaching on family can be fruitfully utilized in addressing today's problems to Christian family life.

   Additionally, the findings of the research showed that there are a vast number of problems faced by the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County. But the researcher focused mainly on the effect of poverty on family life, marital, parenting and cultural difficulties encountered by Christian

families in the area. Proper analysis and interpretation of the study's outcome are meant to conscientize the researcher, readers and family members in various communities on the negative impact of their shortcomings to family life especially in the contemporary society. The study did not stop at identifying these problems but went further to show how respect for African world-view and Ecclesial instructions on family can be fruitfully utilized in addressing today's complications to Christian family life. Moreover, from the study, the Church was challenged to journey with the Christians and to constantly remind them to lead the kind of lives that God intended for them hence realizing a fulfilling Christian family life. Furthermore, the members of the community were encouraged to uphold Agĩkũyũ traditional values that promote their lives as African Christians hence attaining a satisfying African Christian family life. Due to the limitations imposed on the current study, the study suggested areas for further research including carrying out a research on the problems facing families basing itself on other religions and communities.

MAP OF STUDY AREA

Source: Google Maps

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

African Christian Theology: While it is taken to mean confronting African cultures with the Good News, the study operationalize it to mean: A systematic and scientific understanding, presentation and concrete authentic interpretation of the Christian faith/Gospel/Good News in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought forms and mentality of the Africans i.e., an ongoing evangelization process of confronting Christianity with the African cultures (Wachege, 2012: 26).

African Theology: It is generally discourse on God by the Africans. The study, nevertheless, utilizes the term to mean: The scientific and systematic effort, guided by reason illumined by faith (faith seeking understanding), to understand and present Christian faith in accordance with African needs and mentality (Nyamiti, 2005: 5).

Agĩkũyũ: An agrarian, patrilineal, large Bantu people (sometimes manifesting Maasai elements) with a remarkable, vitalistico-communal-relational world-view, belonging to both *mariika* (age-groups and generations) and the full nine *mĩhĩrĩga* (clans) named after the full nine daughters of their originating Ancestors namely: Gĩkũyũ, their father whom they are named after; and his wife Mũmbi, their mother to whose *nyũmba* (household) they belong – both being the Agĩkũyũ forefathers mysteriously created and endowed with properties from *Kĩrĩnyaga* (Mt. Kenya) by *Mwene-Nyaga*, the one and only *Ngai* (God) whom they adore (Wachege, 1992: 11).

Ancestorship: State of being an Ancestor. In the study, the concept will be used as "a sacred kin-relationship which establishes a right or title to regular sacred communication with one's own kin through prayer and ritual offering (oblation)" (Nyamiti, 2006: 4).

Christian faithful : Those whose royalty and standards are based on Christ. These are followers and disciples whose allegiance is Christ. While maintaining such an understanding, the study's working definition is :"Those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through Baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each one (Pope John Paul 11, 1992: no. 871).

Conscientization: It is helping to learn to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality (Freire, 1998: 41ff).

Christian Mystery: That which is secret with hidden meaning, understanding and interpretation made possible through divine revelation; for instance the mystery of the Trinity and the mystery of the Kingdom of God (McKenzie, 1966: 595ff). The study shall examine Christian Mysteries in the light of *Nexus Mysteriorum* (interconnection of Christian mysteries).

Culture: Although the popular understanding of the word is that of people's way of life, the study will operationalize the concept to mean "a system of conceptions and norms for behavior which are expressed in symbols, and which orientate the members of society cognitively, effectively and behaviorally to one another and to the world in which they live" (Shorter, 2005: 17).

Inculturation: The common understanding is that of confronting Christianity with diverse cultures. In the study, which is mainly theological, the term will be used to mean "the insertion of the tradition of Christian faith into a non-Christian culture and a subsequent ongoing dialogue between that faith and the culture into which it is inserted" (Shorter, 2005: 17).

Liberation Theology: It is a theological moment of the experience of Christian faith when it undertakes to consciously transform a world in a situation of dependence on the basis of the Gospel (Boff, 1987: 1).

Nexus Mysteriorum: An expression meaning "interconnection of Christian mysteries." It designates the teaching that Christian mysteries are organically linked together in such a way that it is possible to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of any mystery by examining its link with any other mystery or mysteries (Nyamiti, 2005: 28).

World-view: Respective people's philosophy of life. In the study the term will be employed to mean "how an individual, a society, a community, a nation or a historical epoch views, sees, conceives or understands the world, and the reaction which follows therefrom" (Wanjohi, 1997: 38).

CHAPTER ONE
STUDY'S OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The chapter provides the setting of the study by examining the background to the study, statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, justification of the study, scope and limitations of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, research hypotheses and research methodology. The section is very crucial because it gives an overview of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

The contemporary society is apparently overwhelmed by all kinds of evil which persistently impact negatively towards the institution of Christian family life. The media is so saturated with factors impacting badly towards fruitful realization of married and family life. There is such a proliferation of elements like numerous separations, divorces, eliminating own children, mutual brutality between the consorts some of them fatal and rampant mistrust among the couples that it would be superfluous to give references. Such evils that run across communities and specifically Christian families are seen to be the root cause of un-freedom and suffering that prevent Christians from living an authentic Christian family life.[1] There seems to be a burn out with regard to the numerous cases of culprits bearing Christian names and still going for services and Masses habitually. The scenario makes researchers wonder as to whether such disciples and followers of Jesus Christ live by his standards of living Christian family life. One also wonders whether the highly talked about "Family of God" image of the Church inspired by Synod of African Bishops[2] makes sense in today's Christian family life at all. Moreover, since they are also people socialized in their respective African cultures whereby they are supposed to be – to use Mbiti's coined term – "notoriously religious," a real problem for research emerges.

It is worthy to note that there are researchers who have come up with commendable works on problems to Christian family life at the level of erudition in diversified perspectives. To take but just a few examples: Ndungwa handled the crisis of family life from the point of view of *Akamba single mothers in reference to parenting the boy child* basing her study on Mwala District,

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[1] P. N. Wachege, *Living To Die Dying To Live: African Christian Insights* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2002), pp. 272-293.
[2] Synod Pope John Paul 11, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (*Church in Africa*), 14 September, 1995.

Machakos County;[3] Wachege and Cherono came up with a related study on *African socio-religio-cultural understanding of family and parenting;*[4] Wachege published a comprehensive monograph on *third millennium African single mothers and mother widows* whereby he identifies and explicates at least 31 categories of single motherhood, their difficulties to Christian family life and suggested the accompanying way forward;[5] Mũthoni who tackled the problem from the point of view of *post marriage parenting challenges within the context of former single mothers*[6]; then there is Kĩrĩma who investigated the *impact of some modes of women liberation on African Christian families*[7]; Kamundia researched on *the role of Anglican Church of Kenya in ministering to contemporary African single mothers* basing his research in Embakasi Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Nairobi[8]; Awuor chips in with an invaluable study on *the challenges of University students single mothers in the light of Christian women liberation theology rooted in Christian doctrine of family, parenting and education* basing her study in the Faculty of Arts, University of Nairobi[9]; we then have Chamwama who did a commendable research on *the role and meaning of birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death rituals among the Logoli of Western Kenya in view of Inculturating related sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church*[10] and the list can go on and on.

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[3] W. B. Ndungwa, *The Challenges of Akamba Single Mothers in Reference to Parenting the Boy Child in the Light of Christian Complementary Feminism: A Case Study of Mwala District, Machakos County, Unpublished M.A.* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012).

[4] P. N. Wachege and F. Cherono, *African Socio-Religio-Cultural Understanding of Family and Parenting: A Case of Agĩkũyũ Ethnic Community, "The International Journal of Humanities and Social Studies (ISSN 2321-9231), vol. 5 Issue 3, (June 2017).*

[5] P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2003).

[6] P. M. Mũthoni, *Post Marriage Parenting Challenges: The Case of Former Single Mothers in Gĩthũngũri A. C. K. Church Parish,* Unpublished M.A. (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2008).

[7] P. W. Kĩrĩma, T*he Impact of Some Modes of Women Liberation On African Christian Families in Kagio Town, Kirĩnyaga County*, Unpublished M.A. (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012).

[8] E. M. Kamundia, *The Role of Anglican Church of Kenya in Ministering to Contemporary African Single Mothers: A Case Study of Embakasi Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Nairobi* , Unpublished M.A. (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012).

[9] A. D. Awuor, *The Challenges of University Students Single Mothers in the Light of Christian Women Liberation Theology Rooted in Christian Doctrine on Family, Parenting and Education: A Case Study of University of Nairobi's Faculty of Arts*, Unpublished M. A. (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012).

[10] K. E. Chamwama, *The Role and Meaning of Birth, Naming, Initiation, Marriage and Death Rituals Among the Logoli of Western Kenya in View of Inculturating Related Sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church*, Unpublished PhD Thesis (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012).

Interestingly, none of the above and other works we are aware of handles the subject specifically in relation to African world-view and ecclesial instructions on family life as the study intends to do. Hence the intent to tackle the aforementioned from this perspective to complement the aforementioned and other related scholarly works. For specificity sake, the mode of family that the study opts for is the Christian one. That is why the qualification is "Christian family life" and the research area is the aforementioned locality as a case study.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

The perception of family within the framework of African philosophy of life and being is inclusive, complex, geared towards solidarity and well-disposed to authentic interpersonal relationship with others.[11] As Ndiaye points out, it "includes not only father, mother, and children but also a lineage, ethnicity, and clan as well as cousins, siblings, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and relatives by marriage who may belong to different ethnic groups, religions, and linguistic constituencies. It consists of a web of multiple solidarities and specific relations with economic dimensions and divisions of labour and goods that are often sources of conflict."[12] The bottom-line is that an African family is better understood in relation to what Nyamiti identified and explained as the five crucial inter-related factors in the African world-view. These are life, power/dynamism, sacrality, communality and anthropocentrism.[13]As such, royalty to the above African traditional philosophy of family is expected to equip African families with strong means of countering the current problems that are directed to the families causing havoc in them.

In connection with the aforementioned, adherence to the affinity of the above elements is supposed to enhance family solidarity. Moreover, since talking of family one is already in the realm of married life, the implication is that fidelity to the aforementioned characteristics of life and living should work for family harmony as well as the welfare of married life. On the other

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[11] P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Inculturated into Agĩkũyũ Elderhood as Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): A Third Millennium Fountain of Hope and Joyful Love* (Nairobi: Little Eden Publishers, 2018), pp. 44ff.

[12] A. R. Ndiaye, "*Church as Family or Family as Church?*" in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), pp. 157-158.

[13] C. Nyamiti*, Studies in African Christian Theology Vol. 1- Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2010), pp. 55-74.

hand, violation or contempt for the same African harmonious world-view items results in family disintegration and, as a consequence, a serious problem to Christian family life that should be scrutinized at the level of erudition. In relation to the above, an African family and married state of life embraces the Ancestors whose affinity to the descendants is indispensable resulting in the Ancestors granting favours because of proximity to the Benevolent One and the descendants paying homage in the amicable interchange for the welfare of families and the community at large.[14]Notwithstanding the foregoing, the study wonders as to why families, including the Christian ones, are virtually disintegrating as they encounter disturbing existential factors.

Also, as Wachege explains, with the intervention of the Ancestors and benevolent gift of life and environs/creation the African family has a gratuitous bond with the environment and, above all, with the Supreme Being. That is why beyond the family members' homage and veneration of the Ancestors they specifically sacrifice to and worship God within and in unison with the families.[15] It is also significant to have the awareness that "the religious and the social, the spiritual and the law exist together in it. In his or her family, a child discovers transcendence, a sense of the spiritual, the law, solidarity, fraternity, and benevolence and learns respect for elders as well the veneration of Ancestors."[16] It is important also to bear in mind that: "Social values associated with the family establish relationships of trust and promote dialogue, attention to one another, warmth, joint research, and safeguarding the common good."[17] As such, malevolent forces and problems geared towards family and, indeed, married lives urgently need to be investigated and tackled not just broadly but at a focused scholarly level as the study intends to do concentrating on Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County for specificity sake.

Additionally, experiential knowledge and media coverage indicate that there are repugnant issues that confront Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County in living Christian family life that has been taken for granted even by researchers – at least academic ones. The study's earlier exposition gives credence to the assertion that a proper understanding and realistic adherence to African

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[14] Ibid., pp. 65-68.

[15]P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Inculturated into Agĩkũyũ Elderhood as Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): A Third Millennium Fountain of Hope and Joyful Love* (Nairobi: Little Eden Publishers, 2018).

[16]A . R. Ndiaye, *"Church as Family or Family as Church?"* in A. E. Orobator (Ed.), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 158.

[17] Ibid., p. 158.

harmonious world-view items on family in general and Christian family life in particular is of immense importance more so to Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County and others. The locality being predominantly Christian with Christian marriages habitually contracted virtually every Saturday witnessed by huge congregations and the consorts embracing married state – notwithstanding pronounced divorces and couples' mutual brutality -, there must then be significant ecclesial instructions on family that can be employed for the common good of the family in general and welfare of Christian family life in particular. Furthermore, since the trend of interreligious dialogue, ecumenism, Inculturation and liberation are the in thing nowadays, it would not be farfetched to assume, even at this stage, that respect for African harmonious world-view items and Church teaching on family can be productively utilized in addressing today's obstacles to the realization of a fruitful Christian family life. Such are the issues the study endeavored to research on, verify or even falsify within the context of African world-view and the framework of ecclesial instruction on family life.

The study was thus be guided by the following main research questions:

1. What problems do the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter in living Christian family life?

2. What is the nature and expected royalty of African harmonious world-view items in relation to the family in general and Christian family life in particular?

3. Are there meaningful ecclesial instructions on family that can be employed for the common good of the family and welfare of Christian family life?

4. How can respect for African harmonious world-view items and Church teaching on family be utilized in addressing today's problems to Christian family life?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main goal of the study was to investigate the problems Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter in Christian family life in the light of African world-view and ecclesial instructions on family. It was be achieved through the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate the problems encountered in living a Christian family life among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County.

2. To explain the nature and expected royalty of African harmonious world-view items on family in general and Christian family life in particular.
3. To identify and elaborate significant ecclesial instructions on family life that can be exploited for the common good of the family and welfare of Christian family life.
4. To discuss how respect for African harmonious world-view items and Church teaching on family can be fruitfully utilized in addressing today's problems to Christian family life.

1.5 Justification of the Study

While Kĩambaa Sub-County has been predominantly Agĩkũyũ compared to the surrounding localities like Karũri, Mũchatha and Kanunga, a disinterested observation shows that recently, it has been gradually impressively opening up to other ethnic groups. The phenomenon is taking place more so through the populous Senior Chief Koinange High School which admits teachers, students and support staff from diverse ethnic communities, farm workers, house helps, numerous tenants and inter-marriages which used to be rare previously in the locality. It is also endowed with two major mainstream Churches right in the middle of it namely Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Church. The Churches are inclusive in evangelization and all-embracing in consort's contracting ecclesial marriages. Such inclusiveness of communities affirming the image of the "Family of God" as coined by Synod for African Bishops[18] is commendable. Nevertheless, the emerging accruing matrimonial issues cum Christian family life like inter-ethnic socio-cultural diversity, polygamous mode of family, husbands divorcing consorts to "push" with the "safe" immigrant house helps and other available workers yearn for academic research. A particular ethnic group that of Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County, is chosen in the sense that focusing on one ethnic community ensures a deeper more comprehensive research on its socio-religio-cultural and economic aspects while being disposed to learning from other communities. Moreover, as Nyamiti explains, what is truly valuable in a particular African group goes beyond it since it benefits the other communities as well.[19]

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[18] John Paul II, Pope. *Ecclesia in Africa (The Church in Africa)*, Vatican, 14th September, 1995.
[19] C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol. 1 - Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p. 12.

Among the commonly pronounced problems to Christian family life, as documented by Munro, are: "The influences of modern media and means of communication; the reality of human trafficking, prostitution, and drugs; economic pressure to find employment; abuse or violence, death of a spouse or parents; AIDS, divorce, poverty, migration; the place of traditional African cultures and practices; the recognition of marriage as a process in African traditional societies; and the various constellations other than two parents and children making up modern families."[20] The doubt is whether such is a mere tipping of the iceberg hence the urge to explore and find out.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study limits itself to Kĩambaa Sub-County which, unlike the surrounding localities though previously dominated by the Agĩkũyũ, is eventually opening up to diverse ethnic communities at a terrific rate, some belonging to the two aforementioned mainstream Churches, whose main centres are right at the middle and are renowned for inclusiveness in evangelization and family affairs among others. Another thing is that, as Nyamiti notes, the fundamental items in the African philosophy of life cutting across communities are vitality, dynamism, sacredness, communality and anthropocentrism[21] which run across African ethnic groups. Nonetheless, much as these elements are appreciated and are indispensable in handling the research topic opted for, it is not practical for the current study to address the five main factors vis-à-vis the chosen topic. Focus will then be on the aspect that apparently embraces the others best i.e. communality. The rationale is that it is in the community where families merge that life-force/vital force (to use Tempel's coined term in his *Bantu Philosophy* book), sacrality and anthropocentrism are lived and realised. Moreover, while remaining open to enrichment from other communities, the perception is that "the worth of any human or religious value transcends time and place, and as such is beneficial to any human being...And that any authentic cultural value from any African society belongs to the others too."[22] It will also be a model on how to employ the other world-

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[20] A. Munro, "*The Ecclesia Women Want in Africa: Some Challenges*," in A. E. Orobator, *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in African* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 207.

[21] The five factors are explained in – P.N. Wachege, *CRS 560: African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012), pp. 14ff.

[22] C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol. 1 - Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p. 11.

view aspects in related studies hence the rationale for handling the issue in relation to African world-view and ecclesial instruction on family life.

1.7 Literature Review

Under the subsection, the study reviews, among others, publications relevant to the topic opted for belonging to both Inculturation outlook and liberation perspective with the conviction that, thanks to Wachege's and Nduto's article,[23] the two main approaches shed light to each other. We will thus explore publications by Wachege, Wanjohi, Nyamiti, Cagnolo, and Battignole. In addition to these, will be Vatican 11 CCC, Papal Encyclicals and Exhortations. In addition, monographs by L. Boff and C. Boof, Kinoti and Kibicho will be perused too.

Wachege's book namely *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki*[24] comes in handy. It enriches the study by describing who the Agĩkũyũ are, their origin and uniting factors as well as social organization.[25] It also provides a profound explanation of Agĩkũyũ world-view from the point of view of Agĩkũyũ elders.[26] The author explains that Agĩkũyũ elderhood is indispensably incorporated into Agĩkũyũ world-view within the context of family and family-life together with religiosity such that one would not be elevated to elderhood if one did not have a family and showed one's capability with regard to family life welfare and commitment to religious affairs.[27] He explains the Agĩkũyũ as: "An agrarian, patrilineal, large Bantu people (sometimes manifesting Maasai elements) with a remarkable, vitalistico-communal-relational world-view, belonging to both *mariika* (age-groups and generations) and the full nine *mĩhĩrĩga* (clans) named after the full nine daughters of their originating Ancestors namely: Gĩkũyũ, their father whom they are named after; and his wife Mũmbi, their mother to whose *nyũmba* (household) they belong – both being the Agĩkũyũ forefathers mysteriously created and endowed with properties from *Kĩrĩnyaga* (Mt.

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[23] Wachege, P. N. and S.N. Syengo, "*An Investigation of Blending Inculturation and Liberation Approaches Towards New Evangelization in Contemporary Africa*," International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, Vol.8, No.7, 26 July 2018, E-ISSN: 2222-6990, PP, 74-88.

[24] P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992).

[25] Ibid., pp. 6-16.

[26] Ibid., pp. 17ff.

[27] Ibid., pp. 17-73.

Kenya) by *Mwene-Nyaga*, the one and only *Ngai* (God) whom they adore."[28] A noted shortcoming, however, is that he is not quite elaborate on his indicated "vitalistico-communal-relational world-view" in such a way that it can help the study in a better way. Neither does he actually define the concept world-view. That is why reference is made to Wanjohi to fill up the gap here.

In his book titled *The Wisdom and Philosophy of the Agĩkũyũ Proverbs: The Kĩhooto World-view*,[29] Wanjohi provides interesting insights into the study. He enables us to understand the concept world-view as "how an individual, a society, a community, a nation or a historical epoch views, sees, conceives or understands the world, and the reaction which follows therefrom."[30] He shows that individual cultures, the Agĩkũyũ one included, are endowed with own specific world-views that guide them in life.[31] He notes that world-view is not monolithic but there is a pluriformity of it which is not just ongoing but also transforming according to diverse situations in life.[32] He goes on to explain who the Agĩkũyũ are by elaborating the environment and physical features of their main dwelling places,[33] their origin and historical factors, Gĩkũyũ language including the dialects.[34]

Of particular interest to the study, Wanjohi provides a comprehensive overview of Agĩkũyũ proverbs and their underlying philosophy crowning it with *Kĩhooto* (reason) world-view.[35] He elaborates that Agĩkũyũ proverbs are not only imbued with the essential characteristics of philosophy namely, ethics, metaphysics and epistemology but they also have *Kĩhooto* (reason) whose wisdom brings about "practical advice on how to view and handle problems of life."[36] One notices that the author talks of "problems of life" in general. Here the study fills up the gap by being pragmatic in this regard. It concretizes the above by specifically referring to problems of Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County. Nevertheless, the author comes out well by underscoring that Agĩkũyũ world-view is expressed vividly in the philosophy

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[28] Ibid., p. 11.
[29] G. J. Wanjohi, *The Wisdom and Philosophy of the Agĩkũyũ Proverbs: The Kĩhooto World-view* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997).
[30] Ibid., p. 38.
[31] Ibid., p. 39.
[32] Ibid., p. 39.
[33] Ibid., p. 19.
[34] Ibid., pp. 20-44.
[35] Ibid., pp. 38ff.
[36] Ibid., p. 14.

of wisdom proverbs.[37] He does not, however, show how to utilize the proverbs in tackling specific community and family life conflicts as the study endeavors to do. Neither does he analyze the perception of Ancestors and Ancestorship as among the vital factors in Agĩkũyũ family life together with main items of African world-view.

Nyamiti comprehensively fills up the aforementioned lacuna. In his book titled *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol.* 2 he is resourceful in giving the nature of Ancestorship as understood by the Africans.[38] In very scholarly manner, he identified five main African world-view factors which cut across ethnic groups including the Agĩkũyũ. They are: vitality/life, dynamism/power, sacrality, communality and anthropocentrism. It has to be appreciated that Ancestors are critical in the perception of African world-view. That is why it is indispensable to have a clear understanding of who they are. Nyamiti comes in handy in explaining Ancestorship as follows: "Ancestorship is a sacred kin- relationship which establishes a right or title to regular sacred communication with one's own kin through prayer and ritual offering (oblation)."[39] The definition is triggered by summing up Ancestral qualities in the Africa philosophy of life namely: kinship,[40] supernatural sacred status trees,[41] exemplarity,[42] mediation,[43] and right or title [44] to regular sacred communication with ones kin.[45]

The above underscores the indispensable value of family life – since one has to be an Ancestor of a family having come from family life. It also shows how handling and assisting to positively face family life problems is an added credit towards realizing Ancestorship in yonder life. It has to be remembered that the status is highly envied as an accomplishment of life. Best of all, it enhances a wider scope of perception of African family to include those in celestial life on top of those still on earth and the descendants. Despite the aforementioned enrichment, the author, nevertheless, does not come up with a case study so as to concretize the commendable world-view from the point of view of the Ancestors under the umbrella of African philosophy of life.

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[37] Ibid., p. 19.

[38] C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol. 2- Jesus Christ the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005).

[39] Ibid., p. 4.

[40] Ibid., p. 9.

[41] Ibid., p. 10.

[42] Ibid., p. 11.

[43] Ibid., p. 11.

[44] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

[45] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

Nyamiti is again helpful, in his book titled *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1*,[46] in providing an understanding of African theology. He defines it as "the scientific and systematic effort, guided by reason illumined by faith (faith seeking understanding), to understand and present Christian faith in accordance with African needs and mentality."[47] The author cautions us from engaging a naive dialogue between African socio-cultural characteristics and Christianity but to opt for a serious scrutiny and integration that transforms the community for better.[48] In case of conflict, Nyamiti alerts the study that the point of reference is Christianity and not the other way round since, when all is said and done, it is the Gospel that corrects, transforms and elevates to Godliness as authoritatively taught by the God-Man Jesus Christ.[49]

He further legitimizes the choice of a particular ethnic community, in our case the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County, as a valid approach since the authentic value in an ethnic group goes beyond it and is for the benefit of the other communities even those who do not have the values in common as the former opens itself to mutual benefit too.[50] He also indicates and elaborates the two main sources of African Christian Theology namely the Scriptures together with Tradition and African socio-cultural reality.[51] He even spells out that the former, i.e., Bible and Tradition, take the priority thereby purifying and correcting the latter while raising it up to what God wills it to be.[52] A drawback, nevertheless, arises in that Nyamiti does not show us pragmatically how to retrieve African values and how to source scientifically from Scriptures as the study does using insights from mediation theory and redaction criticism theory.

Cagnolo helps the study to know that although Agĩkũyũ's language particularly grammatical structure, customs, mentality, nature and the tools they use confirm that they are Bantu in origin, nevertheless, it would not be correct to talk of pure Agĩkũyũ owing to mingling with other ethnic groups like the Maasai.[53] He underlines the reality of nine full i.e., ten clans which are not only named after the daughters of Gĩkũyũ and Mũmbi but eventually acquired more subdivisions

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[46] C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol. 1 - Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005).
[47] Ibid., p. 5.
[48] Ibid., p. 6.
[49] Ibid., p. 6.
[50] Ibid., p. 11.
[51] Ibid., p. 16.
[52] Ibid., p. 17.
[53] C. Cagnolo, *The Kikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933), p. 18.

scattered all over the land which would make less studious people talk of more than ten clans.[54] He explains that inter-marriage among clans was not automatic since, clan heads would forbid marriage with a clan which grossly deviated from moral conduct and important family aspects.[55]

The author is candid enough to reveal that the Agĩkũyũ were well established in family life set up with defined duties, opportunities and rights of respective members for the welfare of the family community prior to the coming of the missionaries.[56] The man in the family was the head, the uniting person and the buck of handling family life problems stopped on him in collaboration with the other elders.[57] He corrects the picture painted by some foreigners that the ethnic group's men are oppressive paternalists whose habit is to promote their ego without substantial concern for the wives and family at large. He verifies that the contrary is true and that as shepherds, they tender their homestead with loving care, consensus and customary pride.[58] Not only is he the guarantor of family bond but he is forthright in leading on the issue of family trials.[59]

Also, while there was a vivid preference for boy child, they, nevertheless, accepted girl child not as a liability but as an asset especially in attracting dowry.[60] That is why the Agĩkũyũ had an integral gender parenting whereby the boy child was socialized towards virility and the girl child towards femininity viewing them as complementary. Such positive aspects do not prevent the author in revealing a rather odd treatment of some categories of children. He discloses that some innocent children were eliminated owing to some taboos. Among the examples he gives is that of getting rid of twins.[61] Unfortunately, he does not elaborate the belief behind such an odd practice from an ethnic group renowned for pro-life philosophy of living. The study overcame the shortcoming by digging into the rationale behind the peculiar conduct and showing that far from being obsolete, the scenario is still conservative in the area.

Cagnolo indicates further some unfortunate traditional injustices meted out on women in relation to family land ownership. He shows that by virtue of marriage through dowry produced by their male consorts, she is not only by that fact owned by the husband but all in the homestead

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[54] Ibid., p. 18.
[55] Ibid., p. 21.
[56] Ibid., p. 50.
[57] Ibid., p. 50.
[58] Ibid., p. 51.
[59] Ibid., pp. 52-53.
[60] Ibid., p. 62.
[61] Ibid., p. 63.

– including what is exclusively hers - is the husbands to be bequeathed to male children and not to wives or daughters or widows within the family life set up.[62] The gap here is that he just mentions the unfavorable traditional family life possession practices but does not dig deep into the issue as the study endeavors to do. Neither did he have the advantage of referring to 2010 Kenya constitution which directs that there should be no gender discrimination on inheritance matters as the researcher does thereby giving inheritance rights to women.

Bottignole enriches the study in her publication i.e. *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity*[63] which illumines in various ways. Awareness is created that Agĩkũyũ customary social structure revolved around an all-embracing family and family life which included not just the nuclear community but also the extended one as well as the clan.[64] One learns that Agĩkũyũ family life was at first matrilineal eventually revolving to the current patrilineal system conferring leadership to men while, respectfully, maintaining women original clan names.[65] As Wachege records, those matriarchal based clans are: Agacikũ (from Wanjikũ), Aceera (from Njeri), Ambũi (from Wambũi), Anjirũ (from Wanjirũ), Ethaga also called Ambura or Akĩũru (from Nyambura), Angũi also called Aithiegeni (from Wangũi), Angarĩ (from Wangarĩ), Aithĩrandũ also called Angeci (from Waithĩra), Airimũ also called Agathigia (from Wairimũ), and Aicakamũyũ (from Wamũyũ).[66] The daughters encountered an equivalent number of young men as their husbands who emerged mysteriously from God after Gĩkũyũ sacrificed to *Nyene* (the Owner of all) later effecting *mariika* (age groups cum generations) family system namely: Kĩmerero/Kĩongo/Kĩambĩrĩria (generating generation i.e. Gĩkũyũ's and Mũmbi's); Kariraũ; Agu; Tirũ; Mathaathi; Maina; Mwangi; and Irũngũ.[67]

Bottignole goes on to explain that relationality was fundamental in healthy inter-personal relationships, vital conviviality and family life where each member is delegated with duties to play and rights to benefit from thus going a long way in solving family problems.[68] The youth in particular were socialized into such requirements mainly through initiatic rituals as they were

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[62] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[63] S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984).

[64] Ibid., p. 31.

[65] Ibid., p. 31.

[66] P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder)*), p. 7.

[67] Ibid., p. 8.

[68] S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity,* p. 31.

systematically educated to marriage and family life.[69] In this regard, respect for the elders was paramount[70] since, as Wachege informs, the world of the Agĩkũyũ pragmatically belongs to the elders. A shortcoming here is that Bottignole is not elaborate on the issue of elders who, as noted, were critical on Agĩkũyũ family life. Neither does the author explain whether elder hood was a static status or a dynamic one. Moreover, the author does not concretize what she explicates on Agĩkũyũ socio-religio-cultural matters as the study does with the aforementioned case study to be a model to others going through crisis in Christian family life.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (henceforth CCC):

The CCC[71] provides interesting Church pedagogy on Christian family life that is of great concern to the study. It teaches that Christians are supposed to be the salt of the earth and light of the universe (Mt 5:13-15) by virtue of belonging to the "Family of God" as the People of God.[72] They are supposed to blend with Jesus the vine as the branches symbolically speaking (Jn 15:4f). The CCC expresses such family solidarity by employing Pauline analogy of Jesus as the head and they as the body; also family signification of Christ viewed as the bridegroom and they the bride[73] who Jesus loved unconditionally to the extent of giving up his life for their own good (Eph 5:25f).

The will of Christ is that His followers remain united even when in crisis and existential family problems.[74] The guarantor of such unity that does not discriminate on account of race, life status and gender is the Holy Spirit (Gal 3: 27-28).The struggle in acquiring and maintaining the kind of such family harmony propagated by Jesus Christ requires important characteristics like ongoing renewal, inner conversion, unity in communal prayers, genuine presence and concern for one another, inter-faith prudent dialogue and sincere collaboration between the clergy and the laity are needed.[75] The CCC further illumines that the Church is obliged to indiscriminately attend to the whole flock while being alert to their family anxieties, worries and expectations

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[69] Ibid., p. 32.
[70] Ibid., p. 33.
[71] John Paul II, Pope. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Rome; Vatican, 1992).
[72] Ibid., no. 804.
[73] Ibid., no. 789.
[74] Ibid., no. 820.
[75] Ibid., no. 821.

together with inter-generation conflicts.[76] Local communities are expected to benefit from their respective family lives[77] since they are to be understood as autonomous Churches with enriching mode of authentic worship and catechesis but also being well disposed to the universal Church rather than being parochial-minded which is impoverishing.[78]

The CCC further explains who Christian faithful are in these words: "The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through Baptism, have been constituted as the People of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each one."[79] Clarity is made that as People of God they by that fact have entitlement to the "Family of God" and, consequently, have a duty to be actively involved in solving family life problems. Lay people are instructed that "they share in the priestly, prophetical and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God."[80]The bottom-line is that each member of the family of God has a role to play for the common good.

As members of Christ's, the laity is empowered with the "authority and mission, orientation and goal to shepherd the People of God and to increase its numbers without cease."[81] As such, they "are in the front line of Church life"[82] within the context of respective Christian family living and emerging troubles to be handled. The New catechism also instructs that "worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives."[83] The rites of passage namely, Baptism and Confirmation permeate the gratuitous blessing of their personal, family, social and ecclesial

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[76] Ibid., no. 831.
[77] Ibid., no. 833.
[78] Ibid., nos. 835, 834.
[79] Ibid., no. 871.
[80] Ibid., no. 873.
[81] Ibid., no. 874.
[82] Ibid., no. 899.
[83] Ibid., no. 910.

lives, and so fulfill the call to holiness addressed to all the baptized."[84] As partners of evangelization in their own rights within their milieu,[85] they are not only gifted with an opportunity and obligation "to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church" but also "to make their opinion known to the other Christian faithful, with due regard to the integrity of faith and morals and reverence towards their pastors, and with consideration for the common good and the dignity of persons."[86] They are conscientized to take Mother Mary of Nazareth as their exemplar in faith, hope and unconditional obedience to God."[87] Admittedly, the above instructions as contained in the CCC are invaluable to the study as they shed light in identifying and coming up with some solutions towards tackling challenges imbued with living Christian family life. A closer scrutiny, however, reveals that the above teachings are fundamentally theoretical rather than pragmatic. As a result, one needs to complement such principles with concretization which the study does and with the more practical orientation as the Exhortation below does.

Pope Francis, in his Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*),[88] is emphatic on the centrality of the community and Christian family life. He points out various critical problems in today's society that call for a determined attention and way forward. Among them is the slavish adherence upon customs and traditions without subjecting them to scrutiny in reference to contemporary society's needs and mentality while the other one is selfishness and arrogant pride. He asserts that the two are among today's main hindrances towards the welfare of Christian family life notwithstanding the current situation in life and "signs of the times."[89] He calls for a "new evangelization" that includes both the ministerial priests and common priests within the framework of the community of the "Family of God" each playing own role in collaboration with the others for the welfare of genuine family life.[90]

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[84] Ibid., no. 941.
[85] Ibid., no. 905.
[86] Ibid., no. 906.
[87] Ibid., no. 968.
[88] Pope Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* , 24 November, 2013.
[89] Ibid., no. 33.
[90] Ibid., nos. 33ff.

The Exhortation expresses the urgency and obligation to inculturate Christianity among people of diverse cultures to help them realize "the joy of the Gospel" in their everyday life notwithstanding the burdens of family life they are somehow overwhelmed with.[91] He propagates an innovative approach to evangelization that frees people from fear of belonging to different ethnic groups viewing them as liability and the distorted habit of imposing other people's dominant cultures upon recipients of Christianity in an implantation method of missionary enterprise explaining that different "cultures are a blessing to be properly exploited to make the Good News fruitful to all with the assistance of the Holy Spirit who is ubiquitous God."[92] Here the gap is that while he does well to point out the necessity of boldly getting rid of communal ethnic diversity and implantation approach, he does not actually show how to go about it as the study intends to do.

The Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* further educates on embracing Christ's teaching of living as brothers and sisters of the same Father through different ethnic communities.[93] It, moreover, underscores liberation from useless mutual conflicts[94] and making money our gods[95] as it instructs on getting rid of both selfishness and egocentrism that ruin the family thereby proving to be a stumbling block to actualization of fruitful family life.[96] It is, moreover, a call to retrieve the wealth of the downtrodden that are instruments of God in disclosing divine redeeming and salvific power through their disadvantaged situations in life likened to that of Jesus.[97] It additionally indicates the serious distortion of authentic disinterested Christian love by marginalizing the poor ones socially, economically and existentially condemning them to perpetual deprived status.[98] While the pedagogy here is enriching to the study, the researcher complement the teaching by focusing upon a specific ethnic community for a more profound and deeper research.

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[91]Ibid., no. 69.

[92] Ibid., no. 117.

[93] Ibid., nos. 87-91.

[94] Ibid., nos. 98-101.

[95] Ibid., nos. 55f.

[96] Ibid., nos. 81-83.

[97] Ibid., no. 198.

[98] Ibid., nos. 53f.

Latourelle provides the study with general cum special revelation theory in which he explains what he terms "external and internal testimony" illumined by the Paraclete.[99] The setback is that the author is not elaborate enough on the issue of theocentricity and Christocentricity involved in the theory. The study fills the gap by referring to Rahner[100] and Dupuis.[101] The theory helps the study to confidently search and relate Agĩkũyũ matrimonial and family life values as God-given in relation to ecclesial instructions on family in confronting problems of Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County.

Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff assist the study with mediation theory in their co-authored book namely, *Introducing Liberation Theology*.[102] Their theory complements the above theory which does not show us how to go about sourcing for both primary and secondary material together with drawing out the consequence of the research. They do that by identifying and explicating three methodological aspects which are: "socio-analytical mediation"[103] which assists the researcher to be on the ground, i.e. Kĩambaa Sub-County Kĩambu County; "hermeneutical mediation"[104] which helps the researcher to relate data gathered to the will of God to differentiate it from disciplines like social anthropology or sociology; the third one is praxis i.e. "practical mediation"[105] that enables the researcher to draw the arising transforming solutions as a way forward. Among the drawbacks though is that the theory does not show how to source from the Bible in a scientific manner to establish the will of God.

The gap is taken care of employing redaction criticism theory propagated by exponents like Bornkamm, Fuchs and Kasemann as recorded by Collins.[106] The theory provides a critical manner of sourcing from Scriptures as the main source of theological reflections. It tackles

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[99] R. Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Society of St. Paul, 1966), pp. 383ff.

[100] K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), pp. 144-161.

[101] J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll. New York: Orbis Books, 1997), pp. 29-52, 219-227.

[102] L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987).

[103]Ibid., pp. 24-32.

[104] Ibid., pp. 32-39.

[105] Ibid., pp. 39-41.

[106] R. F. Collins*, Introduction to the New Testament,* 2nd Edition (London: SCM Press, 1992), pp. 192-220.

factors like: the autonomous Scripture Documents, its authors, who the recipients of literally composition are intended to be, among others.

In her book titled *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality,*[107] Kĩnoti enriches the study through her comprehensive description of the ethics of the Gĩkũyũ.[108] Her contribution is useful for the understanding of what African Philosophy is and its place[109] amid the Africans particularly among the Agĩkũyũ. Moreover, she comes in handy in the study by describing the social organization of the Agĩkũyũ and also their religious beliefs.[110] On the social organization of the Agĩkũyũ, she states: "In the traditional Gĩkũyũ society, kinship system comprised of the family group (*mũciĩ*), the extended family group (*nyũmba*), the sub-clan (*mbarĩ*) and the clan (*mũhĩriga*)."[111] Each of the members in the society was constantly reminded that they belonged to the family which is the smallest unit of the kinship.[112] The family group (*mũciĩ*) was considered as the most significant social group for every individual.

According to Kĩnoti, the family comprised of a husband, his wife or wives and children. All the fundamental religious and social celebrations, most importantly, family worship and rites of passage took place in the family. For these celebrations to be complete, all the members of the family were required to participate by playing the role that each of them was assigned. Additionally, through the division of labor according to the traditional system, each member learnt the value of the family by meeting their responsibilities. Neglecting one's responsibilities was a hindrance to a fulfilling family life since it led to increase of burden on other individuals.[113] Moreover, it is in the family that children acquired most of their education.[114] Parents were given the duty to teach their children good behavior and their duties to the family hence, good parenting.

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[107] H. W. Kĩnoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2013).
[108] Ibid., p. 10.
[109] Ibid., p. 9.
[110] Ibid., pp. 21-34.
[111] Ibid., p. 21.
[112] Ibid., p. 21.
[113] Ibid., p. 21.
[114] Ibid., p. 21.

The extended family comprised of a number of homesteads that were brought together through the patrilineal system by the brothers and their stepbrothers.[115] The rising numbers of both the nuclear and extended family formed the sub-clan (*mbarĩ*), who were constantly brought together by social ceremonies.[116] Being born in the Gĩkũyũ community, everyone automatically became the member of a clan (*mũhĩrĩga*). Duties were set up to ensure that clan members work in unity. Social ceremonies brought together clan members to ensure that they constantly helped each other in all spheres of their lives.[117] Problems of family life could equally be shared and solved among the people in the clan.

The author also enhances the study with Agĩkũyũ religious beliefs pointing out that the Gĩkũyũ traditional religion referred to God as the Creator and ruler of all things.[118] God's presence was experienced through "the sky, the sun, the mountains surrounding Gĩkũyũ country and the prominent evergreen sacred trees with milk-like and blood-like sap."[119] God was also referred to as *Ngai* meaning that He is the divider and distributor.[120] "The greatest God-given gift is the gift of life. He also gave other gifts which are meant to protect and ensure the continuity of life."[121] The Gĩkũyũ believed that the God, their giver of life also gave them farming as a way of life which was handed down from one group to another.[122] Furthermore, they believed that they are governed by instructions that came directly from God. These rules were meant to guide people to live the way they ought to live, that is, according to the Will of God.[123]

Kĩnoti further enriches the study by coming up with a detailed study on the five major virtues that make up the Gĩkũyũ philosophy of life.[124] These virtues are meant to govern the behavior of individuals in the society so as to live harmoniously. A shortcoming, however, is that Kĩnoti does not show how the five virtues that make up the Philosophy of the Gĩkũyũ can be used to tackle

[115] Ibid., pp. 21-22.
[116] Ibid., p. 22.
[117] Ibid., p. 22.
[118] Ibid., p. 27.
[119] Ibid., pp. 27-28.
[120] Ibid., p. 28.
[121] Ibid., p. 28.
[122] Ibid., p. 28.
[123] Ibid., p. 29.
[124] Ibid., p. 16.

the specific problems experienced by today's Christian families among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County as the study endeavors to do.

Kibicho, in his book titled *God and Revelation in an African Context*, [125]describes the Agĩkũyũ as ones who "have always believed in the one Almighty God, the Creator and Ruler of all people and all things."[126] He deepens the study by describing the origin of the Agĩkũyũ through the renowned myth of Gĩkũyũ nation; a myth that led to the rise of the Gĩkũyũ religion which is inseparable from the political and social structure of life. According to the myth, after God had created all things, peoples and nations, He took Gĩkũyũ (the father of Gĩkũyũ nation) to the top of Mount Kĩrĩ-Nyaga (Mount Kenya) and showed the land that he had given to him and his descendants. God showed him a spot filled with fig trees and instructed Gĩkũyũ to build his home there. He named the place Mũkũrwe Wa Gathanga. The trees surrounding that particular spot were known as *mĩkũyũ* and it is from this that the name 'Gĩkũyũ' was derived. A Gĩkũyũ is referred to as Mũgĩkũyũ meaning the "the person of the fig tree."[127]

Gĩkũyũ arrived at the place where God had instructed him to build his home and he found a woman awaiting him. He knew it was God who sent her to him and therefore, he took her as his wife and named her Mũmbi meaning creator or molder. Together, Gĩkũyũ and Mũmbi had nine daughters but no sons. They prayed to God about their problem and God instructed Gĩkũyũ to make a sacrifice to him under a holy fig tree. He was to make this sacrifice together with his wife and daughters, as a family, which became the nucleus of the Gĩkũyũ community. After the sacrifice, Gĩkũyũ and his family went back home and there, they found nine men waiting for them. These men were not only ready to marry his daughters but also live with them.[128] A shortcoming however, is that the author does not explain why the young men had to remain in the family of Gĩkũyũ. The gap here is filled using Bottignole's book titled *Kikuyu Traditional*

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[125] S. G. Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2006).
[126] Ibid., p. 17.
[127] Ibid., p. 17.
[128] Ibid., pp. 17-18.

Culture and Christianity[129] which explains that the Agĩkũyũ family life was by then matriarchal hence they had to remain with their wives in the family of Gĩkũyũ and Mũmbi.[130]

God manifested Himself through the gift of life, especially human life. It comes in handy to the study because it expresses the importance of preserving and nurturing human life so as to ensure the continuity of families and the community at large. The Gĩkũyũ community considers those things connected with procreation and sustenance of life sacred. Birth, marriage, blood, sex, relationships, planting and harvesting were all deemed to be sacred.[131] Moreover, the Ancestors were considered to be part of the family because of their concern for the welfare of family life notwithstanding arising issues. Causing harm and disunity among the family members displeased the Ancestors who in turn brought misfortunes to the offender and more often to the family in general[132]as a warning. Additionally, Kibicho emphasized the family as the center of Gĩkũyũ religious rituals and worship of God: "The family-which normally was the extended family of three or four generations and included both the living and the dead-was the most important institution in Gĩkũyũ society."[133] Getting together as a family enabled the family members to pray and to worship God in unison seeking blessings and prosperity. Disunity among people is what brings about evils that negatively affect Christian family life today. The author however, does not show how the centrality of the family would be adequate in coming up with possible solutions; those that would be effectively used to overcome problems of family life especially in Christian families.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The Study was guided by three interrelated theories which are: General cum special revelation theory, mediation theory and redaction criticism theory.

General cum special revelation theory is propagated by scholars like Latourelle where he explicates the issue of "external and internal testimony" animated by the Holy Spirit who is unlimited in creating awareness.[134] Rahner makes it more explicit by explaining that owing to

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[129] S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984).
[130] Ibid., p. 31.
[131]S. G. Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2006). p. 21.
[132] Ibid., p. 22.
[133] Ibid., p. 34.
[134] R. Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Society of St. Paul, 1966), pp. 383ff.

theocentricity involved in creation, God freely makes Himself known to people in their humanness and environs but God, nevertheless, thanks to Christocentricity, discloses Self and His will most explicitly and in the best way possible through Jesus Christ in His historical concrete existence and His salvific and redemption instructions. [135] It is further concretized by Dupuis who is elaborate on the double pronged perspective of revelation within the realm of salvation namely: God disclosing self through creation to all such that all are enabled to know God and His plan for family and married life through what God endows them with which includes their socio-religio-cultural elements; and God's disclosure in the best way possible through Jesus Christ.[136] The theory helps the study to confidently search and relate Agĩkũyũ matrimonial and family life values as God-given in relation to ecclesial instructions in confronting problems of Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County.

The other theory that guided the study is mediation theory which complements the above theory which does not provide the methodological approach to the primary and secondary data accompanied by way forward. The exponents of the theory are two Latin American brothers, Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, who are of international repute in Christian liberation theology. Their main ideas are well articulated in their co-authored book titled *Introducing Liberation Theology*[137] as previously documented in the literature review sub-section. The authors articulate a triple crucial perspective essentially related as ways of doing liberation theology. The aspects are: socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and praxis mediation.

The "socio-analytical mediation"[138] will assist the researcher to be on the ground, i.e. Kĩambaa Sub-County, so as to get first-hand information concerning the complications of Christian family life in the locality. The data so acquired from the insertion will be analyzed to come up with the reasons behind the existing crises or conflicts in such matrimonial state of life in view of

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[135] K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), pp. 144-161.

[136] J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll. New York: Orbis Books, 1997), pp. 29-52, 219-227.

[137] L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987).

[138]Ibid., pp. 24-32.

addressing them. In the second step of the sequence called "hermeneutical mediation,"[139] the researcher will be empowered to relate the findings in the above moment to the will of God to give it a Christian orientation since the study is fundamentally theologically oriented. Here the researcher will find out whether it is the will of God for the family-hood and state of family life to be in the emerging conflict or crisis. For this purpose, the main source will be the Bible, Christian tradition and ecclesial teachings on family and married life. After subjecting the issue to such theological interpretation, the final aspect follows namely that of praxis i.e. "practical mediation."[140] It is at this point that from the above sequence namely socio-analytical mediation and hermeneutical mediation that we are enabled to come up with the transforming way forward as the implication of the study. It will hopefully contribute to the solution to the subject opted for at both the pastoral level and scholarly level.[141]

Then there is the third theory that helps in sourcing from the Bible scientifically called redaction criticism theory propagated by Biblical forthright scholars like Bornkamm, Fuchs and Kasemann as recorded by Collins.[142] The theory provides a critical manner of sourcing from the Bible, "the soul of any theology," by considering aspects like the autonomous Scripture document, its author, who the recipient of literally composition is intended to be, how the material is arranged and why, the opted for goal, the underlying approach and stress, theological orientation, fundamental contribution and peculiarity. The exemplifications of it, to take but two models, are: Bornkamm who in his book *Jesus of Nazareth*[143] employs the theory, without ignoring Form criticism and Source criticism, to show how Jesus' authority in propagating the Kingdom of God emanates from His identity as historical Jesus of Nazareth.[144] Through historical critical orientation, the study is enabled to gain from a historical critical approach to the soul of theology i.e., the Bible and Tradition. Then there is Kasemann who, in the article

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[139] Ibid., pp. 32-39.
[140] Ibid., pp. 39-41.
[141] Ibid., p. 13.
[142] R. F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament,* 2nd Edition (London: SCM Press, 1992), pp. 192-220.
[143] G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960).
[144] Ibid., pp. 23ff.

namely "*The problem of the Historical Jesus*"[145] creates awareness of the complementarity between "Jesus of history" and "Christ of faith."[146] He assists the study not to dichotomize the glorified Christ from the historical Jesus since the two are one. The theory, furthermore conscientizes us to opt for serious Scriptural source texts like NJBC, NJB and DNT.

1.9 Research Hypotheses

The overall hypothesis is that Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter difficulties in Christian family life that deserve to be handled in the light of African world-view and ecclesial instructions on family. The following are the specific hypotheses for the Study:

1. There are problems confronting the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County in living Christian family life.
2. A proper understanding and realistic adherence to African harmonious world-view items on family in general and Christian family life in particular is of immense importance.
3. There are significant ecclesial instructions on family that can be employed for the common good of the family and welfare of Christian family life.
4. Respect for African harmonious world-view items and Church teaching on family can be fruitfully utilized in addressing today's problems to Christian family life.

1.10 Research Methodology

The methodology that the study employed is in the form of the research design, study site and population, sampling techniques, data collection techniques and data analysis techniques. Although the study opted for mainly qualitative approach, nevertheless, the quantitative one was not completely ignored. The two approaches were blended though with bias towards the qualitative one.

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[145] J. S. Kselman and R.D. Witherup, "*Modern New Testament Criticism*," in R.E. Brown, J.A. Fitzmyer and R.E. Murphy(Eds.),*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Burns and Oates 1989),p. 1141.
[146] Ibid., pp. 1141f.

1.10.1 Research Design

The study adopted a case study research design to investigate the problems Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-county encounter in Christian family life in the light of the African World view and Ecclesial instructions on family. Two scholars, Kombo and Tromp in their co-authored book titled *Proposal and Thesis Writing,*[147] explain that a case study research design aims at describing a phenomenon in an all-inclusive, contextual and detailed manner. The study aimed at investigating the difficulties of Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-county hence the case study research design was the most appropriate. The various issues obtained from the Agĩkũyũ in the locale were used as examples since the family life troubles that are experienced in the community run across other communities.

Primary and secondary sources were used to collect first-hand information and works related to the topic of study done earlier on by other scholars respectively. Primary data was acquired by administering questionnaires to the informants, interviewing the informants face to face and also through observation and focus group discussions. Secondary data was obtained from scholarly relevant books, Exhortations and Theses from Little Eden Library, Hekima Library, CUEA Library and JKML.

1.10.2 Study Site and Target Population

The study was conducted in Kĩambaa Sub-county, Kĩambu County. Kĩambaa Sub-county was selected using purposive sampling since it has been known to have recently opened up to other ethnic communities unlike Karũri, Kanunga and Mũchatha which had already embraced people from diverse ethnic groups. Although the area is occupied by different modes of families belonging to diverse faith affiliations, the study targeted the Christian families, i.e. the married people belonging to Christian faith affiliations since the locality is predominantly Christian. Focusing on such families allowed the researcher to conduct an in depth research so as to come out with deeper information that would be useful to the study.

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[147] D. K. Kombo and L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2006), p. 72.

1.10.3 Sampling Techniques

The study employed the aid of respondents from Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-county selected using Non-probability sampling design. Judgmental sampling was adopted in singling out five family men and five family women who worked closely with the researcher so as to effectively realize the aim of the study. Moreover, the researcher was able to acquire broader and deeper data which was useful in providing helpful information to the readers. The two mainstream Churches in the area i.e., Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) were selected using the Purposive sampling technique. Two Church leaders and thirteen members were sampled using the Stratified sampling method to ensure that there is gender balance among the respondents selected. To obtain data from families not belonging to RCC and ACK, the researcher purposely sampled one Church leader and four members belonging to the Immaculate Fellowship Church (IFC). It aimed at gathering more information from diverse Christian families in the area.

1.10.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected using both secondary and primary sources. Secondary data was useful in developing the setting for the researcher to appreciate the works done by other scholars in the same area of study and for the reader to understand the purpose of the study. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, structured in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

1.10.4.1Questionnaires

The study used both closed-ended and open-ended questions. From the closed-ended questions, the respondents were required to choose their responses from the choices given by the researcher. On the other hand, the open-ended questions gave the respondents the freedom to express their opinions. The questionnaire method enabled the researcher to gather data from a large sample and bias in giving the data was minimal.[148] Three kinds of questionnaires were administered to the Parents, Church leaders and youth so that the researcher could gather diverse views from respondents who were able to give information on problems of Christian family life.

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[148] D. K. Kombo and L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2006), p. 89.

1.10.4.2 In-depth Interviews

Structured in-depth interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to collect in-depth information from the Christian families by interacting with them on a face-to-face basis. According to Kothari[149], in- depth interviews are significant when a researcher is exhaustively examining a particular phenomenon. In addition, the method of data collection was useful to obtain information from those respondents who could not read and write. It is also from these interviews that the researcher verified, corrected, gave additional material or disagreed with certain information.

1.10.4.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions of five individuals were used in collecting data and the researcher was the arbitrator. These groups were important for the respondents to give their views on certain issues and the other group members to be able to confirm, disagree or add onto the data given by an individual. Kombo and Tromp, explain that focus group discussions are useful in testing new phenomena or improving existing phenomena.[150]

1.10.4.4 Observation

The researcher went personally into the base community i.e., Kĩambaa Sub-County to live with the Christian families in their homes so as to observe their surroundings. Living with the respondents enabled the researcher to examine the way they live, their relationship with one another in the family and to experience the struggles that these families go through. The study adopted the structured observation method which is significant when focusing on specific patterns of behavior of the target population as explained by Kombo and Tromp in their book entitled *proposal and thesis writing*.[151]

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[149] C. R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (New Delhi: New Age International, 2004), p. 110.

[150] D. K. Kombo and L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2006), p. 95.

[151] Ibid., p. 96.

1.10.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from the research was analysed qualitatively using thematic approach. Qualitative approach was important because it allowed the researcher to collect, analyse and interpret data in a systematic manner.[152] The findings from the respondents were arranged thematically taking into account existing literature on the study's subject matter. The descriptive method was used to analyse the qualitative data obtained from the questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

1.11 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The chapter has covered the introduction of the study by handling background to the study, statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, justification of the study, scope and limitations of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, research hypotheses and research methodology. The outline has given an overview of the study and allowed the researcher to probe into the next chapter which examines the problems of Christian family life among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County.

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[152] D. K. Kombo and L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2006), p. 97.

CHAPTER TWO

RESPONDENTS' INPUT ON PROBLEMS TO TODAY'S CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has introduced the study by providing an overview which gives a reflection of the whole study. The current chapter investigates the disturbing issues of Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-county, Kĩambu County as the main aim that the study opted to achieve. The investigation of these family life problems was achieved by the researcher being in the base community that is, Kĩambaa Sub-County and living with the people so as to identify their issues. It was backed up by the first mediation (socio-analytical) of the Mediation theory as discussed in the previous chapter. The researcher identified a vast number of problems that affect Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-County. Nevertheless, the researcher singled out the four main striking problems that affect a majority of the Christian families in the locale and presented them thematically. These are: marital problems, parenting difficulties, poverty as a problem to Christian family life and cultural issues.

2.2 Marital Problems

The section will handle the problems that Christian married consorts in Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter in living their Christian family life.

2.2.1 Intermarriage Difficulties

Kĩambaa Sub-County has recently opened up to a large number of people from different ethnic groups seeking employment opportunities especially in Senior Chief Koinange High School as indicated in the previous chapter on the justification of the study. Although the community has accepted to welcome and be with these people from diverse ethnic groups, parents are keen enough to criticize the solemnization of marriage of their children with these outsiders. Cagnolo clarifies that intermarriage among clans was not spontaneous since, elders of the community would prohibit marriage with a clan which clearly diverged from the accepted ethical behavior and significant family aspects.[153] From the research on the Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-

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[153] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933). p. 21.

county, the researcher was able to gather information that intermarriage between people of some clans was totally prohibited because of some deviant behaviors. For instance, one could not be allowed to marry from or be married in a clan whom they first intermarried and as a result their child was killed or abused by the family members of that clan. The other case is that one was not allowed to marry from an ethnic group that was popularly known for unusual crooked behaviors such as that of witchcraft which could bring misfortune to the family or the community at large. Such intermarriages among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County were considered as taboos and if they could take place, they would result in curses. These curses could befall the family through the birth of children with deformities or mental disorders.[154] The other thing is that even intermarriages between those Agĩkũyũ of a Kĩambu and those from other Counties like Murang'a and Nyeri was not fully embraced in Kĩambaa Sub-County. It was even worse for those belonging to other ethnic communities. The few ones married from these other areas were treated with suspicion and contempt.

One of the respondents, a Kamba woman from Machakos County is married to a Gĩkũyũ man from Kĩambaa Sub-County. The parents in law were reluctant to accept her into the family. They claimed that their son should marry from his ethnic community. Discrimination of people bsed on their language and where they come from have been a great problem in family life even in the Christian families in the locale. The situation worsened because the woman did not complete her Secondary School education because of her humble background not like the husband who was fortunate to have acquired a University degree and secured a job. Unending quarrels and misunderstandings between the parents and the siblings of the man, especially the girls disrupted their marriage. Members of the family coming between the two interfered with their relationship hence weakening their bond as husband and wife.

After pleading with her husband, they managed to leave home and rented out a house so as to save their marriage. Unfortunately, they stayed for almost two years without being blessed with a child. The mother in law was quick to judge her and even accused her of procuring several abortions before her marriage and that's why she was not able to give birth. She went ahead to

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[154] Ibid., p. 21.

ask her son to divorce the wife, send her back to her parents and marry another woman from his ethnic community. Out of frustration, due to so much pressure from his family, the man opted to drinking alcohol so that he could forget about his family life problems. He got into the habit of spending the nights outside his home leaving the wife alone. The wife started becoming suspicious and doubting that her husband had affairs outside their marriage. Fear of being infected with Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) together with HIV and AIDS made her confront the husband but that did not end well. She was physically hurt by the husband and the wife gave up provoking him.

As the saying goes, a problem shared is a problem half solved, she shared her marital hitches with her friend. She was introduced into a prayer group where women shared their fears and prayed together. She had to attend the meetings secretly since the husband and his family were staunch members of the Anglican Church and could not allow her attend any other denomination. From the group, she was able to get advice, pray to God to give her a child and to change her husband. Being a small village the parents in law received the information that their son's wife belonged to a certain group. She was condemned and accused of joining a cult so that she can bewitch their son to have control over him. She had to quite the group but did not stop praying. Eventually, she got pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy. The good news reached the man's family and with a lot of guilt and shame, they apologized to their in law and became more accommodative to her. The husband through the excitement of being a father and seeing the family relating well with his wife, changed for the better. He quite alcohol and committed himself to supporting his family. To date, they have been happily married for seventeen years and blessed with two children.

Pope Francis in his Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium,*[155] encourages people especially the Christians as role models, to do away with the phobia of communal ethnic diversity. He argues that cultural diversity is not a threat to Church unity but a way of bringing individuals together as the People of God.[156] This way, Christian families are being obliged to allow their children to

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[155] Pope Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium,* Vatican, 24 November, 2013.
[156] Ibid., no. 117.

intermarry with persons from different ethnic groups hence doing away with discrimination of people basing on their ethnicity. As long as they are of good character, they should be openly accepted into the family to unite all as the family of God.

2.2.2 Mistrust between the Consorts

Kĩambaa Sub-location has recently opened up to many people who are in search of job opportunities. A number of public and private Schools have employed quite a number of teachers and workers from different parts of the country and ethnic communities. In search of employment far away from home, one of the respondents (a Primary School teacher) leaves behind his wife and child. The man is forced to do so because of the pressure to secure a job and need to earn money to support his family. A young woman used to her husband finds it very difficult to adapt to the situation. Due to temptation, she engaged in an affair with a man who could play the role of a spouse while her husband was far away in the place of work. The affair went on for a long time and the husband came to learn about the wife's deceit.

The man confronted the wife but she denied the allegations. There emerged endless suspicions, quarrels and fights between the consorts and their home was at the verge of breaking. To save his family, the man came to a decision to move in with the wife in his place of work. Living together in the urban setting i.e., Kĩambu Town, they have to struggle more to make ends meet. The wife has to engage in manual jobs for the sake of improving their living standards. To cater for their child's School fees is demanding because it is more expensive and therefore, they have to surrender a comfortable life and sacrifice for the education needs of the child as required. Pope John Paul II strongly reminds the Christian married consorts that they have a duty to remain faithful to each other no matter the temptation or trouble.[157] Partners have to respect God's command to those embracing marriage and family life so as to overcome the obstacles that block these families from living the way God intended for them.

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[157] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio,* Vatican, 22 November, 1981. no. 20.

2.2.3 Interference by Relatives

One of the researcher's informants, a widowed single mother, was kind enough to share the unpleasant issues that she has experienced in her family life being a Christian and a Church leader. As a single mother of two daughters, she went through so much suffering raising them single-handedly. With pain and a broken heart she wondered what she could do with her children. Eventually, she came to accept the reality that she was alone in the struggle to raise and educate her daughters. She was forced to engage in doing manual jobs from house to house. The demanding manual jobs tired the mother so much yet she earned very little to support her family. Some employers in Kĩambaa Sub-County are known to pay very low wages to their employees just to control and prevent them from progressing and improving their living standards.[158] After deep thoughts and support from her parents, she decided to leave her children with their grandparents and moved to Nairobi City to have a better remuneration. She continued with manual jobs in the rich families through the help of a friend who introduced her to the people living in an urban estate and managed to get a good pay.

On one occasion, she encountered a widower whose wife had died after a long illness. Out of the good heart that she had, she offered to work for the man when she was through with her day's duties free of charge. In the event of helping the man with the house chores, the man began to like her. He eventually approached her and proposed marriage. The young single mother did not know what to do. She shared the story with her friend who saw it as an opportunity from God knowing how much she has been praying for God to change her life. She accepted the proposal and they were happily married in the Church. The man accepted the wife's children as his own and catered for their education. He also opened up a business for his wife.

Problems began when the children of the first wife especially the first born girl who was in bad terms with the father, interfered with her marriage. She and her close relatives accused her of being a gold digger who was after their parents' property. Matters became worse when she engaged lawyers arguing that she was defending her mother's property. She succeeded in her plan and managed to cease the property through a permit from the Court of Law. The couple had to shift to the rural home in Kĩambaa where they constructed their home and lived together. The

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[158] B. L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (New York: Orbis Books, 2006), p. 72.

man being diabetic and the stress added on him by the daughter worsened his state. He called his daughter to allow him sell some property so that he could get money for his medication but she refused to grant his request. The respondent recalls a day that the man told the daughter on phone, "I know you want me dead so that you can share the property among yourselves and chase away my wife who is rightfully your step mother."[159]

As the wife and the only hope the man had, she organized a fundraiser and luckily she managed to raise enough funds to cater for transport and medication of her husband in India. Coming back to the country, he was required to go for regular hospital check-up which was too expensive. A rich man with property ceased by his own daughter became so frustrated that sadly he got a stroke and was paralyzed. He was admitted in hospital and unfortunately, he died in his hospital bed. His children never contributed any funds for the burial but the wife through a very supportive committee managed to give her late husband a proper Christian send off. These children had totally neglected their duty to care for their parents as explained by Peschke[160] especially in times of crises. Parents are empowered by God to give life to new generation and the offspring in turn are obliged to constantly be in contact with their parents. They have a duty to support their parents, respect their choices and assist them to tackle their problems more so in their old age.

After the death of her husband, her status changed to that of single widowed motherhood once more. The chance those against her in the home came. One night, a group of men invaded the home and made away with some property. It was a way of scaring her so that she can leave her home but she remained strong and stood for her family. Having in mind that she had her two daughters and a business to run, she was motivated to support her family and ignore enemies from outside her home. Recently, she was appointed as a Church leader. However, some members in the Church question her leadership. Being a widowed single mother, people claim that she cannot lead the Church well as a Family of God. The other Church leaders intervened and they demanded respect for the woman as their leader, a fellow mother and a family person.

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[159] An interview conducted on 15th January, 2017.

[160] K. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology: In the Light of Vatican II* (India: Theological Publications in India, 1992), pp. 561-563.

In support of what her fellow Church leaders had done, Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem,*[161] teaches that women as Church leaders have the power to preach the Gospel as common priests but under the ordained ministerial Priests. Women, regardless of their status, can be so helpful in preventing humanity from trampling and giving people hope in their difficult moments. Therefore, they should not be blocked from serving other Christians in their capacity as lay leaders. Additionally, the Church has duty to shepherd people without discrimination in their respective situations in life.[162] To date, she is a very committed Church leader and the Christians have come to appreciate her leadership because of the great assistance, both spiritual and material, that they get from her.

2.2.4 Consort's Search for Jobs Overseas

Another family life problem obtained from the researcher's respondents was that of looking for jobs abroad and leaving a spouse behind to look after the family. A man narrates to the researcher about the difficulties that he has to go through in raising his three children. His wife left for Saudi Arabia (now being the third time) in pursuit of a job opportunity so that she can send money to the husband on regular basis for the purpose of supporting her family. The man encounters a lot of difficulties in taking care of the needs of the children especially the youngest who was still a suckling baby girl when the mother left. Also, his wife's insensitivity to his conjugal rights depresses him. As an African man, particularly Agĩkũyũ, he has the responsibility of maintaining the family's welfare by providing their needs.[163] He has to struggle with things he could not do at first; feeding the children, bathing them, cleaning their clothes, changing baby diapers and doing all the house chores. To relieve the husband from these chores, the wife sent for her biological sister to live with the family as an adult house help. The worst scenario is that the sister is a separated single mother of three young children whom she takes care of single handed since she was abandoned by her husband.

With another family to feed and take care of, the man is forced to venture into the motorbike business so that he can earn some money to support the family. Working late into the night

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[161] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem,* 15 August, 1988. no. 1.

[162] John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Rome: Vatican, 1992), no. 831.

[163] S. G. Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2006), pp. 38-39.

exposes him to greater risks such as that of health and being hijacked. He recalls on an incident where he was hijacked, beaten up and robbed by a group of thugs. Despite these kind of risks, he cannot opt out of the business since that is the only way he can cater for his family. Living with the sister-in-law is also a temptation to him as a man who was used to living with his wife. Occasionally, he finds himself having sexual relations with the aunt of his children and this creates a lot of guilt in him. His conscience is haunted because he is already compelled to keep being unfaithful to his wife who is abroad for purposes of sending money to cater for the needs of the family. Although he does not wish to be disloyal to his wife, it is only natural that he is human and his wife has been gone for a long period of time and not once but thrice amounting to duration of six years. Sometimes he also doubts his wife's engagements in her stay overseas and prefers to be with the sister in law rather than engaging in other affairs outside his home for fear of contracting deadly diseases.

Another difficulty experienced in that family is that of the children lacking their own mother's love and care at such a tender age. In addition, their aunt tends to concentrate more on her own children while neglecting her nephews and niece. That lack of parental love especially the motherly love will have an effect on the lives of these children and they will develop hatred among themselves as cousins because of discrimination. Children who are being hated or discriminated against end up being resentful and egoistic just to avoid being in the kind of situation they were subjected to in their childhood.[164] The researcher came across many cases of this kind which some had to be refrained from documenting owing to the limitations imposed in the study.

2.2.5 Barrenness

Barrenness among the Agĩkũyũ is taken very seriously given that fecundity is highly valued because it ensures the continuity of family life and the community at large thereby being seen as a gift from God to His people.[165] If a man dies without having any children, he is forgotten and his name ceases to exist because he did not accomplish his duty to be productive and continue

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[164] K. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology: In the Light of Vatican II* (India: Theological Publications in India, 1992), p. 542.

[165] S. Bottignole, Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984), p. 36.

life. It is considered an embarrassment and shame to the family members to have such a useless person. From the research conducted, the researcher discovered that infertility, though experienced, was not so common in the traditional community. Where it was witnessed, respective families had confidential mechanisms to correct the anomaly. However, this is not the case in the present generation whereby these cases are on the rise. Having that kind of distinction intrigued the researcher to dig deep into the issue and find out the reasons behind the scenario as seen in Kĩambaa Sub-County.

The research findings reveal that a number of women are unable to give birth to children due to certain reasons. The common case for a good number of them was the frequent use of readily available contraceptives during their youthful stages. As youths, young women tend to regularly use contraceptives to prevent them from pregnancy – and the phenomenon is frequent in the current digitized and promiscuous society. Repeated use of these drugs and in the wrong manner like using them more than twice in their menstrual cycle has been medically verified that it slowly weakens their productiveness and when they are ready to have children, they are not in a position to conceive and be mothers. In case they conceive, they more often become victims of spontaneous abortion. Another cause of barrenness is the act of procuring abortion once or severally and ruining the womb. The use of various means to evacuate the fetus from the uterus especially with unqualified medical personnel can be dangerous. In some circumstances, the womb is tampered with and among some implications is that the woman can never be able to carry pregnancy and give birth to a child. With the guilt conscience of whatever transpired in their young stages, these women live with lots of frustration and some owing to too much pressure from their husbands and relatives end up committing suicide. What is more disturbing is that the researcher came across quite a number of such women who are unable to have their own biological children – some of these women are already divorced.

2.2.6 Poor Communication between Consorts

According to Peschke, individuals have varied characters, attitudes, choices and preferences because of different upbringing or background.[166] Some consorts in the Christian families in a good number of occasions disagree when it comes to making decisions in the family. Failure to

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[166] K. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology: In the Light of Vatican II* (India: Theological Publications in India, 1992), p. 545.

understand each other's choices and inclinations bring about conflicts that disrupt their relationship. Poor communication between the parents and children also lead to poor socialization. When parents fail to instill good family and Christian values such as love, kindness and obedience, they not only fail to carry out their parenting duty but also fail to live as they ought to live their family life. They become ignorant and engage in deviant behaviors such as abuse of drugs like *bhang* which is harmful to their health. That is the reason why the power of parents over their children has diminished in the contemporary society.[167] The researcher confirmed Peschke's sentiments in Kĩambaa Sub-County.

Parents have also lost their children's trust because they are not available for them. The researcher noticed that, due to the nature of their jobs, parents have abandoned their role as the principal teachers of their children. Several respondents confessed that they have delegated their duty to the teachers and argue that they pay money for them to be educated in School and that they regret the dire consequences. Failure to talk to their children freely on matters involving their sexuality and other risks that they can be exposed to such as drugs endanger their lives. As adolescents, they are likely to engage in pre-marital sex, drug abuse and alcoholism which then negatively impacts on their lives as Christians. When parents are not ready to discuss issues with their children as they grow and want to learn more, the children lose that trust in their parents. They begin to keep secrets or find boy and girl friends to take their parents place and they lack proper advice and others are socialized into unscrupulous behaviors such as the aforementioned. The scenario is very real in Kĩambaa as revealed by the respondents.

2.2.7 Polygamy

Polygamy comes as a severe test to Christian families because it is against God's plan of total dedication of consorts to their marriage and family life.[168] Although monogamy was demanded of followers of Christ, reality has it that in the area of research those who strictly adhere to monogamy are few. The trend seems to be in explicit or occult polygamous unions which amount to living a lie from a Christian point of view. Traditionally, polygamy among the Agĩkũyũ was meant to solve the issue of barrenness and to search for male heirs for the family. It

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[167] Ibid., p. 542.
[168] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio*, Vatican, 22 November, 1981. no. 19.

was done with the consent of the first wife who still enjoyed her position in the home. As the first wife, she was referred to as the "mother of the other wives" and was entitled to referring to their children as her own. Additionally, a man who wished to marry more than one wife had to meet some conditions; he was required to be in a position to cater for all the wives and the children's education and to maintain harmony amongst the wives and children.[169]

However, in the contemporary society, men including the Christian ones, engage in illicit and secret affairs without the consent of the wife. They keep concubines and raise other children out of wedlock. When the wife discovers that her husband has another family outside their marriage, serious trouble emerges. Their union is ruined. A good number of men tend to neglect the children of the first wife and the mother is left to struggle for the children on her own. Other families take their cases to Courts of Law so that the man can continue paying School fees for his children and providing the money needed for their upkeep. In some incidences, there arises conflicts between the wives and it reaches a point where others plan for the murder of co-wives and their children. Quite a number of women have also ended up murdering their husbands because of unfaithfulness and neglect. Such crimes carried out of anger and bitterness drive them to face harsh punishments like lifetime imprisonment. They are then being separated from their children. These kind of conflicts impose great hindrances to Christian families which end up being dissolved not only in the area of research but elsewhere too.

2.3 Parenting Difficulties

The section identifies and explicates the problems that parents in Christian families face in raising their children so that they can lead a happy life. It also comprises of the difficulties that parents go through due to their children's misconduct in the family and community. Similarly, it tackles the pain of losing a child or children.

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[169] B. Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue between the North and South* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), pp. 108-109.

2.3.1 Difficulty of Losing a Loved One

The researcher got a rare opportunity to interact and live with a family that lost their only son who was a university undergraduate into the cruel hands of death. The son had established a very close relationship with his parents. However, he sometimes felt lonely because he was the only child and lacked that brother or sister to play and interact with. The impact of the death of their son was very intense. To date, the mother has not only been able to understand why her only son had to die but has also not accepted the fact that he is dead. The researcher recalls her words, "I see my son every day, I still serve him food and await him to come home from the university."[170] The loneliness and emptiness in her soul is evident in that she tries as much as possible to avoid being alone. On the other hand, the father was greatly affected by the demise of his son. He was so frustrated that the wife had to call on his relatives and friends to counsel him and encourage him to be strong for the family as the head.

These parents wished to have more children but they could not. Medication from one doctor to another did not solve their health complication. Eventually, they accepted the situation. To overcome their loneliness, the couple opted to open up a private School where children can be educated and taken care of during the day. Their commitment and closeness to the children have attracted many parents and are having quite a good number of children who they cherish. From being parents to one child and losing him to death, they are now parents of many. Moreover, the wife takes in her niece together with her young daughter to bring more life into the house. The couple also ensures that they are always there for each other so as to avoid loneliness in every possible way.

Additionally, the researcher encountered a pastor, an assistant to the Bishop in Immaculate Fellowship Church (IFC). The pastor narrated to the researcher how his only child (a son) was giving him persistent troubles in the family. Though he had been counseled and persuaded to be attending Church services by the Bishop, the son quietly rebelled and stopped going to Church. He was involved in drugs and alcohol. Since the boy could not source money from his parents, he opted to join a group of men that engaged themselves in robbery with violence. On a Sunday night, 8th January 2017, the young man together with his friends stormed a wealthy homestead

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[170] An interview conducted on 2nd January, 2017.

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with the aim of stealing from them. Since the house was on CCTV surveillance, the wife spotted the thieves and reported to her husband who was still out with his colleagues.

The owner of the house armed himself with a sword and headed home. On arrival, he was attacked by the young men and after a short struggle, he stubbed the young man and the rest of the gang ran for their lives and abandoned him dying. The police took his body and reported the case to the parents of the young man. Members of the family were very shocked by the sad news but they had to accept the reality of what had transpired. Being a pastor and a shepherd to many, the man was not even able to face his flock. Though he was ashamed by the son, the Bishop together with his Church members stood by him. It was such a devastating experience – a terrible traumatic problem that almost ruined their Christian hope.

The researcher was able to attend the burial on 17th January 2017 and observed how the family was in pain but at the same time felt guilty because of their son's actions. The mourners openly talked of how shame had befallen the family. After the body had been buried, something strange happened. A group of young men stormed the compound and claimed to be a *Mũngĩki* sect who had come to pay respect to their late fellow. They removed the body from the grave and performed some of their rituals, planted banana plants on the grave and informed the people that they would be responsible for maintaining the grave on a monthly basis. Horror and shock filled the atmosphere, people were left speechless. After the funeral, people left the homestead discussing the occasions of that day and could not understand why a pastor's son could be a member of such an illegal group. The parents are left fearing for their lives since they will be expecting more visits by the group. They were also so ashamed for being referred to as parents of a *Mũngĩki* member.

2.3.2 The Problem of Single Parenting
The researcher's informant, a middle aged widowed single mother sadly expressed her loneliness in the family. In her early twenties, she married a Christian man and together they had three children (two sons and one daughter). They led a happy Christian family life but unluckily, her husband passed on and she was left with the duty to raise the children. One of the sons

engaged in drug abuse because of his notorious behavior and became a nuisance to his mother and siblings. On some occasions, he disrespectfully threatened to rape his own mother. In this case, the single mother experiences difficulties in raising his son without a father figure.

As Cagnolo stresses in the book titled *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore,* the roles of parents in raising their children, both the male and female were well defined in the traditional community. On one hand, the girls were trained to carry out house chores by their mothers and on the other hand, fathers trained the boys to be good shepherds and constructors.[171] Additionally, Bottignole in her book *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity*[172] explains that in the traditional Agĩkũyũ community, there was a "clear-cut division of labor between sexes, the mother became the natural teacher of the daughters and fathers of the sons."[173] Single mothers then experience difficulties in handling the boy-child and the single fathers face obstructions in parenting the girl-child.[174]

In the year 2016 during the Palm Sunday, when the family was preparing to receive the Holy week, the young man came home already drugged and had a quarrel with the brother over a mobile phone. The quarrel led to a fight and the mother who was so hurt by his son's actions could do nothing but to cry out loud for help trying to separate the two sons. Her pleadings to them to stop fighting went to deaf ears. In the fighting struggle, the intoxicated young man grabbed a knife and stubbed his brother to death. He was later arrested by the police and sentenced to life imprisonment. Witnessing his son kill the other son is still a nightmare to her. Her daughter got married and therefore, the woman is left all alone and she lives a life full of emptiness, societal shame and sadness. The most painful moments in her life is when she is being referred to as a mother to a murderer of a fellow brother.

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[171] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933), pp. 52-53.

[172] S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984).

[173] Ibid., p. 31.

[174] Ibid., p. 32.

2.3.3 Young Men Refusing to Marry

From the research carried out in Kĩambaa Sub-County, the researcher engaged a vast number of parents who expressed their concern on the increasing number of young men who refuse to marry. They evade marriage arguing that they fear the burden of being responsible of raising a family. Some of them do not see the need of marrying and spending their money on families that are susceptible to break ups. Exposure to family life difficulties in their childhood like separation of parents discourages them from entering into marriage covenant and beginning family life. A number of these young men are not educated and therefore, cannot secure job opportunities. Instead, they engage in manual jobs in homes, hotels and bars. The little they earn enables them to rent a room where they can put up in. The feeling of loneliness would then push them to bars where they can meet up with friends to chat and drink with.

In these social gatherings in bars, the young men encounter women specifically, commercial sex workers. A good number of them get into the habit of taking different women into their houses to satisfy their sexual desires. The researcher learnt that these men opted for sexual gratification but did not want to be attached to any family commitment. In the account of enjoyment of alcohol and women, young men misuse their money and contract Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and the dreaded HIV and AIDs. Discovering their status, the infected ones set themselves on a mission of spreading the deadly diseases particularly by raping young and innocent girls in the area. Parents therefore, live in fear of their children being abused and infected. Sadly, a number of families in Kĩambaa Sub-County, the Christian ones included, have buried their children resulting from this problem that has been a troubling issue to family life. The above confirms what Wachege and Rũgendo wrote on factors leading to premature deaths of male youth.[175]

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[175] P.N. Wachege and F.G. Rũgendo, "*Factors Leading to Premature Deaths of Male Youths: A Case of Karũri Village, Kĩambu County – Kenya*," IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (1OSR – JHSS), Vol. 22, Issue 7, Ver. 16 (July, 2017), pp. 64 – 74.

2.3.4 Children Ignorance and Rebellion

The researcher gathered quite a number of complaints from parents who are willing to educate their children but they are not ready to acquire education. Such a case is that of a very brilliant young man who excelled in his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams and joined a very prestigious School. While in School, as early as in form one, the boy started to influence other students and together they organized strikes. The boy alongside his friends, were expelled from School. His parents were forced to enroll him in another School. The situation got worse when the young man joined a group of students and started engaging in drugs. Upon discovery, the School principal expelled the boy from School. The parents were very disappointed with their son - their advices and appeals did not bear any fruit.

The young man indulged more into drugs and unfortunately, he impregnated a girl who was still under age. A few months after the child was born, the girl ran away from the boy's home living the child behind. The grandmother of the child was forced to take care of the child. Being a sick woman who had undergone a number of head surgeries she is burdened with a child to look after as her own at the time that she is supposed to be relaxing because of her sickness.

Another case of children's rebellion is the issue of girls engaging in pre-marital sex and becoming pregnant at very tender ages. Among the Agĩkũyũ, engaging in sex before marriage and giving birth out of wedlock is termed as a taboo. Virginity is highly valued and a virgin girl is being referred to as *gathirange* (pure) and her mother is praised for raising her daughter well. However, a girl who gets pregnant before marriage is ridiculed and used to warn other girls because she is a bad example to them. Her mother was blamed for not raising her own daughter in the right manner as taught in the Church and community and shame befell the family. She is considered a burden to the family and her brothers hated her all the more because they do not want to share their father's wealth with the girl so they marry her off to older men who are bribed with *mbũri ya gũtiira nyondo* (a goat for straitening the breasts) instead of getting the customary *rũracio* (dowry).[176] To avoid these kind of scenarios, the Agĩkũyũ had *njaama ya airĩtu* (the initiated girls council) which was used to discipline the girls and prevent them from

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[176] P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2003), p. 181.

involving themselves in pre-marital sex so as to do away with early pregnancies and early marriages.[177]

2.3.5 Foster Parenting

It is a mode of parenting whereby one or both of the parents nurture and educate children who are not their own biological children. A single mother who acquired her status of single motherhood through divorce has one child, a daughter. Fortunately, she gets a husband and remarried. They had two more children and ended up with two daughters and a son. Unfortunately, the woman did not live long because of her condition, struggling with diabetes. After her demise, the husband is left with the responsibility to take care of the three children. The man became cruel to his step daughter to the extent that he refused to pay her School fees. As if that was not enough, the father took her as a wife and a slave of the house. He used the young innocent girl to satisfy his sexual desires and warned her not to disclose the situation threatening to kill her. For the fear of the step father's threat, the girl endured the beastly act and mistreatments. She wished to go to School with her siblings but the chance was already snatched from her.

Teachers from her School were concerned about her absence from School. They approached the neighbor and asked them to find out why the girl no longer came to School. Neighbors stormed the home and they got to speak with the girl who was at first reluctant to share what was going on in her life since she was threatened by the stepfather. After convincing and pleading her to tell them the truth, they were shocked to hear what was happening to the girl. The man was reported to the Chief who in turn handed him over to the police. He was accused of abusing a minor and sentenced to life imprisonment. The children were left all alone with no one to take care of them. Hatred among the siblings arose with the first born daughter being blamed for their father's absence. As a young girl, she struggled to take care of her siblings with the little that good Samaritans and close relatives provided. Eventually, the patriarchal uncles took in the two children leaving behind the girl who was forced to become a house help.

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[177] H. W. Kĩnoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2013), p. 27.

2.3.6 Co-parenting

It is a form of parenting whereby parents have separated or divorced and one of them is left with the responsibility to take care of the children. However, the other parent is given the chance to be visiting their offspring and to continue catering for their needs. The researcher got a chance to interact with some Secondary Schools students. After engaging them in a discussion on family life problems, the researcher came to understand why some of them live with their father in the absence of their mother who is still alive. From the children, the researcher found out that their parents had divorced and they were left to live with their father because the wife was unfaithful and is currently living with another man. The children have grown up to accept to live with their father who is so caring and close to them.

Later on, the man made a decision to remarry so as to get a companion. Fortunately, the new wife becomes a very good mother to her husband's children who accepted her and lived happily. The biological mother later broke up with the man she was living with. It made her feel so bitter knowing that she once had a good family that she ruined. Her emptiness, loneliness and jealousy of seeing her husband and children living happily with another woman led her to planning an evil act. She filed a case in Court to be granted the custody of her children. To win the case, she blackmailed her children that if they do not come with her, then she would commit suicide. Out of the love they had for their mother, they agreed to side with her. So as to convince the Court, she plotted a strategy to accuse the foster mother of maltreating them to prove her accusation. The children were asked by their mother to physically hurt themselves and in Court, the judge granted her the custody of the children.

2.3.7 Neglect of Children and Family

Some parents from Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County tend to neglect their duties towards the family for various reasons. Cagnolo puts it clear that the man as the head of the family is obliged to provide the family with their needs.[178] However, this is not always the case and it leads to family life problems experienced by Christian families today. The researcher encountered a woman who explained how her husband spends his money recklessly in alcohol and how he has totally neglected his duty as a husband and father. In the Agĩkũyũ traditional

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[178] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933), p. 51.

society, a hardworking man was assisted by other members of the clan in handling his family life troubles. But if he neglected his duties, his fellows withdraw from helping him because of lack of commitment to his family and community. It was important to discourage laziness in the family.[179]

The research findings showed that due to abandonment of family duties, some parents have subjected their children to so much suffering. They are forced to live under very poor conditions, others drop out of School and some totally miss out the chance to join Secondary Schools even after scoring very high marks in their Primary School and securing positions in good secondary Schools. The wives are left with heavy burdens of toiling hard so that they can cater for their families. Some are brutally abused by their husbands who are under the influence of alcohol. In some cases, a good number of men become impotent and are unable to sire children owing to indulging in taking illicit brew that is harmful to their health. Illnesses arising from excessive drinking force the wives to spend large amounts of money in catering for the hospital bills to take care of their husband's health.

As these men distance themselves from their children because of neglecting their role as parents, the relationship between the children and them is weakened. The children's respect for their father diminishes.[180] In extreme scenarios, in Kĩambaa Sub-County, a mother and her sons ganged up and murdered the father because he was totally addicted to alcohol and could even sell the family's property just to get money for drinking hence impoverishing the family. After murdering him, they dumped his body in the river so that it could look like he drowned after getting drunk. Sadly, the family no longer knew peace, the first son became mentally ill and the second indulged in hijacking people and robbing from people's homes. He became a threat to the community and the villagers could not tolerate him anymore. Community members stormed the homestead and killed him then he was burned to ashes. The mother, out of guilt because she knew very well what transpired, confessed their actions. Some elders had to offer a sacrifice on

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[179] S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984), p. 31.

[180] K. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology: In the Light of Vatican II* (India: Theological Publications in India, 1992), p. 543.

behalf of the family so as to relieve them from the calamities befalling them which was seen as a terrible curse.

2.3.8 Suicide as a Problem to Christian Family Life

The research findings revealed that a number of youths from the Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County commit suicide because of varied reasons. The family is where an individual is given a sense of belonging so that he or she can feel loved, cared for and part of the family.[181] However, some parents mistreat their children because they have committed some mistakes. The researcher encountered a girl who became pregnant out of marriage and her parents disowned her because of bringing shame to the family. Away from home, the girl struggled to survive but out of frustration for being rejected by her own family and having no one to talk to, she decided to take her own life to relieve herself from suffering. The life of the girl and the unborn child ended because of the parents not giving her a chance even when they know the value of human life.

Another case is whereby parents pressurize their children to do some things that are not their interests. A Christian family from the research area shares with the researcher how they forced their daughter, an only child, to take an engineering course in the university despite her interest to become a journalist. At the university, she continually failed her exams and out fear for her parents' reactions, too much stress and pressure, she committed suicide. She left a letter for her parents explaining how she wished she could realize her dreams that were cut short because of being forced to do what was not in her heart. Up to date, the parents still regret their actions and they encourage other parents to support the interests of their children to avoid such circumstances that bring unending pain to the family.

2.4 Poverty as a Problem to Christian Family Life

According to Myers, "poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. He further indicates poverty results from relationships which are broken, not functioning, exploitative and oppressive."[182] From the study, the researcher found out that poverty is a great problem to a number of Christian families

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[181] Ibid., p. 545.

[182] B. L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (New York: Orbis Books, 2006), p. 83.

in Kĩambaa Sub-County. The poor Christian families do not live as God intended them to because of the kind of suffering they are exposed to due to poverty. The poor remain poor because the rich block them from improving their status so that they can continue serving them. They are also highly exploited and oppressed by the rich.[183]

2.4.1 Poverty as a Difficulty to Church Leaders

From the research carried out among Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County, the researcher noted the poor living conditions of some families and how they struggle to make ends meet. The researcher got a chance to live and interact with a Bishop's family. The Bishop is married and together with his wife, they are blessed with three children. Living in a tiny piece of land (quarter of an acre), the family has to utilize the land effectively so as to cater for the needs of the family. Since pig farming is less demanding and cost effective, the family opted to rare pigs. Through selling of the pigs, the parents acquire money to feed and educate their children. Both the man and his wife have not been employed and therefore, they engage themselves in manual jobs from house to house in search of money to support their family. Being a bishop, the man has to play not the role of heading his family but also shepherding the congregation in his Church known as Immaculate Fellowship Church (IFC).

Distinct from the two mainstream Churches (RCC and ACK) in Kĩambaa Sub-county where they are saturated with hundreds of families giving huge tithes and offerings, the IFC is comprised of poor families who give very low tithes and offerings. The researcher was privileged to attend a service in IFC where the Bishop serves and witnessed the small numbers of people attending and the tithes collected were extremely low. From experiential knowledge, the researcher learnt that the amount collected when the service was well attended by all members was three hundred shillings unlike the thousands collected in the mainstream Churches in the locality. With the little amount he gets, he has to support his family and also be generous to his flock who constantly come to him for financial assistance.

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[183] Ibid. pp. 69-70.

As a Bishop, the members of the Church depend on him for spiritual and also financial help. In extreme cases, for example, the Bishop together with his family were forced to shelter and feed a family man with his wife and child. With their financial constraints and a family added to them, the Bishop and the wife had to put more effort in their manual jobs which were not guaranteed. In some occasions, they are being exploited by being overworked and paid little. In the event that people note that they are progressing by educating their children and improving their living standards, they are being denied jobs by those whom they could count on because of jealousy. As a Church leader, the bishop is called upon every other time to console and conduct services with bereaved families and he spends most of his time counseling Christian families.

Though a calling, a lot of his time is being consumed outside his home and he is left with little time to work so as to earn a living. As a result, the wife is being left with the burden of overworking herself so that she can provide for the family. Combining manual jobs to earn some money and later in the day working in her own house exhausts the mother who has to be responsible to her husband and children. Cagnolo backs up the finding in his book *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore*[184] where he explains that the mother in the family is burdened with heavy weight duties that are even beyond her power. She has to work extra hard because there are those kinds of jobs that the father in a typical Gĩkũyũ home cannot engage in due to their culture and tradition.[185]

2.4.2 Poverty Driving Youths to Join Illegal Groups

A Christian family disclosed to the researcher a painful experience that has been a great problem in their family life. Their son sat for his Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and scored very high marks which secured him a place in a National Secondary School. The parents who could not afford to pay his School fees went seeking for help but they did not succeed. Even the rich relatives were not willing to give up a cent to help their son. Experiential knowledge shows that relatives do not want to help each other because of jealousy that the other family will be successful. Eventually, the boy had to accept the reality that he had to remain home and forget about continuing his studies. Out of disappointment of seeing his age mates join

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[184] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933).
[185] Ibid., p. 51.

Secondary Schools and missing out the chance of joining a good School, the boy involved himself in alcoholism. He made friendship with some peer groups that introduced him to an illegal group popularly known as the 'quails.' The group promised him wealth and assured the young man of security. With the misconception that he will benefit from the group, the youth blindly joined the unlawful group.

These illegal groups have been a threat to the community. They engage in robbing homes, mugging people, carjacking and raping young girls in the area. The parents live in fear of losing their son being aware that the police were after the group and he could either end up dead or imprisoned. Pleading with the son to come home did not bear any fruit until the family agreed to involve some Church leaders. The chairman of the Church's Executive together with some youth leaders reached out for the boy and engaged him in counseling. The main aim of the boy was to continue his studies and he explained that the only way he could be reformed was by going to School. Though it was not an easy task, the Chairman and the youths took up the task to educate the boy. They acquired financial help from the Church members and the community at large and enrolled the boy in a School. That kind of help to the needy is encouraged by Pope Francis in his Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* whereby he teaches the Priests and all Christians to be there for troubled families. He also instructs the Priests to be with the people "bear the smell of the flock" as they preach the Gospel so as to give them hope.[186]

2.4.3 Poverty Blocking the Youth from Continuing With their Education

The researcher also interacted with a man who seemed to be so sad and bitter about life and living. He engages himself in doing manual jobs so that he can earn some money to support his family. Due to financial constraints, he was not able to take his son through secondary education. It is a major problem to family life in that inasmuch as the parents wish to educate their children, lack of School fees makes them handicapped. The son opted for the *boda boda* enterprise (motorbike business) and he was employed in a gas company to do house to house delivery. The hardworking young man was very committed in his duties. He used his earnings to support the parents and siblings. In January 2017, two years in the company, a number of gas cylinders went

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[186] Pope Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium,* 24 November, 2013. nos. 68-70.

missing in the company. Unluckily, the young man was wrongly accused of theft, reported to the police and is now under police custody as the investigations are ongoing.

His father pleaded with the owners of the company to release his son because he is not guilty of the offense. The bosses heard his cry and went to the police to withdraw the case but the police turned down their request. The police claim that the release of the boy would depend on the recovery of the stolen goods. Out of frustration of seeing his son in the cells and the guilt of not managing to educate him, the father indulged in much alcohol taking just to forget the suffering of his son in cell and to lessen his pain. He visits his son regularly and the money he earns from his manual jobs is swallowed up by the police each and every other day and yet there is no hope for his son's release. The children who depended on their brother live in fear of also dropping out from School.

2.5 Cultural Issues

These are the difficulties that Christian families encounter because of their attachment to unfair traditional practices and beliefs in the community. According to Pope Francis, maintaining of harmful customs and traditions leads to the oppression of certain categories of people especially women.[187] Sticking to these cultures even in a dynamic society becomes a disturbing factor to Christian families in living their marriage and Christian family life. Within this context, let us consider: Inheritance of land and property; gender preference; and abandoning the elderly.

2.5.1 Inheritance and Ownership of Land and Property

As indicated by Cagnolo, among the Agĩkũyũ, women are traditionally not allowed to acquire and own property from their parents.[188] The customs and traditions of the community prevent the families from giving property to their female children. Though they are Christians and want to treat their children with equality, parents are restricted by a culture that they are attached to. From the research, women who gave birth out of wedlock are seen as a burden to the family. In such cases, they are married off to old men who are already married but practice polygamy. If

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[187] Pope Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium,* 24 November, 2013. no. 33.

[188] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933). pp. 29-30.

they are unlucky to secure husbands, the family out of pity and concern for the mother, apportions them a small piece of land as the *ihĩĩ cia mũcii* (sons of the home). The land is meant to give her a place where she can build a house for herself and her children and carry out subsistence farming to cater for the welfare of her family. The above is affirmed by Wachege in his book *Third Millennium Single Mothers and Mother-widows.*[189] However, trouble comes in when her brothers do not wish to share property with *aka* (women) as the author explains. It brings about conflicts that eventually results in divisions among the siblings.[190] Adherence to such traditions, therefore, does not augur well with family cohesion and well being.

In Kĩambaa Sub-County, families including the Christian ones face a number of problems emerging from the issue of inheritance and ownership of land and other property. Some families engage lawyers to contest in Courts of Law. These families may have children being persuaded to contest their father's will and the sharing of property amongst themselves. Often, the Court proceedings are very long and tedious and more so, a lot of money is spent in lawsuits not to forget mutual ill-feelings and hatred. Similarly, some judges can be compromised hence ruling unfairly in favor of one party at the expense of the other. The disadvantaged party then feels dissatisfied with the Court's verdict and hence causes wrangles due to bitterness. These disputes then lead to divisions in the family and lead to a life time enmity among the family members. In extreme cases, siblings are seen murdering each other. The researcher was made to know that some family members actually hire goons to eliminate their very own people on account of inheritance and property. The issue is a big problem to family especially as African Christians who are supposed to be respecting life as the best gift to them from God and living in harmony with each other.

2.5.2 Gender Preference
Though families long to have children of both sexes, the male children are preferred by the respondents regardless of them being Christian. The argument is that young men remain at home to continue the family lineage while the girls are married off to other families and therefore,

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[189] P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press, 2003). P. 164.
[190] Ibid., p. 164.

leave their homes. The respondents confirmed Wachege's assertion that male children are expected to maintain family unity as well as being guarantors of respectful burial of their parents and assurance of authentic accompanying rituals. Nevertheless, the girls are not ill-treated or hated because they are seen as a source of wealth for the family. As the girls are married, their families receive the bride wealth which enriches the family. The wealth can also be used by the young men in the family as dowry for acquiring their own wives.[191] In the area of study, gender preference still prevails even among the Christian families. When a woman gives birth to girls only, the in laws of her husband pressurize the man to get another wife to give birth to sons for the home. Their choice weakens the relationship between the husband and wife and conflicts arise between the wives and also among the children especially on the issue of inheritance of property from their parents. Pope Francis inspires the Christians to do away with oppressive cultures and traditions that block Christian families from living as God had planned for them to live in their marriage and family life.[192]

2.5.3 Abandoning the Elderly

Pope John Paul II educates the Christian families to embrace the elderly in the family as community assets not liability. He argues that they are important in passing on the values of living family life such as love, honesty, kindness and obedience to the young generation. They are also involved in making decisions for the Christian families because of their wisdom and they bless the family members.[193] Despite such Papal family pedagogy and other champions concerned with the welfare of the elderly, the researcher encountered a good number of old men and women being abandon and left by their children even the Christian ones to wander in the village as destitute. They are seen as a burden and therefore, they cannot live with them in their families. Other families have relocated to the urban areas in search of jobs and they leave their parents to live under very poor conditions rarely visiting them – and when they do, it was disclosed that they are often in a hurry to leave for their respective urban homes.

The elderly men and women because of the toll of advanced age and physical weakness cannot engage themselves effectively in manual jobs and therefore, they are being forced to depend on

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[191] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: The Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933), p. 62.

[192] Pope Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium,* 24 November, 2013. no. 33.

[193] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio,* Vatican, 22 November, 1981. no. 27.

donations from good Samaritans. When they are not provided with food to sustain their lives they literary starve to death despite having given birth to healthy working grown children. Recently, an old woman died as a result of eating a bar soap out of hunger. Loneliness and emptiness also fastens their deaths. The phenomenon contradicts the observance of the fourth commandment in the Decalogue. Out of the pain resulting from the suffering they are exposed to, some of these elderly men and women end up cursing their own children. Misfortunes then befall the descendants which, among the calamities, lead to birth of children with disorders and ones who are mentally retarded. To rectify the scenario, Peschke stresses that children are obliged to care for their parents even in their old age. They have the duty to provide their needs, visit them regularly and never to lose contact with them. Moreover, they should never be abandoned or rejected no matter the situation.[194]

2.6 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The chapter identified and explicated four basic problems that Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter namely: marital problems, parenting problems, poverty as a problem to family life and cultural problems. The researcher has explained the four main issues thematically with the view of the next chapter. The research findings pave way for the next chapters whereby the study will identify ways that can be used effectively to overcome the difficulties that face Christian families so as to achieve a fulfilling family life as God intended the family to be. With the above in mind, the following chapter will handle the anthropological secondary sources in relation to the four main identified issues.

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[194] K. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology: In the Light of Vatican II* (India: Theological Publications in India, 1992), pp. 561-563.

CHAPTER THREE

AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW WITH REFERENCE TO THE FOUR PROBLEMS TO CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter profoundly involved the researcher in the identification and explication of fundamental problems that Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter. The researcher explained thematically the four main complications with the view of the present chapter. The current chapter therefore, will handle religio-anthropological secondary sources on the African world-view with reference to the four striking issues to Christian family life by focusing on: Nyamiti's clarification of Ancestorship, Nyamiti's five items on the African world-view, Wanjohi's *kĩhooto* world-view, social organization and customs of the Agĩkũyũ, single motherhood, Gĩkũyũ traditional morality and concepts of God in the community.

3.2 Nyamiti's Clarification of Ancestorship

In his book titled *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol.* 2[195] Nyamiti benefits the study with his forthright explanation of an African Ancestor – an essential component of African world-view. According to him, "Ancestorship is a sacred kin- relationship which establishes a right or title to regular sacred communication with one's own kin through prayer and ritual offering (oblation)."[196] The definition is a synthesis of the fundamental characteristics of an Ancestor within the African philosophy of life. The qualities, which are so invaluable in our study on Agĩkũyũ family life, are: kinship, supernatural sacred status, exemplarity, mediation and right or title to regular sacred communication with ones kin.[197]

The author explains "kinship" as "founded on consanguineous ties with their living relatives."[198] The point is that African Ancestors are a confine of own individual families. He elaborates "super-human sacred status" as acquired after one's death having lived a family life of good conduct. Owing to closeness to *Ngai* (God), one then became sacred. Such sacrality then gave the person enjoyment of superhuman characteristics like possessing the earthly ones for

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[195] C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol. 2- Jesus Christ the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005).
[196] Ibid., p. 4.
[197] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[198] Ibid., p. 9.

good or for evil, being somehow ubiquitous and capability of being in shrines and special trees.[199] As for "mediation," he discloses that having lived among the earthly and now being close to the Almighty, the Ancestor is empowered to intervene as a qualified mediator.[200] By that very fact, the Ancestor is enabled to grant favors to respective family members.

The other quality the author explains is that of "exemplarity." To qualify as an Ancestor, as earlier pointed out, one must have lived an exemplary life of good conduct. One must have proved oneself in handling family life problems, assisted families in difficulties thereby manifesting role model characteristics through one's own family.[201] As a result of the above three requisites of Ancestorship, such a person deserved gratitude, oblation and a right to be remembered and being accorded ongoing thanksgiving rituals like libation and mutual communication.[202] Consequently, neglect to their entitlement and contempt for their well-deserved sacred communication irritated them. As the author states: "Neglect of such communication on the part of the living is judged as an offense against their Ancestors. These revenge themselves by sending bodily calamities to their negligent relatives. Their anger is appeased by prayer and ritual donations."[203]

The above underscores the indispensable value of family life – since one has to be an Ancestor of a family. It also shows how handling and assisting to positively face family life hitches is an added credit towards realizing Ancestorship in yonder life. Best of all, it enhances a wider scope of perception of African family to include those in celestial life on top of those still on earth. The shortcoming, however, is that the author gives a commendable over-view of African Ancestors in the African world-view without providing a model of the same as the study does.

3.3 Nyamiti's Five Items on the African World-view

According to Nyamiti, there are five crucial interrelated aspects in the African world-view. The understanding of these elements is useful to the study so as to understand the Agĩkũyũ family life better. These aspects include vitality (life), dynamism (power), sacrality, communality and anthropocentrism.

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[199] Ibid., p. 10.
[200] Ibid., p. 11.
[201] Ibid., p. 11.
[202] Ibid., pp. 11-12.
[203] Ibid., p. 11.

Vitality as explained by Nyamiti is the centrality of every being. Life is a God-given gift and is highly valued in the family. Those things that are related to life such as blood, marriage, sex and birth are also respected by individuals. Fathers and mothers as analogically viewed as God's co-creators thus holding a very special place in the society for giving life.[204] Life is also associated with the super natural beings, divinities, ancestral spirits, human beings, animate beings and inanimate things. The respect for life is varied from, that of the Supreme-being as the highest up to that of the inanimate as the lowest. In the society, the fullness of life is expressed in a number of ways for example, through greetings where people can show their concern for the welfare of others and also through sharing and celebrating their being alive. It is done by organizing ceremonies where people dance to enjoy life and share whatever they have so that they can eat to sustain their lives.

Dynamism expresses life as the greatest power in the society. As the highest of all, life should therefore be respected and protected from any kind of danger that undermines it hence ensuring that individuals live wholly without fearing for their lives. Sacrality is the other characteristic that articulates the sacredness of life as the greatest power. To protect the sacredness of this life, there are those taboos that are put in place in the society. These taboos forbid individuals from taking the life of another through such ill actions as murder. The community members argue that life is God-given and only the Creator has the right and the power to take it from an individual. All these efforts are meant to protect the dignity and worth of a person in the society.

Communality is of great interest in the study since it is in the aspect that the rest can be explained best. Vitality, dynamism, sacrality and anthropocentrism are fully lived in the community because this is where they all converge. Community is then considered as the centrality of life[205]: "the life of the living; the departed; and those that are yet to be born."[206] It is the community that comes before individuals though the individuals are not ignored but cared for so that they can feel part and parcel of that society. The community overrides the individuals so

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[204] S. G. Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2006), p. 21.
[205] Ibid., p. 34.
[206] For more elaborate information, refer to P. N. Wachege, *CRS 560*: *African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012), pp. 14ff.

as to encourage people to act communally by generating authentic interpersonal relationships, participating fully in various activities in the community, unity among all people and being open to each other so that people can share their family life problems.[207] Sharing one's difficulties with the rest of the community helps greatly whereby the members of the community come together to assist troubled families to overcome their issues. However, one is expected to play their role and not be lazy. An individual cannot survive without the community and therefore, if one is excommunicated, they feel lost and vanished.

Individuals are incorporated into the community through initiatic rituals such as birth, initiation, marriage and death. During these celebrations, people come together to celebrate the gift of life and to continue their communal aspects of sharing and participation. The events further provide an avenue for disclosing problematic factors and assisting in solving them. The last aspect in the African world-view is anthropocentrism which simply means man-centeredness. It is where a person is understood as the child of God the Father and Creator. By understanding people, then we are able to understand God. The gift of life is given to human beings by God hence He is regarded as the Father of all. The above empowers people in a community to live together as brothers and sisters having descended from one Father. As relatives then, they can easily unite and assist each other to overcome burdensome elements that they encounter in living their Christian family life.[208]

3.4 Wanjohi: Kĩhooto World-view

In the book titled *The Wisdom and Philosophy of the Agĩkũyũ Proverbs: The Kĩhooto World-view*,[209] Wanjohi explains that although Agĩkũyũ fundamental settlements are Kĩambu, Mũrang'a, Nyeri, Kĩrĩnyaga and Nyandarũa Counties, still a considerable number of them live in the other 42 Counties like Laikipia, Nakuru and Kajiado. According to Wanjohi, inclusive of

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[207] S. G. Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context,* pp. 33-39.

[208] For more elaborate information, refer to P. N. Wachege, *CRS 560*: *African Christian Theology*, pp. 14ff.

[209] G. J. Wanjohi, *The Wisdom and Philosophy of the Agĩkũyũ Proverbs: The Kĩhooto World-view* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997).

the dispersed ones, the Agĩkũyũ population is about 6.5 million and therefore, as Kenya's largest ethnic group among the 47 in the Republic.[210]

Wanjohi's informative understanding of world-view is "how an individual, a society, a community, a nation or a historical epoch views, sees, conceives or understands the world, and the reaction which follows therefrom."[211] The author does well in spelling out what he calls "the existence of broad areas of world-view" that tends to surpass individual ones as follows:

1. "Every knowledge discipline with its sets of assumptions, theories and methods constitutes a world-view;
2. Every philosophical system necessarily involves a world-view;
3. Every religion is shaped by and is an expression of a world-view;
4. Every culture contains its own world-view."[212]

Of even greater interest to the study is the fourth item above which underscores that particular cultures, like the Agĩkũyũ one, are endowed with specific dynamic world-views. That is the justification for speaking of "Greek world-view…contemporary world-view."[213] With such an understanding, perhaps it may be valid to assert that world-views trigger paradigm shifts and the accompanying ongoing cultural modifications owing to changed situations in life, globalization, and growth in education and generation change. Such a perception will go a long way in creating awareness in correcting, modifying and uplifting Agĩkũyũ traditional requisites of family life on one hand and elevating the related customary values on the other hand through enrichment from Christian teaching on family life. This, of course, does not mean discarding even what is "judged" to be incompatible with Christianity as obsolete without finding out why such practices have been conservatively utilized. The bottom line is that there has to be an objective encounter between Agĩkũyũ world-view in relation to family life and Christian instructions on family life which is a dialogue whereby both are beneficiaries.

On the bases of reality being multi-dimensional, Wanjohi enlightens the study with the following remarks: "The human person is the best example for explaining the multi-diversity of reality. For as many people know and believe, the human being is at one and the same time

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[210] Ibid., p. 19.

[211] Ibid., p. 38.

[212] Ibid., p. 39.

[213] Ibid., p. 39.

material, spiritual, sensuous, intellectual, free, determined, temporal and eternal; he/she loves and hates; is brave and cowardly; generous and stingy; just and unjust; moral and immoral."[214] He goes on to point out that: "Some world-views are known to be narrow and reductive, trying to resolve reality into only one dimension or mode. It is what gives rise to the various monisms, materialism, spiritualism, sensism, rationalism, liberalism and determinism."[215] Such insights would go a long way in creating awareness to individuals in communities, in this case Agĩkũyũ community, to keep maturing and broadening their personal philosophy of family life opening up in dialogue with those of the others thereby striving to be inclusive rather than exclusive for the welfare of all.

Our experiential knowledge has it that, in the world-view of the Africans in general and Agĩkũyũ in particular, proverbs play an important role in the welfare of family life. They enhance wisdom to guard against family life crisis. They also guide on how to face the cropping up existential problems. Wanjohi addresses scholars like Levy- Brull and Hegel who question the reality of African world-view or rather African philosophy reducing it to "mere emotionalism."[216] He is not happy either with those who are of the opinion that in reference to Africans it is "African thought" technically called ethno philosophy.[217] Neither is he satisfied with Oruka's "sage philosophy" in reference to the African sage respondents who happen to be sages or elders among them being highly influenced by Christianity.[218]

The author brings to awareness that Agĩkũyũ proverbs are not only imbued with the essential requisites of philosophy i.e., metaphysics, ethics and epistemology.[219] They are also endowed with *kĩhooto* (reason) whose wisdom provides "practical advice on how to view and handle the problems of life."[220] Nevertheless, though the author talks of "problems of life "in general, our study concretizes it to the issue of today's troubles to Christian family life narrowing it down to Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County. Despite the shortcoming, the author deserves credit for

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[214] Ibid., p. 39.
[215] Ibid., p. 39.
[216] Ibid., p. 13.
[217] Ibid., p. 13.
[218] Ibid., p. 13.
[219] Ibid., p. 14.
[220] Ibid., p. 14.

emphasizing that it is in philosophical and wisdom proverbs that Agĩkũyũ world-view is mainly expressed.[221] Such a perception will go a long way in legitimizing the study for spelling out Agĩkũyũ proverbs that speak to family life. The exercise is within the context of addressing today's problems to African Christian families.

The manifestation of world-view inclusive among the traditional Agĩkũyũ culture, as explained by Wanjohi, is portrayed in the proverbs in a very special concrete manner. According to him, Agĩkũyũ proverbs "cover a large area within the culture, so that in studying them one is studying almost the whole culture and world-view."[222] He does not stop here but goes on to point out that: "The all- embracing character of Gĩkũyũ proverbs is shown by the fact that these proverbs treat of both unperceivable and perceivable psychological and moral realities…They introduce one to physical reality: the earth, the sun, the moon, the rain, the wind, trees and animals; they also treat of social and political matters."[223]

Drawing from his comprehensive research on Agĩkũyũ proverbs,[224] the author authoritatively confirms that "the majority of Gĩkũyũ proverbs have to do with social realities. The above may be explained by the fact that the Gĩkũyũ, like most other Africans, place a high premium on the social."[225] Such a crucial finding gives credence to the current study since the family is the very core of social matters. Proverbs, furthermore, "involve senses and intellect; empiricism and rationalism; knowledge and ignorance, among others."[226] Additionally, "In regard to metaphysics, these proverbs make reference to perfection and imperfection; to reality and appearance; to free will and determinism; to change and permanency."[227] Moreover, "As concerns ethics these proverbs treat of right and wrong; of rights and duties; of justice and injustice. At the level of social and political philosophy, Gĩkũyũ proverbs talk about industriousness and laziness; about generosity and meanness; about violence and non-violence;

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[221] Ibid., p. 19.
[222] Ibid., p. 39.
[223] Ibid., p. 40.
[224] The same author has published another book on and about Agĩkuyu proverbs namely- G. J. Wanjohi, *Under One Roof: Gĩkũyũ Consolidated* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2001).
[225] Ibid., p. 40.
[226] Ibid., p. 40.
[227]Ibid., p. 40.

about co-operation and self-reliance; about individualism and socialism; about; about law breaking; about reward and punishment."[228] Yet, the noticeable omission here is that Wanjohi does not demonstrate how to implement or exploit the proverbs in guarding family life positive as well as negative issues. The lacuna is filled up by the current study.

3.5 Social Organization and Customs of the Agĩkũyũ

Cagnolo helps the study to know that Agĩkũyũ language particularly grammatical structure, customs, the articles they use, mentality and nature are Bantu by origin but it would be mythical to think of them as pure Gĩkũyũ.[229] That is why Wachege talks of "Gĩkũyũ Ũkabi" (Agĩkũyũ Maasai) and "Gĩkũyũ *Gathirange*" (Complete Gĩkũyũ).[230] Cagnolo's theory of asserting that they are imbued with Hamitic blood via mixing with Maasai thereby qualifying a considerable number of them as "Gĩkũyũ Ũkabi"is articulated thus: "The weapons and clothes are identical for both tribes. When in arms for war they sing the same Maasai song with Maasai words; both call God *Ngai* and offer sacrificial meat; both the tribes used to pierce their ears for ornament; both cultivated their hair with ochre and fat; and what matters more, both the tribes use nearly the same ceremonies of circumcision, which among African peoples is the maximum point of contact."[231] The distinction brings about some amount of tension in the family.

Cagnolo notes that it would be wrong to falsify the number of clans as "nine with the fill" i.e., ten as he explains: "A superficial observer might think these clans to amount to fifty or sixty; but that is inaccurate, because each clan may have up to five different names, according to the places where the clan has spread. The relationship between the different clans is not one of servitude or privileges, as with the Indian castes, but all of them equally cooperate to one social and national whole."[232] Another observation is that while clans' intermarriage for family life was spontaneous, nevertheless, there were some exceptions in the form of taboos.[233] If a clan head noted something incongruent with Agĩkũyũ family life that would be detrimental to one's

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[228] Ibid., p. 40.
[229] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933), p. 18.
[230] P.N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder)*, p. 12.
[231] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore* (Nyeri: Mission Printing School, 1933), p. 18.
[232] Ibid., p. 21.
[233] Ibid., p. 21.

community, the head prohibited the homestead from marrying members of that clan and that was binding[234] as a kind of curse. Our research shows that the practice is conservative in some families in Kĩambaa Sub-County and this creates some amount of conflict in family life. Positively, however, with some polishing, such an idea of parents alerting their children to be critical in choosing who to marry or be married to by digging deep into people's history to know them better would go a long way in minimizing family life difficulties. Also, while Agĩkũyũ hospitality and support were inclusive, nevertheless, prevalence and intensity were laid upon fellow clan members. As such, Cagnolo indicates that: "If a member of the *mũhĩrĩga* suffers a grave abuse – land dispute, murder – the whole clan joins to obtain justice."[235] That was a commendable way of handling family life problems.

On women and family land ownership issue, Cagnolo indicates some unfortunate customary handling. Women – whether wives, daughters or widow – on the affair of possession, ownership and inheritance of land were accorded a rather oppressive treatment. Cagnolo puts it thus: "A woman, strictly speaking, does not possess. Having been taken from her parents upon an agreed dowry, she becomes a possession of her husband, who exercises his rights on all the fruits originating from her. Custom allows to the woman, nevertheless, certain personal rights, as the option of accepting her match, the possession of certain things, the distribution of certain duties, wherefore she is not altogether a slave, but possessed by mutual consent."[236]

The field research noted such ambivalence expressed above in Kĩambaa Sub-County which in family life rivalry and elements of community animosity. It also came out that some families engage lawyers in their endeavor to contest in Civil Courts whose verdict results in serious perpetual divisions among family members. So, instead of resolving the conflict, the judicial interventions succeed in dichotomizing the concerned families into winners and losers transmitting the hostility to the descendants thereby instilling perpetual family life complications. Our research further confirmed that some Agĩkũyũ in Kĩambaa Sub-County, even those of Christian faith affiliation, are still conservative in conserving the above discriminating traditional

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[234] Ibid., p. 21.
[235] Ibid., p. 22.
[236] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

inheritance practices. Such practices vis-à-vis Kenya's 2010 promulgated Constitution on gender inclusive inheritance[237] generate an unfortunate conflict detrimental to the welfare of family life. The researcher noted a lot of animosity, separation and even fatal rivalries as apparently the in thing. The gap here is that Cagnolo just mentions the unfavorable traditional family life possession practices but does not dig deep into the issue as the study does.

Interestingly, in his capacity as both a European early Christian missionary and a writer in his own rights, Cagnolo acknowledges that the Agĩkũyũ already had their well-defined family life network, governing precepts and community standards. The assertion he makes on the reality of a well set family and the centrality of family life revolving upon African world-view is as follows: "However barbarous and savage a tribe may be, the idea of the family is always implied; and when we, missionaries, first came in touch with these savages, we realized that this idea was well founded on traditional principles and safeguarded by rights, laws and sanctions."[238] He goes on to inform that after youthful enterprise, "a good Kikuyu jealous of and obedient to the traditions of his tribe and country, realizes the duty incumbent upon him to start a home where to transplant and carry on the paternal traditions. This costs him labor and money, but in this task he can count upon the cooperation of his father, who is no less concerned that his son should marry and carry on the family line."[239] Drawing from his research findings, the author observes that: "In Kikuyu the husband is not the absolute tyrant, the terror of the other members of the family, the master of life and death, such as we read in certain tribes of the far East, but he is the moderator, to the native mind, of every detail of the family routine, into which he admits no outside interference."[240] Moreover: "If one member of the family suffers an injustice, the father will at once see that right is done. It is the father who supplies the family with clothes, who provides for cultivating the land, and builds the hut and necessary granaries – though assisted by neighbors and friends, according to the customs of the tribe."[241] Cagnolo also corrects those who are quick to accuse the husbands of treating wives as beasts of burden making their family life miserable as follows:

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[237] *The Constitution of Kenya, 2010* (Nairobi: National Council for Law Reporting, 2010), Art. 60, (1) (f).
[238] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore*, p. 50.
[239] Ibid., p. 50.
[240] Ibid., p. 50.
[241] Ibid., p. 51.

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Local customs and traditions generally tax the mother of the heavy toil, burdening her with labors beyond her strength. This arouses general commiseration, and it is usual for those who are not acquainted with Kikuyu customs to charge the husbands with cruelty, and compare the wives, mistakenly, with slaves or beasts of burden. But how is the husband in the wrong if such are the customs from time immemorial? If he attempted to take his wives' place in such work, he would become the laughing- stock of the whole neighborhood.[242]

The author goes on to explain the family bond and respective duties for the good of family life as prescribed in the Agĩkũyũ world-view. He says:

With this point of view, husband and wife recognize their union, and strive mutually for the financial betterment of the family and rearing the children, both making sacrifices for the common welfare. The children are generally subject to the parents until they reach puberty; afterwards the bonds of discipline are weaker. The young girls render assistance to their mother, more particularly in cultivating the land, drawing water from the river, cutting firewood, cooking food and attending to the smaller children. The little boys are attached to the father, tending the livestock and helping in other masculine affairs, or simply loaf and play about the roads.[243]

The insight here regarding mistaken role complementarity makes the study to have – in Descartes'' coined term – "methodical doubt" on what others say and have a commitment for self-insertion to dig deep into problems of family life in Kĩambaa in Sub-County. The shortcoming here is that the author does not show the reader how to go about it. The drawback was attended by employing the two Boffs' mediation theory.

Gender preference in traditional Agĩkũyũ family life was somehow ambivalent. Cagnolo enlightens the study by explaining the paradox thus:

Although a Kikuyu is very anxious to have children of both sexes, the male child is preferred , because, they say, the males are the mainstay of the stock, while the females are like bees who sooner or later will swarm away leaving the beehive deserted. Yet the members of the female sex are not oppressed or ill-treated …after all, girls are a source of

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[242] Ibid., p. 51.
[243] Ibid., pp. 52-53.

income through marriage contracts which increase the possessions of the family and provide means to enable the male members to marry.[244]

Cagnolo is, moreover, candid enough to reveal a hardly talked about negative aspect of the Agĩkũyũ traditional treatment of some categories of innocent children within the family. He spells out at least five such occasions namely:

1. If a child is delivered legs first, the midwife is its immediate executioner. As soon as it comes into her hands, her pitiless duty is to stop its nose and mouth with grass and earth, so that it can neither cry nor breathe.

2. If the mother becomes pregnant before menstruation, the infant will not long enjoy its right to live.

3. If a young mother gives birth to twins at her first accouchement, both children are put to death.

4. If the upper incisors of a baby appear before the lower teeth, no matter how pretty and beloved it may be, the child must die.

5. In case a woman desires more children when her husband is too old and infirm to give them to her, she will procure them out of wedlock. When the child is born, the husband is the arbiter of its fate.[245]

Such were among the family life trials the traditional Agĩkũyũ community encounters. The term "encounters" is deliberately employed since the practice is ongoing in today's Agĩkũyũ families, Kĩambaa ones included as the research found out, though in a concealed manner though the locality is dominated by Christians.

3.6 Traditional Social System of the Agĩkũyũ

Bottignole assists us to realize the indispensability of having a clear understanding of Agĩkũyũ family so as to comprehend their perception of family life and parenting thereby. The author observes that: "The family was the basic unit on which the traditional social system was hinged. The concept has, however, to be understood in the extensive meaning of the word, considering also all the links of kinship and the wider ones at clan level."[246] She informs that at first the

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[244] Ibid., p. 62.
[245] Ibid., pp. 62-63.
[246] S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984), p. 31.

Agĩkũyũ family system was matrilineal which was later systematically replaced by the current patrilineal system with husbands being the undisputed family heads though commendably maintaining the nine full (i.e., ten family clan women names).[247]

It was earlier observed that family cohesion and welfare was the consequence of genuine relationality and dynamic authentic interpersonal relationships. Bottignole captures the perception well as follows: "The relationship set up among the members of the family formed in such a way, were characterized not only by very strict and strong links with the closest members of the family but also by heavy duties towards all the others members…These duties were transformed into rights when one of the members found himself in condition of need."[248] One should not be quick to conclude that such a practice encouraged laziness among the relatives since they knew that others had to come to their aid. The observation emanating from field research is that each is expected to play one's commensurate role as a contribution to the community to be worthy of being a beneficiary. Such entitlement, therefore, came with duties for which they were initiatically socialized into as the research informed. Utilizing the coined term principle of "general reciprocity," Bottignole points out that "when a member of the clan is in need, all the clan members participate in helping. On the other hand, this member is expected to act in the same way when any other member of the clan is in need."[249] It has to be reiterated that, each and every person in the family was expected to play one's appropriate role in solving family problems while being generous in participating actively giving a hand in resolving family difficulties for its welfare in particular and that of the community at large.

Another thing to note is that fecundity was a greatly appreciated gift from *Ngai* (God). The existential vital belief, as a related proverb has it, is that "*rũũru rũtarĩ njaũ no kũhuka rũhukaga*" (a flock without calves vanishes). Moreover, descendants within respective families had their obligation of duty, rights and opportunities to get involved in tackling family affairs and were thereby socialized in the area accordingly. Here, the sentiments of Bottignole are crucial: "It was always within the family that the children learned their duties and rights towards their parents, grand-parents, relatives and members of their clan. Grand-parents and parents were the natural

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247 Ibid., p. 31.
248 Ibid., p. 31.
249 Ibid., p. 31.

teachers of their children. The former taught them the legend and tribal traditions transmitted orally from generation to generation, and tried to develop their memory."[250] She adds that "because of the clear-cut division of labor between sexes, the mother became the natural teacher of the daughters and the father of the sons. Daughters and sons were, quite soon, trained to help their parents in their domestic activity, field-work and cattle-breeding."[251] That is why, as par Chapter Two, single mothers and single fathers were disadvantaged in this regard. The former experiences stumbling blocks in handling boy-child while the latter faces serious impediments in parenting girl-child. With the proliferation of such mode of single handed parenting in Kĩambaa Sub-County in Kĩambu County, devastating issues to Christian family life are becoming more pronounced.

In the research, it was noted that circumcision was not merely an initiatic ritual. It was also pedagogical and an occasion for bringing together youngsters of the same *riika* (age-group) who were educated to have mutual respect, concern and as support groups in family life problems. Indeed: "Through that ceremony the youth (boys and girls) proved their courage and were considered adults. In fact, after having been extensively informed about their new status, their duties as adults and the secrets of the ethnic community life, they could marry and have children. The men could possess land, cattle and engage in political activities."[252] Among the ethical values held dearly is that of being pro-life and pro-family. It was taken to be among the major blessings from *Ngai*. In this regard, overwhelming veneration of vitality within the dynamism of community of those on earth, the Ancestors and *Nyene* (Owner of all) "hinge upon belief in *Ngai* (God); the Ancestors; the spirit of God in the world of the living and of the unborn, in the animal, vegetable and inanimate ministers of both religious ethics and social customs."[253] The belief was not a mere abstraction but was actually lived within the community made up of families notwithstanding life struggles. Animals were also somehow included not just for human nourishment and wealth status. They played a major part in Agĩkũyũ initiation rites and

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[250] Ibid., p. 31.
[251] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[252] Ibid., p. 32.
[253] Ibid., p. 34.

spirituality by offerings and, above all, sacrifices.[254] The underlying factor here is that "Agĩkũyũ traditional culture hinges therefore on the great respect bestowed upon the elders (also *Ngai*, in the legend, had the attribute of Great Elder); on the sacredness of the land; on the tangible link between the generations, perpetuated by sons and daughters, who are considered real blessings; and on the spirit of community so well shown by the relationship among the members of the an extended family and by the traditional political structure." That is why problems to family life are traditionally taken with the seriousness they deserve.

3.7 Single Motherhood among the Agĩkũyũ

Wachege in his monograph titled *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows*[255] comes in handy. He is more elaborate in enriching the study with his profound identification and explanation of at least 31 categories of single motherhood families which do not spare those who are Christians. The author is thorough in spelling out the respective family life struggles in each of the 31 categories to the type of family life propagated by Christianity.[256] In addition, he clearly identifies the causes of single motherhood including those that emanate from rape, widowhood and divorce which are the current serious problems that affect family life including the Christian the families.[257] Wachege goes on to give way forward to the single mothers.[258] He does so by recommending that the Church leaders should be on the frontline in changing the perception of those that treat single mothers unfairly. People should be made aware that these single mothers require Christian help and moral support so that they can achieve a fulfilling Christian family life. In the contemporary society, Kĩambaa Sub-location included these kinds of single motherhood families do not spare even the Christians. According to the African Philosophy of family life, being a mother and parenting, single mothers are said to be living an unfulfilling family life. However, they are being given the hope of standing up for their

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[254] For more elaborate information, read-P.N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki* (Ideal Elder), pp. 50-55.

[255] P. N. Wachege, *Third Millennium African Single Mothers and Mother Widows: Ethno-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press 2003).

[256] Ibid., pp. 71-124.

[257] Ibid., pp. 130-150.

[258] Ibid., p. 358.

families just as mother Mary did as they await life in heaven where they can live a happy and satisfying Christian family life.[259]

The Agĩkũyũ viewed the single mothers as having gone against the marriage covenant in that an ordinary family comprised of a father, mother and their child or children.[260] Discrimination of these single mothers adds up to the existential burdens that they encounter in their family life. Their status of single motherhood could lead them to being denied the chance to become leaders in Church since they are said to be incomplete. The researcher confirmed the scenario in Kĩambaa Sub-County whereby single mothers regardless of how they acquired their status are hardly or reluctantly given leadership positions in the Church. In cases where one was elected as a leader, the other members of the Church could question their authority. In extreme cases, some categories of single mothers such as those that gave birth out of wedlock are referred to as women with loose morals.

Among the Agĩkũyũ, a girl was not allowed to engage in any sexual activity before marriage as previously explained. Pregnancy and birth out of marriage was considered a taboo, a shame to the family and community. The girl was then used to warn her age mates and was declared a bad influence to other girls in the society.[261] A woman who gave birth out of wedlock was seen as a burden to the family. An elderly man was bribed to have her as his wife as a means of relieving the family from the burden of supporting the woman together with her child or children.[262] In cases where they fail to secure a husband for her, she and her illegitimate children were given a small piece of land. Interestingly, they were then considered as "*ihii cia mucii* (sons of the home)" and they were entitled to inherit property from their parents. However, conflicts arose among them because the brothers were reluctant to share property with "*aka* (women)" and this became problematic to family life.[263]

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[259] Ibid., p. 163.
[260] Ibid., p. 164.
[261] Ibid., p.179.
[262] Ibid., p. 164.
[263] Ibid., p. 181.

A shortcoming however, is that the author elaborates only on single mothers and leaves out the single fathers who together with their children, also make up families. The gap is filled by Cherono[264] who complements the author by perusing not only single mothers but also single fathers with accompanying struggles to living Christian family life. She accomplishes this by specifically perusing on the widowed single fathers and mothers in Kĩambaa.[265] Cherono goes on relating the phenomenon to Church Doctrines like the teachings of Vatican II, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and the Catechism of the Catholic Church[266] together with Theologians reflections on family life and parenting.[267] Despite the above efforts by these two scholars and other aforementioned scholar's related contribution, there are other fundamental issues to Christian family life that have not been addressed. The study opts to fill the gap by carrying out an intensive research on the fundamental difficulties earlier pointed out that Christian families face in Kĩambaa Sub-County, *Kĩambu* County.

3.8 Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality

In her book named *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality*,[268] Kĩnoti notes that circumcision ritual was very critical in initiating the young men into adults.[269] The initiates circumcised at the same time formed *mariika* (age-groups) which were equally important as belonging to a family. The members of these age-groups referred to themselves as age mates and they were obliged to stick together, be responsible for each other's family welfare and uphold the prestigious name of their group. Those members that misbehaved were reprimanded by age mates and therefore, individuals became more responsible to their family's welfare hence minimizing the problems experienced in family life due to irresponsibility.[270] Initiation into adulthood increased a man's responsibilities; he became not only responsible for his family but also the whole society by maintaining the rules and ensuring order. As a warrior, a man had a

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[264] F. Cherono, *A Study of Agĩkũyũ Widowed Single Fathers and Mothers in Kiambaa Village: Unpublished M.A (University of Nairobi: 2014).*

[265] Ibid., pp. 32ff.

[266] Ibid., pp. 84ff.

[267] Ibid., pp. 120ff.

[268] H.W. Kĩnoti, *African Ethics:* Gĩkũyũ *Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2013).

[269] Ibid., p. 22.

[270] Ibid., p. 22.

duty to provide security, punish law breakers, organize social celebrations and instill discipline among the members of the community.[271]

Elders were highly valued in the Gĩkũyũ community. They had well defined duties to perform and rights to enjoy.[272] To become an elder, a man was obliged to manage his own *mũciĩ* (family) and the outcome determined how highly he could be regarded by the community members. An elder was also expected to be wise and to have lived a morally upright family life.[273] Elders formed the *kĩama* (council of elders) who played both religious and legal roles which enabled them to settle disputes which resulted in family life skirmishes. Apart from presiding over ceremonies held in times of famine, they also had to come together occasionally for worship and making sacrifices to God. The sacrifices were meant to please God so that he could bless their families, lands, homes and the community at large.[274]

In addition, the author brings to our attention the existence of disciplinary committees referred to as *njaama*. These committees dealt with social issues concerning certain groups in the society.[275] *Njaama ya nyũmba* (family group council) dealt with matters of property, inheritance, debt and entitlement of the orphaned children in the family. *Njaama ya riika* (age-group council) was responsible for visiting each other's families to ensure that the lazy age mates were punished and made to work hard so as to provide for their families. On the other hand was the *njaama ya atumia* (women's council) which was involved in demanding *ngoima* (fines) from those elders who neglected their wife or wives and children. With these kinds of fines, elders were keen not to abandon their responsibilities to family life. Moreover, for one to qualify as a respectable member of the council of elders, he had to be the head of a family, a man who is fully responsible for the welfare of his family as a whole. *Njaama ya airĩtu* (the initiated girls council) came together to forbid girls from crude behavior and early marriages and generally instill discipline amongst themselves.[276] The above customary councils aimed at pushing individuals in

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[271] Ibid., p. 22.
[272] Ibid., p. 23.
[273] Ibid., p. 23.
[274] Ibid., pp. 23-24.
[275] Ibid., p. 26.
[276] Ibid., p. 27.

the society to act responsibly and uphold the social values of the community in general and those of the family in particular so as to realize effective family life.

Moreover, the author helps the study in understanding the *Gĩkũyũ t*raditional religion which referred to God as the Creator and Ruler of all things.[277] God's presence was experienced through "the sky, the sun, the mountains surrounding Gĩkũyũ country and the prominent evergreen sacred trees with milk-like and blood-like sap."[278] God was also referred to as *Ngai* meaning that He is the divider and distributor.[279] The greatest God-given gift is the gift of life. He also gave other gifts which are meant to protect and ensure the continuity of family life.[280] Life was deemed to be sacred and therefore, it was protected and nurtured in the family to ensure the continuity of family life in the community. The Agĩkũyũ believed that the God who gave them life also gave them their agricultural way of life which was handed down from generation to generation."[281] It is evident in the contemporary Gĩkũyũ society whereby families in Kĩambaa Sub-County engage in farming so that they can support their families as verified by the researcher. The Gĩkũyũ believed that they are governed by rules that were handed down to them by God Himself. These rules were meant to guide people to live the way they ought to live, that is, according to the Will of God hence realizing a fulfilling Christian family life.[282]

Furthermore, Kĩnoti enriches the study by coming up with a detailed description of five indispensable virtues which touch on all the critical aspects of family life among the Agĩkũyũ. [283] The author goes further to explain how such virtues could be used by individuals in the family to keep away from social evils that lead to problems in family life. Honesty guided family members to be true to themselves. Wives remained faithful to their husbands, husbands maintained their homes by not desiring other women and chasing away their wives and the children (both boys

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[277] Ibid., p. 27.
[278] Ibid., pp. 27-28.
[279] Ibid., p. 28.
[280] Ibid., p. 28.
[281] Ibid., p. 28.
[282] Ibid., p. 29.
[283] Ibid., p. 16.

and girls) assisted in daily chores and lived at home till they reached a matured age to marry.[284] Generosity paved way for family members to turn to each other in times of need and they were also required to be of help to others. This mutual assistance helped to discourage laziness in the family.[285] *Kĩhooto* (Justice) was primarily concerned with maintenance of peace and good dealings. Peace was achieved through solving of disputes among the people.[286] The elders played a major role in handling these disagreements and they saw to it that the wronged parties were compensated. The offender however, was assisted by their family members to pay the compensation meaning that problems of family life could be handled effectively by the family as a whole.[287]

Courage was the other virtue described by the author to have been highly valued among the Agĩkũyũ. It is through courage that an individual especially the men managed to protect their homes and community from dangers.[288] Temperance as the ability to control oneself enabled individuals in the family and the larger society exercise self-control thereby respecting the members of the opposite sex. During initiation, boys and girls were put together as they acquired community education from their elders and were strictly demanded to live as brothers and sisters.[289] Pre-marital sex was termed as *mũgiro* (taboo). A girl married a virgin was referred to as *gathirange* (pure) meaning that she had an appropriate upbringing and her parents were praised.[290] Experiential knowledge however, indicates that individuals in the locale have somehow abandoned these virtues. Therefore, the abandonment of these indispensable values has led to a vast number of worrying characteristics to family life even in the Christian families.

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[284] Ibid., p. 66.

[285] Ibid., pp. 100-101.

[286] Ibid., p. 125.

[287] Ibid., p. 127.

[288] Ibid., p. 145.

[289] Ibid., p. 206.

[290] Ibid., p. 209.

3.9 Concepts of God in the Community

Kibicho's book titled *God and Revelation in an African Context,*[291] is helpful to the study. According to the author, God manifested Himself through the gift of life, especially human life. It expresses the importance of preserving and nurturing human life so as to ensure the continuity of family life and the community at large. The Gĩkũyũ community considers those things connected with procreation and sustenance of life sacred. Birth, marriage, blood, sex, relationships, planting and harvesting were all deemed to be sacred.[292] Moreover, the Ancestors were considered to be part of the family because of their concern for the welfare of family life. Causing harm to the living members of the family and destroying the peace in the family displeased the Ancestors who in turn brought about misfortunes to the offender and more often to the family as a whole.[293] Individuals from families and the community engaged in appeasing the ancestral spirits from time to time so as to ensure that family members (both the dead and the living), are in good terms.[294]

Kibicho comes up with three ways in which the Agĩkũyũ used in the worship of *Ngai* (God). Approaching God was through individual prayers,[295] family worship[296] and public worship.[297] Agĩkũyũ emphasized on uplifting and continuing the welfare of the family and community than that of an individual. However, an individual was not overlooked because they were the utmost reason of concern.[298] He explains that: "The protection and security one was assured as a member of his family, of his age-group, and of the larger community, helped him to relate better and more uninhibitedly, and to develop his personality and his potentialities to the fullest." [299] Gĩkũyũ religion encouraged people to worship together and in collaboration with the Ancestors. The family was considered as the center for worship of God and all the social and religious rituals took place in the family thereby dispelling living difficulties. In cases where families experience problems, they are required to come together as a family and come up with possible

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[291] S. G. Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2006).
[292] Ibid., p. 21.
[293] Ibid., p. 22.
[294] Ibid., pp. 21-22.
[295] Ibid., pp. 33-34.
[296] Ibid., pp. 34-37.
[297] Ibid., pp. 38-39.
[298] Ibid., p. 33.
[299] Ibid., p. 33.

solutions that could be used appropriately in overcoming their troubles.[300] In this regard, "the family-which normally was the extended family of three or four generations and included both the living and the dead-was the most important institution in Gĩkũyũ society."[301]

According to the myth of the origin of the Agĩkũyũ, God Himself instituted the family as the basic unit where prayers and sacrifices could be offered to God. Additionally, "the centrality of the family in Gĩkũyũ worship is seen first of all in the fact that most of the religious acts of worship, sacrifice and other rites which any individual was involved in throughout his lifetime were celebrated by the whole family as a group. The most important were those connected with birth, initiation, marriage and death."[302] In worship and other rituals that took place in the family, the father who is the head of the family, acted as a 'Chief Priest' in his own home.[303] The man was responsible for maintaining the family's welfare by providing their needs and ensuring that they live together harmoniously. An irresponsible man who neglected his family exposed his wife or wives and children to family life problems such as poor parenting. Unlike individual and family worship, public worship and sacrifices to God took place at the sacred trees such as the *Mũgumo.* These celebrations were conducted by elders from the "Ceremonial Council."[304] The sacrifices were aimed at thanking God for rich harvests and also seeking God's intervention in times of crisis such as drought and illness. People from different families could come together and pray to God to free them from the impediments experienced in their families and the community at large.[305]All the foregoing is invaluable to our work. It nevertheless, provides principles while the present study handles both the theories and their actualization in the chosen case study.

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[300] Ibid., p. 33.

[301] Ibid., p. 34.

[302] Ibid., p. 34.

[303] Ibid., p. 36.

[304] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[305] Ibid., p. 39.

3.10 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The chapter has dealt with the religio-anthropological data based on the African world-view in relation to the problems of Christian family life. It elaborated: Nyamiti's clarification of Ancestorship, Nyamiti's five items on the African world-view, Wanjohi's *kĩhooto* world-view, social organization and customs of the Agĩkũyũ, single motherhood, Gĩkũyũ traditional morality, and concepts of God in the community. The chapter was crucial in showing how the aspects of the African philosophy of life can be effectively used to handle contemporary family life struggles. It thus becomes the springboard into the next chapter which will handle the teachings of the Church in relation to the four major issues identified and explicated in the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHURCH TEACHING ON CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE IN RELATION TO THE FOUR MAJOR PROBLEMS

4.1 Introduction

After the explication of the African world-view in relation to the study in the previous chapter, the current chapter examines significant Church teaching on Christian family life in relation to the four major problems explained earlier on. It is meant to come up with relevant Ecclesial instructions that can be used effectively to handle family life issues Agikuyu Christian families face. It will be done by handling: Nyamiti's reflections on African Theology and Church teaching on Christian family life; centrality of the community and family life; the Catechism of the Catholic Church; Christian ethics on family life; ethical dimension of the Agĩkũyũ community; Myers' view on poverty as a problem to Christian family life; family in the modern world; role and dignity of women in the society; together with, vocation and mission of the family.

4.2 Nyamiti's Reflections on African Theology and Church Teaching on Christian Family Life

Nyamiti, in his *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol. 1*, is very helpful in providing the understanding of African theology in particular and vital reflection on Church teaching on Christian family life. He defines it as "the scientific and systematic effort, guided by reason illumined by faith (faith seeking understanding), to understand, and present Christian faith in accordance with African needs and mentality."[306] The study also learns from him that the above is not a mere encounter of Christian teachings and African cultures or a superficial dialogue on God. Awareness is created that: "It essentially involves the effort to purify, rectify and transform or Christianize African traditional religious cultural values."[307] Such is an inspiration to scrutinize Agĩkũyũ socio-cultural and religious perception of family life so as to elevate what is positive and to correct and modify what may not be compatible with the Gospel. The rationale is that genuine Christian doctrine does not only surpass people's socio- cultural factors and beliefs

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[306] C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol. 1- Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of mankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p. 5.
[307] Ibid., p. 6.

but acts also as a point of reference in case of corrections to be done.[308] Such a notion will go a long way in examining Agĩkũyũ family issues with the above in mind.

The author confirms the case study in the current work as a model to others, i.e., that of Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County, while remaining well-disposed to the enlightenment from other ethnic communities. He puts it thus: "The worth of any human or religious values transcends time and place, and as such is beneficial to any human being. Accordingly, the African of today should be taught to consider any authentic cultural value from any African society as belonging to him or her…The teaching of an African theology based on common African cultural elements is particularly useful."[309] He further justifies focus on a particular ethnic community in the sense that narrowing down to one ethnic community allows the researcher to have a deeper focus and a more comprehensive study of that community's specific socio-cultural phenomenon.[310] He is emphatic that genuine values from one community transcends the ethnic group's confines and are for the benefit of others too to integrate for their welfare.[311] The drawback here is that Nyamiti handles different ethnic groups' underlying socio-cultural characteristics mainly on Ancestral values[312] while the study dwells on a particular community, Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County, on family life issues.

Nyamiti points out Scriptures and Church Tradition on the one hand as the main source of African Christian Theology to be approached scientifically.[313] On the other hand, he highlights African socio-cultural situation as the other fundamental source.[314] The former is the core of Christianity. As such, it has to be taken in such a way that it "penetrates the African cultures and situation and transforms them thereby elevating them to a level compatible with the Gospel. The endeavor demands a scientific approach to the Christian sources…to distinguish in them what is universal and unchangeable from what is local and transitory e.g. particular world-view,

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[308] Ibid., p. 6.

[309] Ibid., p. 11.

[310] Ibid., p. 12.

[311] Ibid., p. 15.

[312] Ibid., p. 12ff.

[313] Ibid., p. 16.

[314] Ibid., p. 17.

language, philosophy and local customs."[315] That is why the study sources from the Bible using redaction criticism theory which Nyamiti hardly employs. The African socio-cultural factors are not to be confined to the past but have to include the resent as well as the future.[316] Such remarks enable the study to be critical of superficial attitudes like, "it is our tradition," and "this is our family way of doing it," and "this is what our culture has always demands, therefore, no one can change it" as if cultural elements are static and not subject to what Vatican II calls "signs of the times." One should not, however, read into the assertion a total rejection of the past and uncritical embrace of the current socio-cultural characteristics.[317] Nyamiti here compels us to have a positive mind disposition while examining problems of today's Agĩkũyũ Christian family life. He, nevertheless, does not show us how to go about it. That is why the two Boffs mediation theory is incorporated.

4.3 Centrality of the Community and Family Life

Pope Francis' Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*),[318] which is his pastoral programme as Vicar of Christ on earth in fathering and mothering members of the "Family of God," is emphatic on the centrality of the community and Christian family life while spelling out some contemporary critical issues that are to be boldly confronted. Among them are those of uncritically assuming too much on maintaining customs and traditions while the other one is individualism together with egocentrism. He asserts that the two are among today's main impediments in the welfare of Christian family life notwithstanding the current situation in life and "signs of the times." This is how he puts it: "Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: 'We have always done it in this way.' I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities…The important thing is not to walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters…"[319] He advocates for a "new evangelization" involving, not just the clergy, but the whole community of the Family of God living their family life each playing own role in solidarity with the others paying attention to the "signs of the

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[315] Ibid., p. 17.

[316] Ibid., p. 18.

[317] Ibid., p. 19.

[318] Pope Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Vatican , 24 November, 2013.

[319] Ibid., no. 33.

times." Saldarriaga captures well the perception of the concept "new evangelization" Pope Francis propagates thus: "It is not to start evangelization anew…It is rather a renewal of the way the Church is evangelizing today in the world, even in countries where the majority of the population is Christian and where the Catholic Church has been long established."[320] In clearer terms, "It is not a matter of evangelizing again but of evangelizing in a new way, more adapted to the rapidly changing societies of our time."[321] The sentiments here are beneficial to the study. The study, however, complement Pope Francis' with handling a particular ethnic group in relation to the above for both depth and specificity.

The Exhortation is creditably more emphatic in demanding a genuine dialogue between respective ethnic groups' cultures and Christian Gospel for a true community of God since it is the gift of God that each community's culture has Godly characteristics and popular devotions that need to be prudently exploited, purified and elevated for the welfare of the family life within the communities.[322] Awareness is also created that the innovative approach has to emancipate people from the phobia of communal ethnic diversity and implantation approach to propagating the Good News: "When properly understood, cultural diversity is not a threat to Church unity. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, transforms our hearts and enables us to enter into the perfect communion of the Blessed Trinity, where all things find their unity. He builds up the communion and harmony of the people of God."[323] Here the gap is that while he does well to point out the necessity of boldly getting rid of communal ethnic diversity and implantation approach, he does not actually show how to go about it as the study does.

The above is, moreover, a summon to the shepherds to insert themselves into the families in communities, their cultures and way of life such that they "bear the smell of the flock" as they inculturate the Gospel.[324] The rigor, passion and significance in the undertaking demands are made possible when done in attentive collaboration with the inspiration of the Paraclete.[325] It

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[320] R. M. Saldarriaga, "*The African Bishop in the Pastoral Programme of Pope Francis*," in A. E. Orobator (Ed.,), *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), p. 60.
[321] Ibid., p. 60.
[322] Pope Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Vatican, no. 69.
[323] Ibid., no. 117.
[324] Ibid., nos. 68-70.
[325] Ibid., no. 261.

also requires "respectful and compassionate listening" to the needy family members and their disturbing living crisis.[326] It is, furthermore, a earnest call to discover the richness of the poor who God uses in His own way to convey redemptive and salvific power through their disadvantaged situations in life analogically equated to Christ's.[327]

The Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* does not stop there. It also instructs on embracing Christ's teaching of living as brothers and sisters of the same Father through different ethnic communities.[328] It further underscores liberation from useless mutual conflicts,[329] and making money our gods.[330] Additionally, it creates awareness of getting rid of both selfishness and egocentrism that are detrimental to a healthy family life.[331] It also spells out the grave violation of Christian *agape* whereby the downtrodden are segregated and economically sidelined as nobodies being misused as means towards economic growth for which they are not beneficiaries thus persistently being reduced to maintaining their gross disadvantaged status.[332]

4.4 The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

The CCC[333] is very rich in Church instructions on Christian family life that go a long way in accomplishing the study. It teaches that one of the fundamental missions of Jesus was to summon people under the umbrella of a united family, the People of God[334] empowering them to be the salt and light of the universe (Mt 5:13-15). The disciples are called to embrace Jesus in unison to ensure their solidarity likening them to the branches and Jesus the vine (Jn 15:4f). The CCC underscores such family oneness by appealing to Pauline analogy of Jesus as the head and different people as the body; also family symbolism of Christ being the bridegroom and the followers as the bride.[335] This is a bride who Jesus loved so much that He paid the ultimate price for the bride's redemption and salvation (Eph 5:25f).

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[326] Ibid., no. 171.
[327] Ibid., no. 198.
[328] Ibid., nos. 87-91.
[329] Ibid., nos. 98-101.
[330] Ibid., nos. 55f.
[331] Ibid., nos. 81-83.
[332] Ibid., nos. 53f.
[333] Pope John Paul II, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Rome: Vatican, 1992).
[334] Ibid., no. 804.
[335] Ibid., no.789.

Their unity, guaranteed by the Holy Spirit, is such that it goes beyond race, life status, generation and gender (Gal 3: 27-28). It is the teaching and, indeed, the will of Christ that His members remain united even in difficulties.[336] To strive to acquire and maintain such family unity willed by Jesus, qualities like ongoing renewal, inner conversion, unity in communal prayers, genuine presence and concern for one another, inter-faith prudent dialogue and sincere collaboration between the clergy and the laity are needed.[337] As a universal entity, the Church is duty bound to shepherd people without discrimination in their respective situations in life, difficulties and generations.[338] Local communities are supposed to be most at home in their family lives.[339] They are to be understood as autonomous Churches with enriching mode of genuine worship and catechesis but also open to the universal Church.[340]

The New Catechism is explicit in explaining who a Christian faithful is. It articulates it thus: "The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through Baptism, have been constituted as the People of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each one."[341] As People of God then they belong to the "Family of God." The nature of the followers of Jesus on the basis such an understanding are those obliged to participate in handling the problems of the family's life.

CCC reminds lay people, including Kĩambaa ones, that "they share in the priestly, prophetical and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God."[342] They are rightful Church members founded by Christ and given "authority and mission, orientation and goal to shepherd the People of God and to increase its numbers without cease."[343] In their capacity as Church members, they

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[336] Ibid., no. 820.
[337] Ibid., no. 821.
[338] Ibid., no. 831.
[339] Ibid., no. 833.
[340] Ibid., nos. 835, 834.
[341] Ibid., no. 871.
[342] Ibid., no. 873.
[343] Ibid., no. 874.

"are in the front line of Church life"[344] within the context of respective Christian family living. The New catechism also instructs that "worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives."[345]The universal Document does not stop here.

It further instructs them that "they exhibit the grace of Baptism and Confirmation in all dimensions of their personal, family, social and ecclesial lives, and so fulfill the call to holiness addressed to all the baptized."[346] That is why Christ "establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the sense of faith (*sensus fidei*) and the grace of the world."[347] They are partners of evangelization in their own rights within their milieu.[348] Not only do they have a right and duty "to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church" but also "to make their opinion known to the other Christian faithful, with due regard to the integrity of faith and morals and reverence towards their pastors, and with consideration for the common good and the dignity of persons."[349] They are counseled to take Mother Mary as their model in her "obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the Savior's work of restoring supernatural life to people"[350] as they tackle issues of Christian family life. Such insights are significant in making the study more profound and timely.

4.5 Christian Ethics on Family Life

According to Peschke, in his book titled *Christian Ethics*,[351] the family is the basic unit of the community. The growth and continuity of the society depends on the family. As families grow, they form many communities that make up the society. It is in the family that an individual acquires their physical and spiritual growth. A child being raised with love develops a good interpersonal relationship with others. Hatred leads one to resentment and even makes them

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[344] Ibid., no. 899.

[345] Ibid., no. 910.

[346] Ibid., no. 941.

[347] Ibid., no. 904.

[348] Ibid., no. 905.

[349] Ibid., no. 906.

[350] Ibid., no. 968.

[351] K. H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology: In The Light of Vatican II* (India: Theological Publications in India, 1992).

selfish.[352] In the contemporary community, there are a number of crises that negatively impact family life. Among these predicaments include separation and divorce, single parenthood, foster parenting and the diminishing power of parents over their children.[353] The research findings confirmed the above as being among the complications that Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter. Despite these problems that affect family life, it is in the family that an individual feels fulfilled. Children are considered as a source of happiness in the family. Children, together with their parents make up a family.[354]

The family plays three major roles to ensure its survival and continuity. Firstly, it is responsible for the provision of basic needs whereby, each member of the family in a condition to contribute has the duty to meet their wants.[355] To be able to support these families, individuals are required to secure descent jobs and earn a just salary. The wage should in turn be used an appropriate way so as to avoid wasting it in alcohol, drugs and gambling. Misuse of money is a problem to family life since it denies family members the enjoyment of those things that better their lives. Squandering money leads to what Peschke terms "secondary poverty."[356] This kind of poverty is largely experienced in Kĩambaa Sub-County since some family men and even several women engage in alcoholism and the youths (their children) are not left behind since, as the researcher observed, are notorious at that. They involve themselves not only in drugs but also in exploitative gambling by playing cards and pool. A lot of money earned is being wasted rather than being put in to improve the standards of living in a family.

Secondly, the family has the responsibility of educating their children without discrimination. Parents are reminded that they are the first teachers of their off springs.[357] An issue however, is that today's parents, as the research found out, have neglected this duty and left it to the teachers at School and Priests and Pastors in respective Churches. Quite a number of parents argue that they have paid School fees and therefore, the teachers should play that role. Others have very little time or no time at all to be with their children because of the nature of their careers. Thw

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[352] Ibid., p. 542.
[353] Ibid., p. 542.
[354] Ibid., pp. 542-543.
[355] Ibid., p. 543
[356] Ibid., p. 543.
[357] Ibid., p. 552.

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researcher found out that the kind of abandonment of duty by parents, have led to numerous family life difficulties such as disrespect of parents by the children. In addition to the issue of education, siblings also learn from each other. An only child lacks this opportunity and in the end, he or she feels lonely.[358] From the research, it was noted that an only child tends to bring in to the home friends or close relatives who can keep them company so as to do away with the feeling of loneliness and emptiness in the house.

Thirdly, a family has the duty to provide a spiritual base for its members. As the first spiritual shepherds, parents have the duty to ensure that children learn the values of love, obedience and truthfulness. They are obliged to instill good moral conduct and Godliness among their own children in particular and the descendants in general. These indispensable values strengthen the relationship among family members and also the community at large. Above all, "the family is not just there to provide help, but gives a sense of belonging and acceptance." [359]Such factors are indispensable particularly in handling difficulties and transmitting them into opportunities towards maturity and self-fulfillment.

The author further explains the privileges and duties of consorts towards each other. Openness between the partners allows them to do away with the feeling of oddity and strengthen their relationship.[360] Couples will never agree entirely on their ideas and plans due to the way an individual was raised, character, choices and preferences. The above often leads to misunderstandings in family life but they should learn to handle them so as to cement their marriage. As Christians, husbands and wives should have that Godly Spirit in them to resolve their differences to avoid wrangles that may disrupt the family.[361] Both the father and mother should be responsible in providing for the physical and spiritual needs of the family.[362] Parents, who neglect their children especially those born out of wedlock, lose the authority over them. In this case, the state through social workers can give the children for adoption to bring happiness to childless families able to raise children in the right manner and direction.[363] Adoption helps to

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[358] Ibid., p. 544.
[359] Ibid., p. 545.
[360] Ibid., p. 545.
[361] Ibid., p. 545.
[362] Ibid., p. 546.
[363] Ibid., p. 549.

solve the complication of childlessness resulting from barrenness or infertility and loss of an only child which is a great issue among families.

Furthermore, children have responsibilities towards their parents and the family in general. They owe them such reciprocity. Children have the duty to honor their parents as the fourth commandment commands: "Honor your father and mother so that you may live long in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you." (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16). In that respect, children should not abuse their parents, abandon or reject them because of their status.[364] In addition, children are obliged to obey their parents and follow their instructions so as to be able to make the right decisions in life. However, they are allowed to detach themselves from advices that may lead them to engage in immoral acts and also from over dependence on parents.[365] Moreover, children are expected to show love for their parents and express gratitude by being there for them whenever they need their attention. Those that are financially stable, should support their families by educating and catering for the needs of the younger ones, visiting their parents more often and buying them gifts to show their gratification. Most importantly, children should not lose contact with the parents.[366] What is sad is that, based on the research we undertook, some parents are part of the problem themselves for reasons earlier pointed out.

Finally, the author stresses on treating employees as family and not just as workers. Since these employees live with the family and support them in their day-to-day duties, they should be considered as family members. Both the employer and the employee have a role play. On one hand, the employer is responsible for paying the employee a just wage, giving them free days, not overworking them and not to sack them without any justifiable cause. The boss should also be concerned with the spiritual welfare of the employee especially the younger ones who need guidance into the right path. On the other hand, the employees should work diligently and obey their employers having in mind the agreement between them and also their rights in that family.[367] Mishandling of employees especially the house helps has been the reason why a good number of families have experienced certain nightmares as mistreatment of children, kidnap and

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[364] Ibid., p. 561.
[365] Ibid., pp. 561-562.
[366] Ibid., p. 563.
[367] Ibid., pp. 564-565.

even organized robbery. Some Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County, as the research found out, have gone through such family life negative factors because of the bitterness of their ex house girls seeking revenge on their employers.

4.6 Ethical Dimension of the Agĩkũyũ Community

In his book titled *The Ethical Dimension of Community*,[368] Bujo enriches the study. He does so by giving a clear detail on the issue of marriage as the source of family life. According to the author, marriage influences the lives of the people. Through marriage, people belonging to a particular community, that of the Agĩkũyũ included, converge because they are united by the initiatic ritual. These people include "the departed, the living and those yet to be born."[369] Matrimony does not only bring together a man (husband) and a woman (wife) but also the families and communities that they both belong to. Among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County, both families maintain *ũthoni* (a very close relationship with each other). This is evident from the dowry presentation whereby it is not given at once but is made a continuous process as a means of cementing the two families since *ũthoni ũkũrĩkio ti mwega* (dowry that is completed at once is not good). Bujo puts it clearly that marriage should not be seen as an agreement but a union formed by two partners expected to be one body from the time of their official unification despite their ethnicity, character or self-interests.[370] That kind of union should therefore, not be broken so as not to interfere with family life. Moreover, the Christian families should be in a better position to keep their families intact since they are bonded together by God and guided by the Biblical principles of marriage.

The continuity of the family and community at large depends on marriage since "it symbolizes the survival of the entire family and accomplishes it through the handing on of life which is to the benefit of the whole clan community."[371] Marriage is achieved through various steps accompanied by gradual rituals which are very critical in the realization of a fruitful family life. The introduction stage allows both families to familiarize with themselves, exchange gifts,

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[368] B. Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue between North and South* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998).
[369] Ibid., p. 93.
[370] Ibid., p. 94.
[371] Ibid., p. 94.

express their intentions and agree on the dowry.[372] Ancestors are involved in these rituals because they play a very important role in blessing the couples who intend to marry. The departed are beseeched to participate in these rituals with the living through prayers and offerings as a signification of solidarity. When the Ancestors are pleased, they reveal their will to the people who in turn will know if the marriage should or should not take place.[373] Failure to venerate the Ancestors would lead to misfortunes in the family such as birth of children with deformities. Caring for these children with special needs and education is a heavy load to families even in Kĩambaa Sub-County. Some parents abandon these children and others hide them at home denying them a chance to go to School.

Parents are obliged to educate their sons and daughters on marriage issues. Children are made aware that marriage is an eternal union whereby a man is expected to marry one wife. However, polygamy is acceptable in the community but the first wife enjoys her position and is being referred to as *ngatha* (the "mother of the other wives").[374] Nevertheless, the author indicates that the community sets the following conditions meant for those intending to marry;

1. "First, whoever intends to marry one or several wives has to show his capability to sustain his wife or wives materially and economically.

2. Second, a polygamous husband has to be a strong personality, able to maintain harmony and peace between his wives so as to prevent destructive jealousy.

3. Third, the husband, especially the polygamous one, has to be in a position to care for his children both materially and economically as well as to educate them according to the rules of tradition."[375]

Failure to meet the above conditions by a man married to one wife means that he cannot traditionally be allowed to marry several wives. Today, a large number of men are known to be polygamous even when they are not in a position to support wives together with their children. It has been a stumbling block to a peaceful family life whereby in some instances, quarrels and

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[372] Ibid., p. 94.
[373] Ibid., pp. 94-95.
[374] Ibid., p. 96.
[375] Ibid., pp. 108-109.

fights arise among the wives over their husband's tiny pieces of land and property. These family wrangles would lead to hatred especially among the children. In some families, children are being abandoned by their fathers hence they grow up as bitter people in the society who later on, out of the difficulties experienced in their childhood become a threat to the community. Bujo, puts it clearly that polygamy should be accepted in instances of barrenness and in search of a male heir to continue the family name.[376]

In the African community, dowry is presented to the bride's family as a reward from the bridegroom's family to thank the family members, especially the parents, for raising their daughter in an appropriate manner, educating her and allowing him to have her as a wife. At the bride's home, the gift symbolizes her presence to show that she is living, though far from home, but not departed.[377] Customarily, dowry is to be given in form of cows and goats. In the traditional community, people did not accept money from the bridegroom because it would be tantamount to reducing a human being into an object of sale. Cows and goats given as dowry represent vitality (life). This life force symbolizes the continuity of life for both families. Just as the girl is concerned about the family by being productive, these cows would produce milk to feed the family members. In addition, the cows would reproduce calves which can be used by the brothers to get wives into the household.[378] The author also expresses the need of Christianity, as the people's religion to embrace the fundamental meaning of dowry and incorporate it in the sacraments. It is meant to promote proper marriage and growth of healthy Christian families without undermining their affirmative traditions.[379] However, people should be very careful not to use dowry as means of exploiting the groom's family with the evil intention of enriching themselves out of greed.

In Africa, marriage is considered as a basis of life. Fecundity is highly valued since it ensures the continuity of family life and the society as a whole.[380] The firstborn child makes a couple complete marriage partners. The rationale is that "fatherhood and motherhood are preferred to the dimension of husband and wife because African marriage is regarded as a source of life."

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[376] Ibid., p. 109.

[377] Ibid., p. 97.

[378] Ibid., pp. 97-98.

[379] Ibid., p. 98.

[380] Ibid., p. 95.

That is why in Kĩambaa Sub-County; a barren woman is not taken kindly by the family members especially by the in laws but with contempt. In extreme cases, they are chased away from the family even when they are legally married and their union was celebrated in Church. The lenient ones will give room for adoption but it still remains a rare case. If an individual dies without a child or children, they are forgotten forever and blamed for ruining the family lineage since they do not leave anyone to continue the family name. On the other hand, those who die but have children, continue to live in their off springs.[381] Among the Agĩkũyũ young men are encouraged to marry and have families. The Church supports it by stressing on the importance of families having in mind that marriage is not only meant for companionship but also procreation but barrenness remains a negative matter that troubles a number of families.

Barrenness could lead to mental disorder because of the pressure from the husband and relatives.[382] The case becomes worse if the woman knows that she had the power to procreate but wasted it away due to carrying out several illegal abortions which resulted in the damage of her womb. Such a woman is seen as a disgrace in the family and in most cases, as the researcher found out, they are sent back to their homes where they live a miserable life due to frustration and others commit suicide. However, a childless woman married to a polygamous man, who marries a second or third wife with the permission of the first wife is relieved from the trauma. As the "mother of the other wives," she also qualifies as the "mother of her husband's children."[383] Polygamy also assisted women to beget husbands and minimize prostitution which is a major problem to family life across ethnic communities.

Today, even among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County, as noted by the researcher, a man takes in a new wife without the consent of the first wife. This *gacungwa* (new wife kept secretly) not explicitly known by the husband's relatives. She is practically kept as a concubine. She is then favored by the man who tends to neglect his family just to please her. This way, the man subjects his wife and children to suffering.[384] The practice has become very common in families not sparing the Christian ones guided by the Scriptures encouraging marriage between one man

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[381] Ibid., p. 95.
[382] Ibid., p. 113.
[383] Ibid., p. 113.
[384] Ibid., p. 118.

and one woman. The Church should instruct polygamists to adhere to the traditional rules directed to polygamous marriages. The wives together with their children should have a harmonious relationship.[385] Misunderstanding among themselves because of favors instilled on one at the expense of the other disrupts family life. The above is evident in Kĩambaa Sub-County because of the vast number of families that have broken up because of the issue of polygamy which is a great threat to family set ups and community welfare.

4.7 Myers' View on Poverty as a Problem to Family Life

Myers in his book titled *Walking with the Poor*[386] contributes to the study by giving the definition poverty, its causes and consequences on family life. According to the author, "poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable as poverty results from relationships which are broken, not functioning, exploitative and oppressive."[387] The poor remain poor because of such conditions as inaccessibility to social power to improve their standards of living. Members of the community including the Christians and well-wishers block the poor from accessing their services hence denying them the opportunity to opt out of poverty.[388] In the contemporary society, money is availed for the poor through bursaries to cater for the needy students' School fees. More often than not, the money does not reach the intended impoverished ones. Instead, those in charge of the distributing of the funds corruptly enrich themselves, their own families and also the well up families at the expense of the poor. That kind of corruption blocks the poor children from continuing their education so as to change their family's situation of poverty. The vice is widespread and Kĩambaa Sub- County is no exception.

According to Myers, the poor remain poor because of lack of information that is useful to transform their lives. The author suggests that this situation can be overcome if the poor are instilled with proper knowledge and skills useful for development. It would enable them to engage in certain generating tasks so as to earn a decent wage. Financial institutions are also required to support the poor by providing them with funds and advising them on how to start

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[385] Ibid., p. 118

[386] B. L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (New York: Orbis Books, 2006).

[387] Ibid., p. 83.

[388] Ibid., pp. 69-70.

their own businesses for income generation.[389] Wrong choices and poor decision making is another hindrance in the demanding lives of the poor.[390] Some individuals in the community, despite earning very little, choose to spend their money in alcohol and drugs. These commodities do not in any way benefit them but destroy their lives. In Kĩambaa Sub-County, a good number of men spent their money wastefully in illicit brew. They tend to neglect their families and the women are left with the burden of supporting their families by themselves.

Lack of empowerment leaves the poor people in a dependent state. They are blocked by oppressive and exploitative cultures, physical and mental weaknesses and domination by the rich.[391] The rich who consider themselves high-class, significant and powerful, exploit the poor who are seen to be inferior, useless and powerless. The rich are known to pretend to be good to the poor yet many have specialized in making them dependent so that they can control their lives reducing them to dependent slaves. Being the masters, the rich make the poor their servants who remain below them and work in very poor conditions.[392] As the bosses, they tend to pay very little wages to their servants who are overworked to see to it that they do not progress but remain poor and reliant on them. A number of cultures and traditions are also known to prevent the poor from making progress so as to change their lives.[393] Among the Agĩkũyũ, women are customarily not allowed to inherit property from their parents. The impoverishing tradition denies a poor woman the chance to acquire a piece of land to engage in farming which can earn her some income to support her family.

In addition, the poor in the community seem to be hopeless. Hopelessness makes them not to believe that their state of poverty can change for the better. Awareness should be created to make them believe in their potentialities and to understand and accept that change is real and can only come from them.[394] On one hand, the poor spent a lot of money in nursing the sick because of malnutrition and on the other hand, the rich also fall victims of poverty. This is because they spent their money on charms to protect themselves and their wealth. These charms are also

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[389] Ibid., p. 71.

[390] Ibid., p. 72.

[391] Ibid., p. 72.

[392] Ibid., p. 73.

[393] Ibid., p. 84.

[394] Ibid., p. 84.

meant to keep them in power and stay in big businesses. On top of it, a lot of money is spent in parties, careless and expensive drinking and several impractical journeys. The irony is, while the poor lack proper housing, the rich have giant houses that are expensive to maintain. In addition, while the poor suffer malnutrition for lack of food, the rich suffer from heart diseases and obesity because of eating fatty food that endanger their health.[395] Sickness then makes them spend a lot of finances to stabilize themselves health wise.

Furthermore, the poor are often dependent on loans from money lenders and their bosses as observed in Kĩambaa Sub-County. When they borrow the money, they are charged very high interest rates which impoverish them more. These loans are spent in paying School fees, medical bills and purchasing the basic needs for the family.[396] In certain situations like paying off debts, poor families are forced to sell their inadequate property such as land and are left practically landless. In addition, the disadvantaged are also known to live in areas that are prone to natural or man-made disasters. These calamities expose them to deadly diseases and in extreme cases, they are forced to abandon their lands.[397]

Myers indicates that both the rich and the poor have a false understanding of who the poor are, their place in the community, their purpose and their relationship with God. In the society, the poor are made to believe that they are insignificant, they belong to the low class, are meant to serve the rich and are abandoned, punished and forgotten by God because of their sins.[398] The rich seem to be more concerned with wealth rather than healthy interpersonal relationships that will help realize a fruitful family life. The rich normally mingle with people from their class and the poor are socialized to mingle among themselves.[399] The division of people in the name of class lowers the esteem of the poor and therefore, they lack the morale to change their situation. Christian families should strive to do away with this kind of discrimination and fight for the poor and embrace them in the Church community where they can feel loved, cared for and affirmed to believe in themselves. The Christians should also engage the poor in activities that can help them earn an income to support their families.

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[395] Ibid., p. 86.

[396] Ibid., p. 89.

[397] Ibid., p. 90.

[398] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

[399] Ibid., p. 79.

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Occasionally, the voice of the poor is not heard because those in power believe that they have nothing to offer.[400] Developers do not engage the poor so as to know what should be done towards developing the community for the benefit of all. Community workers tend to work with community leaders at the expense of the ordinary citizens who suffer from the poor conditions of living family life. According to the author, the development process should include the poor. It is adequate so as to know what their needs are and put them as a priority. Excluding the poor and involving community officials alone will result in poor development which normally fail to impact on the lives of the poor people.[401] Community development workers should accept that they are at par with the local people hence creating a friendly working relationship with them. Their aim should be to empower the poor and liberate both the rich and the poor so as to attain better living standards in families.[402] Individuals should be put first in the line of development as worthy persons. Human life should be treated with the respect it deserves since it is the greatest of all and not money as people do.

A shortcoming however, is that the author has not indicated what the poor people do in the community so as to strive to overcome their state of poverty. The researcher filled the gap by going into the community to be with and live among the people to understand their situation on the ground utilizing Boffs' insertion cum social analysis mediation. This way, the researcher came up with ways in which the poor Christian families engage in to ensure their survival in the society thereby being able to come up with a transforming way forward.

Family in the Modern World

Pope John Paul II, in his Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio (The Family in the Modern World,*[403] explains the family as the basic unit of the human society. He argues that members of a community come into existence through the family which is a source of life drawn from the love between a man and a woman united together in marriage. The Pope further maintains that the family is the first learning institution where individuals acquire the values that guide them to live

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[400] Ibid., p. 76.
[401] Ibid., p. 148.
[402] Ibid., p. 156.
[403] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio,* Vatican, 22 November, 1981.

harmoniously in a community.[404] The Pontiff views family life as involving sharing, generosity, listening and understanding one another hence, solidarity which is meant to keep a family intact.[405] Nevertheless, the contemporary Christian family has been somehow overwhelmed by a number of changes which affect family life, the community and their way of life. Despite these changes that have led to various problems in living Christian family life, the family still comprises of very important values that guide people towards living truthfully, faithfully and freely. The Church is thus summoned to be committed in assisting Christian families and others in realizing their roles of loving each other as family members, loving their neighbors and doing good to humanity.[406] The Church is also reminded to remain responsible for preaching the Gospel to Christian families with the aim of helping the family members live their Christian family life fully.[407] Priests and Pastors are given the power to understand the Gospel and preach it to the people. It helps these religious men to guide Christians in the light that God desires for them.[408] Living according to God's will strengthen the relationship between God and His people. The Church also has a duty to fight for the poor and encourage the Christians to live as brothers and sisters hence developing a caring relationship.

The Pope expresses "the need for the development of interfamily relationships, for reciprocal spiritual and material assistance…for the building of a more just society."[409] The current Christian families are faced with severe factors such as mistrust between the consorts, compromised power of parents over their children, lack of communication of proper family values to offspring, numerous cases of abortion that cost people's lives, barrenness and infertility. Furthermore, lack of essential needs like food, shelter, clothing, proper health care, clean water, education and jobs denies family members the opportunity to live the way they ought to live.[410] In Kĩambaa Sub-County, Christian families lacking these basic needs encounter a number of difficulties that make them feel that God who is their Father has abandoned them as

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[404] Ibid., no. 42.
[405] Ibid., no. 43.
[406] Ibid., no. 1.
[407] Ibid., no. 3.
[408] Ibid., no. 5.
[409] Ibid., no. 6.
[410] Ibid., no. 6.

His children. Some of these individuals opt to drop out of Church because they do not get hope that their lives would be better someday.

According to Pope John Paul II, marriage is seen as the basis of the family. Children are the precious gifts to couples who become co-creators with God by giving life which is highly regarded in the community. These children represent an existing image of the consort's love and change their state from being husband and wife to father and mother. As parents, they acquire the duty to love their children and raise them according to the will of God. Childless couples are encouraged to adopt and to help the poor families by supporting their children and assisting the orphans together with the handicapped.[411] By helping the poor and also through adoption, the childless families get an opportunity to become parents and to create attachments with other children who will bring happiness to their homes as fulfilled people. Christian marriages make up Christian families which in turn lead to the development of the Church as a "Family of God." Family members are initiated into the Church through baptism which makes them Christians and confirmation which enables them to be mature Christians who share in receiving the Holy Communion.[412]

Furthermore, the Pope stresses that the family is "a community of life and love…the family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a reflection of and a real sharing in God's love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church, his bride."[413] Just as Jesus loved the Church, Christians should love each other by ensuring that they are their brother's and sister's keepers. The needy people in the Church should be shown concern not only by offering spiritual help but also material assistance through donations and other empowerment deeds. Guidance and counseling should be offered to those Christian families experiencing marital problems. Care, love and concern for one another improves the welfare of Christian families. Additionally, the Pontiff teaches that the family has four major roles to play in the society:

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[411] Ibid., no. 14.
[412] Ibid., no. 15.
[413] Ibid., no. 17.

1. "forming a community of persons;
2. serving life;
3. participating in the development of a society;
4. Sharing in the life and the mission of the Church."[414]

As a community, Christian families should engage themselves in serving other members of the community especially the less fortunate just as Jesus did. For a society to develop, there must be individuals that volunteer to improve the lives of people especially the poor. Christians should also be ready to accept responsibilities in the Church so that they can serve others hence improving the welfare of Christian family life.

The union between a man and a woman is often influenced by polygamy which goes against God's plan of total dedication to marriage intended to establish Christian family life.[415] Though spouses meet numerous complications in their marriage, the Church encourages them to stick together and handle their issues in Godly way to avoid the dissolution of marriages cemented in the Church. In case one is being abandoned by their partner and chooses to remain single, the Priests and Pastors are required to guide these individuals towards living a faithful and fulfilling Christian family life.[416] An individual's rights in a marriage or family should be respected so as to bring about a peaceful co-existence among themselves. Christian consorts have a duty to remain truthful to each other throughout their marriage no matter the temptation or trouble. This way, they will be respecting God's command for those that choose to enter into the institution of marriage and family life.[417] In Kĩambaa Sub-County, some Christian families encounter family life problems because of infidelity between the consorts which lead to quarrels, fights, breaking up of families and untimely deaths.

In a special way, women in the family are bestowed with the role of being bearers of the Good News exemplified by Mother Mary who is highly respected in the Church as the mother of God and our mother too.[418] Men and women should therefore, be treated equally as God's creatures and be given the chance to preach the Gospel and to engage in other activities in the Church.

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[414] Ibid., no. 17.
[415] Ibid., no. 19.
[416] Ibid., no. 20.
[417] Ibid., no. 20.
[418] Ibid., no. 22.

Women should also be allowed to have their own jobs so as to serve the society but they should not neglect their family duties to see to it that her family members live a life that pleases God.[419] Today, the dignity of women is undermined by such factors as oppression, exploitation, un-freedom, commercialization of sex and discrimination in learning institutions, places of work and even in the religious institutions. Discrimination of women in the community, the Agĩkũyũ one included, affects certain categories of women in families. For example, the barren women, widowed mothers, single unmarried mothers and divorced mothers. Women greatly suffer the consequence of being used as objects of pleasure by men who are after satisfying their selfish desires.[420] These kinds of evils negatively impact on family life and leads to Christian families losing the meaning of their being together as God intended for them.

Pope John Paul II further encourages Christian families to be kind to the elderly who should be considered a blessing and not as a burden to the family. Involving the elderly in home activities will give them a chance to pass the values of living family life to the young generation and making decisions in the family because of their wisdom.[421] From the research, the researcher found out that old people are being neglected in the community. Even those from Christian families are left wandering in the village begging for food and other essential needs for their survival. The Church and the community should not be separated because of their interdependence and co-operation towards caring for the elderly. Just as the family is involved in the activities taking place in the community, the society is required to play its role in nurturing the family. Both the community and the Church should work together for the sake of maintaining the welfare of individuals in Christian families and in the community at large.[422]

Moreover, the Church as the guardian of Christian family life, stresses that a family has the right to such things as proper housing, education for the children, protection from harmful materials such as drugs and pornographic films, worship, representation in power.[423] Similarly, families have duties such as caring for the less fortunate in the community and preaching the Gospel to them.[424] Christian families as ecclesial members are expected to live as good examples

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[419] Ibid., no. 23.

[420] Ibid., no. 24.

[421] Ibid., no. 27.

[422] Ibid., no. 45.

[423] Ibid., no. 46.

[424] Ibid., no. 47.

to others just as Jesus Christ is their exemplary in working with the poor so as to free them from the harsh conditions that they are exposed to and coming up with Schools that are meant to educate their children and also children from the poor homes. [425]Not to be forgotten are the duties and accruing dignity of women at home and the society at large.

4.9 Role and Dignity of Women in the Society

John Paul II, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Mulieris Dignitatem (the Role and Dignity of Women)*,[426] stresses that women, when imbued with the power to preach the Gospel, can be so helpful in preventing humanity from trampling.[427] It means that women have distinctive role in the family whereby they are expected to lead their family members in the right path headed for an authentic Christian family life. Women are responsible for assisting other members of the family to strive towards overcoming their family life problems that deny them the opportunity to live the way they ought to live. Jesus Christ as seen in his ministry supported the dignity of women by acting against all forms of oppression directed to women. Jesus also included women in his ministry, for example, the Samaritan woman whom though sinful, becomes Christ's disciple to spread the Good News of Jesus as the Messiah throughout Samaria. (Jn 4:14ff) Jesus Christ revealed righteous things to women who were supposed to tell people about the savior so that by faith, they receive him in large numbers.[428]

The special place of women in the ministry of Jesus Christ is further witnessed in a number of occasions such as women accompanying him on his way to his crucifixion and appearing to them on the day of his resurrection. As the first witnesses of Christ's resurrection, the women were presented with the opportunity to spread the Good News to the apostles and other Christians. Mary Magdalene becomes the messenger of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus to his Father in heaven.[429] These incidences and others found in the Scriptures proves the equality between men and women as God's people. It also brings to our attention that both men and women have the capacity to preach the Gospel and lead people towards achieving salvation. Women not only have family responsibilities but also duties in Church to preach the Good News of Salvation to

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[425] Ibid., no. 72.

[426] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem,* 15 August, 1988.

[427] Ibid., no. 1.

[428] Ibid., no. 15.

[429] Ibid., no. 16.

the people. Moreover, women have the best the example of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Women have a divine role to be co-creators with God in giving rise to human life through procreation.[430] Motherhood is thus a special gift from God to the women for the home and community. Being companions and helpers,[431] husbands are encouraged to love their wives just as Christ loved the Church as his Bride whom he gave his life for. Jesus Christ gave up his life to the Church so that it may be consecrated, purified and freed from sin and suffering.[432] In the research locality, the realization of the above has a long way to go hence having family life problems as a consequence.

4.10 Vocation and Mission of the Family

Jesus in his ministry on earth taught about marriage and family life to reveal the plans of God for those who enter into these institutions. The very first family of Adam and Eve was established by God Himself and He gave them the power to be productive and give rise to new generations (Gn 2). Marriages, beginning from the union between Adam and Eve are frequently negatively affected by sin as the root cause of all evils. These evils such as unfaithfulness of marriage partners lead to breaking up of families even those instituted through Christian marriages. That is why even in the Old Testament times, Moses issued the right to divorce a partner as is witnessed or experienced in the contemporary society.[433] However, in the New Testament, Christ is seen engaging himself in the re-establishment of marriage and family life so that consorts together with their children live as God had planned for them. "Through his Church, Christ bestows on marriage and the family the grace necessary to witness to the love of God and to live the life of communion."[434] Through God's grace therefore, family members are empowered to handle their marital and family life issues so that they can stay intact and not destroy an institution that was begun by God Himself.

The Church which defines marriage and family as community of life and love is very keen on guiding individuals to live as God intended for them. Love as the greatest value that cements spouses, children and other family members is highly encouraged by the Church. A union

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[430] Ibid., no. 17.

[431] Ibid., no. 18.

[432] Ibid., no. 23.

[433] Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta*, Vatican, 4-25 October, 2015.

[434] Ibid., no. 15.

blessed in the Church invites Christ to their marriage and family life to strengthen their relationship and be their guide. This is confirmed by the Synod of Bishops who stressed that "Christ the Lord comes into the lives of married Christians through the Sacrament of Matrimony and remains with them."[435] Having Christ as their head, a family is seen as a home Church which reveals the entire Church of Christ.

In celebration of marriages in the Church, Christian partners are expected to stick to their mutual agreement to be together as husband and wife to the end of time. This is because they make their vows before God and in the midst of other Christians as witnesses to the commitment that they promise each other in their union. "In accepting each other and with Christ's grace, the engaged couple promises a total self-giving, faithfulness and openness to new life."[436] Christian couples have a duty to be truthful to each other and to obligate themselves to one another fully without engaging in things that would lead them to secret or illicit affairs which can compromise their union. A husband and a wife are the "heart of the family."[437] They are the ones responsible for keeping individuals and the home as a whole together.

Christian families should be given continued support by the Church and be encouraged to guide other Christian families in handling their problems and act as their role models.[438] Additionally, parents should also be encouraged to nurture their children as the fruits of their union so that they can grow up to be better people in the society. Neglecting children would cause them to suffer, feel inferior and develop fear of marrying and beginning their own families. Moreover, the Church as an educator of the family, has a duty to educate its members to undergo the Sacraments of baptism and marriage to make a union legal and not go against the will of God towards marriage and family life.[439] Today, some young men and women rush to stay together without being united by the Church through Christian marriage. The consequence of this kind of haste is family break ups because at some point, they feel that they no longer need to be together. Engaging themselves once more in the same kind of relations and they experience the same fate, kills their desire for marriage and family life. The Church should show concern for such families

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[435] Ibid., no. 16.
[436] Ibid., no. 20.
[437] Ibid., no. 20.
[438] Ibid., no. 22.
[439] Ibid., no. 23.

by inspiring them to follow the right path towards achieving a fulfilling Christian family life through adherence to the Church's Sacraments explaining to young people who are baptized should be encouraged to understand that the Sacrament of Marriage can enrich their prospects of love and that they can be sustained by the grace of Christ in the Sacrament and by the possibility of participating fully in the life of the Church."[440]

The above confirms the need for the Church leaders to avail themselves to the youths who should not be left by themselves to wander in the dark. They should be engaged in the Church's activities and their participation would go a long way in molding their character and conscientizing them on the importance of marriage and family.[441] Youths should be motivated to attend masses or services regularly, undergo baptism to become true Christians and also to join groups and seminars that would be useful to them especially when they approach the age when they should enter into family life through Christian marriages. Moreover, the Church should also be there for Christian families that are struggling because of the pain of betrayal resulting from unfaithfulness and vanished love because they can no longer trust each other. They should be encouraged to be truthful to one another and restore their mutual love that was blessed by God and intended to last forever. Having the above in mind, the family, especially the Christian one, has the mission to unite its members and lead them through the right path so as to realize an authentic family life just as God has planned for the family in the society.

4.11 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The chapter has expounded on important Church Doctrines and theologians' reflection on Christian family life. From the point of view of the four main problematic issues identified and elaborated previously. To accomplish the task, the chapter dwelt on: Nyamiti's reflections on African Theology and Church teaching on Christian family life; centrality of the community and family life; the Catechism of the Catholic Church; Christian ethics on family life; ethical dimension of the Agĩkũyũ community; Myers' view on poverty as a problem to Christian family life; family in the modern world; role and dignity of women in the society; together with, vocation and mission of the family. As such, adequate foundation is drawn with the goal of showing how the merging of the African world-view and Church teaching on family can assist in

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[440] Ibid., no. 25.
[441] Ibid., no. 25.

tackling specific family life issues so as to realize a true African Christian family life in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW AND CHURCH TEACHING ON CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE IN VIEW OF ADDRESSING TODAY'S PROBLEMS TO CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the Church teachings on family and how these ecclesial instructions can be productively used to overcome certain marriage and family life difficulties in Kĩambaa Sub- County and elsewhere. The current chapter is meant to show how respect for both African world-view and Church teaching on Christian family life can be fruitfully utilized in addressing today's problems to Christian family life. The current chapter would then be drawn from the anthropological section and the theological section. Merging the two brings about a dialogue between them that is meant to enable Christian families to handle their struggles. Empowering African Christians to overcome their troubles gives them the opportunity to attain healthier relationships among themselves hence improving their African Christian family life. The Chapter will follow the following thematic sequence: African spirituality and Christianity; traditional values and Christian ethics; elderhood in the community and Church leadership; Agĩkũyũ beliefs on family and Church teaching in relation to Christian family; and, traditional marriages and Church weddings.

5.2 African Spirituality and Christianity

Magesa in his book titled *The Post Conciliar Church in Africa,*[442] comes in handy to the study and specifically to this chapter since he emphasizes the importance of merging African spirituality and the teachings of Christianity so as to achieve an authentic African Christian family life. Christians live their lives according to the will of God but they are still influenced by their cultures.[443]The Church teaches that Christians should embrace such human values as sharing, participating in both the Church and community activities and being open to each other. In the same way, the aspects of African world-view especially the communality perspective encourages sharing, total participation in the community's activities, relationality and openness - and above all respect for human life and the elements that support human life which is the

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[442] L. Magesa, *The Post-Conciliar Church in Africa: No Turning Back the Clock* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2016).
[443] Ibid., p. 47.

highest sacred force.[444] Generally, people are the products of their respective cultures, traditions and they accept the Gospel so as to embrace Christianity and live a life that pleases God without being uprooted from their God given cultures.[445]

Magesa draws from the *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue,* a dialogue between Christianity and African Religion. It showed how African philosophy of life integrates with the Church teachings to come up with a fulfilling family life especially among the Christians well equipped to handle family life arising issues. From it, the study adopted four forms of dialogue to guide Christians in their daily lives keeping in mind their way of life. These dialogues include:

(a) "The dialogue of life, where people strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations;

(b) The dialogue of action, in which…(members of different faiths and religions) collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people;

(c) The dialogue of theological exchange, where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages and to appreciate each other's spiritual values;

(d) The dialogue of religious experience, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute."[446]

Drawing from the above dialogues between Christianity and African Philosophy of life, the Church encourages Christians to love their neighbors as they love themselves so as to emulate Christ who was sent by God to bring salvation to humanity. That way, Christians are encouraged to care for each other and be of help to those in needs especially in the time of crisis. Such crises as death bring great pain and sorrow to family members who need emotional, spiritual and material support from their fellow Christians so as to overcome their suffering. Similarly, in the traditional community, individuals were encouraged to be their brother's/sister's keepers. A

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[444] P. N. Wachege, CRS: 560, African Christian Theology (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012), pp. 14ff.

[445] L. Magesa, *The Post-Conciliar Church in Africa: No Turning Back the Clock* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2016), p. 49.

[446] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

communal life enabled them to share, co-operate in their daily activities, caring for the needy in the society and total participation of every individual according to one's endowment so as to ensure harmonious interpersonal relationships in the community. This kind of care and concern for each member of the family, Church and society as a whole, strengthens people's relationships towards each other thereby minimizing existential family problems. Unity brings about the desire to assist each other hence giving individuals an opportunity to work together to overcome the obstacles that they encounter in living their family life as true African Christians.

According to Magesa, the mentality that African spirituality and religious practices would fade with time because of the impact of the teachings of Christianity has been proved to be null and void. He says that "African spirituality remains alive and active and often clashes with Western Christian positions and expectations. Instead of merely ridiculing African living spirituality, as was the case for a long time, the Christian tradition must enter into serious conversation with it, because it forms the basis of the world-view of millions of people not only in Africa but Worldwide."[447] It is because Africans have come to love, accept and appreciate their own religion which guides them in their everyday lives. Africans are also open to other religions such as Christianity that have accommodated their traditional human values and cultures that help them grow as mature Christians. It is therefore, evident that respect for both African world-view items and Church teachings on family life can help Christians a great deal to appreciate their religion and not abandon their way of life with the aim of attaining authentic African Christian family life.

5.3 Traditional African Values and Christian Ethics

In his book titled *Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol. 1,*[448] Nyamiti expresses the need to embrace and continue the traditional African values that are useful to individuals in the contemporary society who have embraced Christianity.[449] However, individuals have a right to refuse aspects that are not significant to them in their current situation but not to throw way

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[447] Ibid., p. 69.

[448] C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology, vol. 1, Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA Press, 2010).

[449] Ibid., p. 19.

everything in the past.[450] To the author, there are those positive values that should be reserved or reinstated and integrated in the current African way of life as Christians. The Church teachings on family life should be based on relevant African values such as uprightness, fairness, kindness, bravery and self-control as propagated by Kĩnoti[451] so as to fit in their current situation in life. The above is backed up by the author's concern that "in spite of Western modernization, cultural identity is being stressed and encouraged in various perspectives both by the Church and civil authorities."[452]

Nyamiti further proposes the education of the youths in Schools, Churches and Community. This is to make them aware of the importance of knowing and accepting to live with their traditional cultural values which will guide them in living an acceptable Christian family life within the African context. Nevertheless, they should not be restricted to the past while ignoring the present and future. The culture of a people is not static but dynamic and thus individuals should accept the changes that take place in their lives and adjust so that they can fit in well in the ever changing society[453] without losing their identity. The teachings of the Church on family life can best be explained using the wisdom and philosophy of the people so that they can fit their state of life. Nonetheless, these Church teachings should be used for judging what is right and wrong so as not to distort Christianity. At the same time, they will be preserving the traditional cultural values that are very useful to people in the community. Meaning that the teachings of the Church can be used to purify, rectify and transform African values to improve people's life. It is also important in liberating people in the present day community from oppressive and exploitative cultures such as discrimination of women on the issue of inheritance and ownership of property as shown by Cagnolo[454] that block them from living as true Christians.

Furthermore, the concept of Ancestors is valued both in the African community and the Church. Among the Africans, one only becomes an Ancestor if one led a morally upright life, praiseworthy family life and Godliness. Ancestors are believed to have a close affinity with God

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[450] Ibid., p. 19.

[451] H. W. Kĩnoti, *African Ethics: Gĩkũyũ Traditional Morality* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2013), p. 16.

[452] C. Nyamiti, Studies in African Christian Theology, Vol.1, p. 19.

[453] Ibid., p. 19.

[454] C. Cagnolo, *The Akikuyu: Their Customs, Traditions and Folklore*, pp. 29-30.

and hence they intercede and mediate between their descendants and the Creator and also communicate with them through prayers and offerings so that they can deliver them from their misfortunes.[455] Paying homage and veneration to the Ancestors is stressed in the community. It is practiced through pouring libation, naming children after them and involving them in the activities of the society. When the Ancestors are pleased with the people, they bring them blessings which results in family healthy flourishment and when they are displeased, they bring about calamities which enhance problems family life. Africans are motivated to imitate the behavior of their Ancestors when they were alive so as to live an admirable family life. Just as Ancestors are good examples, the author refers to Jesus as the Ancestor of humankind, not just of kin relations, and an exemplar in living authentic African Christian family life in the best way possible.[456] In addition, God and Ancestors are in constant communication with human beings through prayers and offerings.[457] Just as Africans desire many more children so that they can have many descendants,[458] so also God and Jesus Christ desire many Christian descendants as seen from the Biblical texts (Mt. 28: 29f; Mk. 16:16).

5.4 Elder hood in the Community and Church Leadership

Wachege in his book *Jesus Christ Our Muthamaki (Ideal Elder),[459]*explains that for one to become an Elder in the Agĩkũyũ community, one had to undergo the rituals of birth and naming, rebirth/being born again, circumcision and marriage. After birth, a male child is named after his father, uncle or grandfather already inclining him to the status of elder hood. Being born again-rebirth, cleanses one spiritually (analogically as Christian Baptism does). Circumcision integrates one into the community as an adult ready to positively persevere or overcome painful life ordeals thereby instilling courage and bravely into the initiate – analogically as Christian Confirmation does. The initiates are initiatically instructed in the traditional values of the society and taught how to be respectable people. They are also educated on the qualities of leadership as they prepare for marriage, family life and elder hood. It is through having a family that a man's fecundity was determined and the manner he raises his family also helped single out good elders.

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[455] Ibid., p. 70.

[456] Ibid., p. 71.

[457] Ibid., pp. 77-78.

[458] Ibid., p. 78.

[459] P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992).

Among the Agĩkũyũ, elders performed duties such as conducting prayers and offering sacrifices especially in cases of misfortunes on behalf of individuals, families and the whole community. They also settled disputes that disrupted family life and the best of them represented the community in public sacrifices to *Ngai* (God).[460]

Drawing from the above, the role of Church leaders is reflected. The author expresses Jesus as the 'Ideal Elder.' The relation brings to the researcher's attention that just as Jesus is seen as the best example of a leader, Priests and Pastors should likewise imitate Jesus and engage in journeying with Christian families especially when they are facing difficulties so that they can guide them to lead an authentic life that is pleasing to God. Like the elders in the community, Church leaders have the role to pray for the people, reconcile the factious, bless their marriage and family and teach them significant Christian values such as faithfulness, self-control and love that will assist them to effectively handle the issues they encounter in living family life. From the study, the researcher found out that the Priests were made elders in the community. Just as the Priests are engaged in blessing Christian families, guiding and counseling them, instilling good Christian virtues such as faithfulness on them and preaching the Good News to all; as community elders, they will be able to reach out to a larger group of people in the society. Additionally, involving the Priests who are familiar with the traditional values of the society together with the Christian values empowered them to guide family members more effectively in assisting them to overcome their deficiencies and be better empowered to live as authentic Christian family life.

5.5 Agĩkũyũ Beliefs on Family and Church Teachings in relation to Christian Family Life

As seen earlier from the study, Wachege explains that the Agĩkũyũ "belong to both *mariika* (age-groups and generations) and the full nine *mĩhĩrĩga* (clans) named after the full nine daughters of their originating Ancestors: Gĩkũyũ, their father whom they are named after and Mũmbi, their mother whose *nyũmba* (household) they belong."[461] Their sense of belonging to the same origin, clan and household gives the people the feeling of solidarity and oneness. The *mũciĩ* (family group) worked hand in hand with the *nyũmba* (extended family) to ensure that they strengthened their family and kinship ties towards realized an ideal family life with *Ngai* in their

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[460] Ibid., pp. 18ff.
[461] Ibid., P. 11.

midst as their Creator and Father. In the contemporary society, it has become difficult for families to maintain a close relationship between the nuclear and extended family due to the changes that take place in the community. Such changes include urbanization due to the need and search for employment so as to earn a living to better their living standards in a society that is controlled by a money economy. It has led to such issues as elders being left in the rural areas struggling to make ends meet while others end up in homes developed to care for the elderly.

Certain communities, like the Agĩkũyũ one, are endowed with specific dynamic world-views that guide people's life. World-views then trigger cultural adjustments due to changing situations in life, growth in formal education and generation change.[462] This then brings to attention the need to correct, adjust and uplift Agĩkũyũ traditional provisions of family life that can be adopted and fruitfully used by African Christians in living their lives as they ought to. Moreover, cultural values should be enriched using Church teachings on Christian family life to elevate the values and correct discriminative cultural elements. A dialogue between the two aims at achieving a fruitful family life while maintaining both cultural and religious values that guide families even when confronted with malevolent forces. Changes such as rise in the cost of living, catering for children's fee in expensive Schools and migration to the urban centers are a consequence of extended families cutting their kinship ties. Despite the changes that take place in the society, African Christians are encouraged to stick together as a "Family of God" better equipped to handle forces aimed at ruining families and undermining adherence to Christian family life.

Both the traditional community and the Church recognize the significance of the union of the nuclear and the extended family. The above is meant to ensure useful relationships between the present generation and the past generation. For example, grandparents are very important to the children in the modern families especially in instilling matrimonial values upon them. To learn about the past and their origin, children are seen visiting their grandparents from time to time. Such information is given to them in terms of stories and songs. Additionally, they are being taught about community proverbs with the intention of imparting discipline to the children. Thus, these form of relationships between the nuclear and extended families are useful in ensuring that

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[462] G. J. Wanjohi, *The Wisdom and Philosophy of the Agĩkũyũ Proverbs: The Kihooto World-view,* p. 39.

children learn about their traditional values in addition to the Christian virtues inculcated on them in Church.

5.6 Traditional Marriages and Church Weddings

Mpongo, a defender of African marriage and Liturgy comes handy to the study.[463] As a Christian theologian, he devoted his time in reflecting on the African way of life. He particularly based himself on the marriage institution as an opener into family life. He argued that Liturgy is not only about evangelization but also incorporation of certain traditions into the development of the Christian faith.[464] In addition, he stresses that Church leaders should accept and understand people's mentality by changing their attitude towards diverse cultures that are different from their own. As long as these cultures are not harmful to others and to the Christian belief, then they should be used, though critically, to benefit all people.

According to Mpongo, for readers to understand traditional or customary marriage, they should be knowledgeable on customary law. He defines customary law as a set of principles (un-written) that are used in the traditional society to guide those in marriage…that kind which is sealed under customary law. An individual does not marry the way they please but must follow set rules that govern marriage and family institution.[465] Additionally, the author defines Christian marriages as the union of Christian consorts in Church guided by a set of rules that aid to realize an acceptable Christian family life. Today, even among Christian families, individuals conduct traditional ceremonies before the Church wedding. These traditional festivals are meant to bring the two families together, make bride wealth payment and for the families to accept each other into their communities. It helps the Church to acknowledge the positive values of the culture of a people. In turn, it will also be useful in showing individuals that God and Christ as in Christianity are also in the community and in support of their humane values which, after all, are gifts from God.

Traditionally, after paying the bride wealth, a man was allowed to take in the woman to live with him as his wife. In Christian families however, the man pays the bride wealth and before he

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[463] L. Mpongo, "*A Defender of African Marriage and Liturgy*" in B. Bujo and J. I. Muya, (Eds.), *African Theology in the 21st Century vol. 2-The Contribution of the Pioneers,* 2nd Edition (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006).
[464] Ibid., p. 126.
[465] Ibid., pp. 130-131.

takes in the woman, they are encouraged to get married in Church before living together as husband and wife. On the issue of fecundity, traditionally, a man wished to prove their fertility before marriage but Christianity has encouraged people to get married first as children are a blessing from God. In case of infertility or impotence, a Christian consort is heartened to consider adoption or help poor families to raise their children and not necessarily end their marriage because of childlessness.[466]As to which of the two approaches is less problematic is something the reader is entitled to argue.

Furthermore, the author insists on the veneration of Ancestors in the traditional community just as Saints are being venerated in Christianity. Both Ancestors and Saints act as intermediaries between God and the people because of their proximity to God. The Ancestors are the guardians of morality just the Saints are the guardians of Christian virtues. This similarity gives the Africans more confidence in Christianity because of its resemblance in the commemoration of the departed through prayers, naming their children after them and remembering them in special occasions that cement their union.[467] The departed are part of the family and therefore, they should not be rejected because it can bring about calamities to families including the Christian ones. Such a perception would contribute greatly in living Christian family within the context of both Christian and ethnic God's gratuitous endowments.

5.7 Chapters Concluding Remarks

Basing itself in chapter three and four, the present chapter has labored to combine the African world-view and significant Church teachings on family. This has been done with the aim of empowering Christian families among the Agĩkũyũ to tackle their family life problems so that they can realize a fulfilling African Christian family life. The chapter also enables the readers to appreciate the relevance of merging traditional values together with Christian values that promote an ideal family life. To realize the above, the themes the Chapter examined are: African spirituality and Christianity; traditional values and Christian ethics; elderhood in the community and Church leadership; Agĩkũyũ beliefs on family and Church teaching in relation to Christian family; and, traditional marriages and Church weddings. Having dealt with this and the previous

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[466] Ibid., p. 135.
[467] Ibid., pp. 143-145.

chapters, the researcher is now adequately empowered to draw implications, make recommendations and conclude the study in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

With the knowledge drawn from the previous chapters, the researcher is enabled to make a summary of the study, give the spiritual, catechetical and pastoral implications of the study, bring forth the way forward as recommended by the respondents in handling their personal and also other people's problems and conclude the issue on the difficulties that Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter. Moreover, the researcher will also suggest areas for further research so that other scholars interested in the same area can chip in to bring new ideas to boost the study.

6.2 Summary

The study has examined Christian families among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County, *Kĩambu* County so as to understand the worries that they face and come up with possible practical solutions aimed at realizing an authentic family life that is characterized by healthy interpersonal relationships within the realm of family. The main goal of the study was to investigate the problems that Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter in Christian family life in the light of African world-view and ecclesial instructions on family. The key aim was achieved through the following specific objectives: To investigate the problems encountered in living a Christian family life among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County; To explain the nature and expected royalty of African harmonious world-view items on family in general and Christian family life in particular; To identify and elaborate significant ecclesial instructions on family life that can be exploited for the common good of the family and welfare of Christian family life; To discuss how respect for African harmonious world-view items and Church teaching on family can be fruitfully utilized in addressing today's problems to Christian family life.

The overall hypothesis was that Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County encounter problems in Christian family life that deserve to be handled in the light of African world-view and ecclesial instructions on family. The specific hypothesis of the study included: There are problems confronting the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County in living Christian family life; A proper

understanding and realistic adherence to African harmonious world-view items on family in general and Christian family life in particular is of immense importance; There are significant ecclesial instructions on family that can be employed for the common good of the family and welfare of Christian family life; Respect for African harmonious world-view items and Church teaching on family can be fruitfully utilized in addressing today's problems to Christian family life.

In addition, the study was guided by three interrelated theories namely: General cum special revelation theory propagated by scholars like Latourelle and Rahner; Mediation theory which was propagated by the two Latin American brothers known as Leornardo Boff and Clodovis Boff; Redaction Criticism theory propagated by scholars like Bornkamm, Fuchs and Kasemann. To compliment these theories, the study also opted for serious Scriptural sources from NJBC, NJB and DNT. The use of the theories and Scriptural texts mentioned above, assisted the researcher greatly in achieving the goals of the study.

Moreover, the study brings to our attention that different categories of families including the Christian ones which the study focuses on, encounter a number of struggles that affect the stability and continuity of family life. The study drew a vast number of issues facing Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County but only focused on the four main striking ones that ran cross a good number of families. They include; marital problems, parenting problems, poverty and cultural problems. Members of the community together with the Christians should then join hands to empower these families to overcome the kind of troubles that they experience. This form of assistance would help families do away with things and acts that prevent them from living the way they ought to live.

Furthermore, the study drew a number of instructions addressed to families from Church teachings on family. These teachings are useful in guiding families especially the Christian ones towards achieving the kind of life that pleases God and ensures their comfort in thus World as they await for their reunion with God. Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio*, instructs families to be hospitable, accommodative and to live as Jesus Christ our example did. This will help members of a family to be concerned about the welfare of one

another.[468] The Church should be in the frontline in spreading the Gospel of love, sharing and helping the poor in the community.[469] In Kĩambaa Sub-County, the Church is greatly involved in helping the members of the community especially the Christian families. It was confirmed by the researcher from the respondents who explained how they seek for assistance and guidance from the Church leaders and elders in times of crises in their families.

The study also employed the importance of the African World-view so as to extract and retrieve traditional African values, principles and personnel that are significant in changing troubled family life. Respect for the African harmonious World-view items is meant to realize an authentic African family life even among the Christians who are guided by Ecclesial instructions on family. Family members should be able to appreciate their roots as Africans and apply he values that ensure solidarity, totality, openness, sharing and communality which would then result in reliable community and family life in particular.

6.3 Implications of the Study

Three interconnected implications can be drawn from the study with the aim of empowering Christian families to overcome the problems that they encounter in living their family life. These suggestions will be scrutinized in the following manner: Spiritual Implications, Catechetical Implications and Pastoral Implications.

6.3.1 Spiritual Implications of the Study

The study is permeated with a good number of aspects that can boost the spirituality of Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County and other communities in the society. Assessment of the social organization and cultural values of the Agĩkũyũ concerning family is important in guiding Christian families to appreciate significant community values that impact on their day-to-day lives. Possessing these values would give parents the opportunity to pass on family ideals to their children and grandchildren. In turn, the current and future generations would be able to live in a way that is acceptable within the realm of Christian family life.

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[468] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio,* 1982, no. 43.
[469] Ibid., no. 49.

Understanding of and respect for the African World-view items and Church teachings as explained in the previous chapters is very critical in living an authentic Christian life. Christian families are stimulated to strive for a fulfilling Christian family life despite the challenges that they encounter. Living according to the essential standards of the community and Ecclesial instructions on family would greatly influence families to live the way they ought to live. Individuals will be encouraged to play their part in ensuring harmonious relationships within the home. In addition, they will be motivated to do away with factors that trigger misunderstandings in the family.

The Church as the "family of God" should embrace Christian families and assist them in handling the issues that prevent them from living in the manner that God designed for them. This way, individuals will feel loved and cared for hence strengthening their family relationships and relations with others in the society. Preaching the Gospel to the people gives them hope and strengthens their faith in God and are taught the importance of looking after the needy in the society. Belonging to the Church gives Christians the feeling and need of unity, fairness, love, growth and understanding among themselves.

Moreover, having Jesus as their example, Christians are stimulated to be hospitable and accommodate all just as Jesus did. Jesus did not favor others but welcomed all including the sinners who yearned for their salvation. Being a family, Christians are encouraged to live as brothers and sisters and to be accommodative to other people despite their religious affiliation, ethnic community or social class. It will in turn help in freeing people from hatred and discrimination that cause chaos in the community. Embracing love and concern for each other would enable individuals to lead a life that pleases God, the Father of all.

Parents have a great role to play in the family. As the guardians, they are responsible for guiding their children to follow the right path towards achieving the kind of life that God expects of them. Pope John Paul in his Encyclical *Familiaris Consortio* stresses that "parents must trustingly and courageously train their children in the essential values of human life."[470] Children should be educated that family life is more important than material goods hence they should be ready to live simple lives and avoid greed in the name of living extravagantly. Single parents

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[470] Pope John Paul, Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio,* Vatican, *1982*, no. 20.

should also strive to be better parents to their children who look up to them for guidance and a good life. Men and women who choose to remain single for the sake of their children should be guided by Priests and Pastors to live faithfully.[471]

Furthermore, Christian families facing complications such as childlessness should be encouraged by examples from the Scriptures such as Abraham and Sarah who did not have a child for many years in their marriage. Later on, God gave them a son, Isaac despite their old age. Such couples should understand that children are a blessing from God to bring happiness in families. If they cannot have their own children due to medical and other reasons, then these consorts should be given the opportunity to adopt or help children from needy families.[472]

6.3.2 Catechetical Implications of the Study

The catechetical implications drawn from the study will enable the clergy men and women and members of Christian families to understand family life better. Comprehending family life better helps individuals to live appropriate lives and be good examples to other families even to those that are not attached to any religious affiliation. Parents are encouraged to raise their off spring according to the will of God. Children as a blessing from God should be trained to be obedient to God, their spiritual Father and to obey His commandments. Moreover, parents are constantly reminded by the CCC that they should "regard their children as the children of God and respect them as human persons. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's Law."[473]

In addition, the family as the primary educator to its members especially the children, has the responsibility to educate the children. Parents should educate their children to embrace values such as obedience, commitment to family and societal duties, compassion and kindness to others. Children should also be trained to avoid doing wrong, but if they do, they should be ready to acknowledge their mistakes and accept to be corrected and change for the better. Moreover, parents should warn their children not to engage in behaviors that will ruin their lives. Such behaviors include engaging in drugs and alcohol, prostitution, pre-marital sex which would lead

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[471] Ibid., no. 20.
[472] Ibid., no. 14.
[473] Pope John Paul II, Catechism of the Catholic Church (Rome: Vatican, 1992) no. 2222.

to unwanted pregnancies, robbery and bullying which has become a major problem in institutions of learning especially the secondary Schools.

Moreover, parents should educate their children to respect their elders even if they do not belong to their family. In the traditional community, children highly respected the elders. They could also be punished for their misconducts by other members of the society whenever they go wrong and the parents were in full support of it. A child could be sent by an elder from another family and it was mandatory for them to accept the seniors' plea. In the contemporary society, it is a different case. Children have become reluctant when it comes to respecting the elders claiming that they are outdated. At times they fail to follow the instructions of the seniors from other families and even their own. Such values that were highly valued in the traditional African community should be retrieved and rooted in the present generation so as to guide people's behavior especially for the youths.

The Church is responsible for giving hope to Christian families. Priests and Pastors should constantly remind people that they originated from God and they are supposed to live in the manner that God designed for them. Christians are expected to seek the understanding of the Good News that give them hope of attaining salvation hence, obtaining freedom from oppressive factors that cause their suffering.[474] Church leaders should encourage consorts to continue being faithful to the teachings of the Gospel concerning marriage and family life so that they can build a strong Christian family bonded by love and strengthened by happiness amongst its members.[475] The Church should also be concerned about those Christian families struggling to live happily despite the hindrances they encounter. They should be comforted and directed to adopt ways that would help them end their problems and lead a true Christian family life.[476] Generally, the Church is responsible for helping all kinds of Christian families facing diverse interferences to attain "the fullness of God's plan for them."[477]

Moreover, youths should be the Church's priority. A number of them rush for early marriages that eventually break up because they no longer wish to commit themselves to their marriage

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[474] Synod of Bishops, The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World, 2015, no. 12.
[475] Ibid., no. 22.
[476] Ibid., no. 23.
[477] Ibid., no. 24.

partners. Others live together but do not intend to undergo the Sacrament of marriage to unite them as husband and wife. Church leaders should often engage in guiding and counseling the youth and them aware of the importance of marriage. Binding them together in Church lays the foundation to the building of a fruitful Christian family life.[478] Continued counseling to spouses is also significant in enabling marriage partners to handle their marital fears in a Godly and mature way hence minimizing issues like separation and divorce.

Furthermore, as Pastors and Priests commit themselves to guiding the Christian families, Christians would strive to attain a fruitful family life. Parents will be motivated to raise their children in a manner that pleases God and children will learn to be obedient to their parents and other senior people in the community at large. The youths should constantly be engaged in Church activities, house chores and studies. This will help the parents to keep them away from peer influence. Church seminars and youth meetings should be conducted from time to time for the youth to be taught about the reality of the current situation, share experiences and encouraging them to start their own self-help groups that would keep them pre occupied and can also use the proceeds for charity work like helping the needy families in the society.

6.3.3 Pastoral Implications of the Study
The pastoral implications are interconnected with the spiritual and catechetical implications. They should not be treated as separate identities but be used to illumine each other with the aim of aiding Christian families to attain a fulfilling kind of life. Examining the problems of Christian family life in the Agĩkũyũ community is meant to guide Priests, Pastors and Christians to consider the significance of striving for an authentic Christian family life in the society especially in the modern times. Family life should be continued in the community through procreation in marriage. From the CCC family members are reminded that "by transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents co-operate in a unique way in the creator's work."[479] Parents are therefore, co-creators with God and have the duty to propagate family life by giving birth and raising children in the light of God. The clergy should then support parents in raising a future generation that is just and respectable in the society.

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[478] Ibid., nos. 25-26.
[479] Pope John Paul II, The Catechism of the Catholic Church (Rome; Vatican, 1992). no. 372.

Additionally, using the mediation theory, it is important for the Pastors and Priests to live with the Christians in the community. They can do so by visiting them in their homes so that they can understand their situations in life and know their needs. By understanding the troubles that Christians face in living their Christian family life, they will be able to evangelize to them using the efficient pastoral method that will help the tackle their family life worries. Dealing with families singly will enable Church leaders as the people's shepherds to provide their assistance to these families depending on the issues that affect them. In his Encyclical letter *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope John Paul II inspires Christian families and the Church to be hospitable "in all forms, from opening the door of one's home and still more of one's heart to the pleas of one's brothers and sisters, to concrete efforts to ensure that every family has its own home, as the natural environment that preserves it and makes it grow."[480] In addition, the Pope calls upon families to monitor political institutions so as to safeguard their privileges and responsibilities s family. This helps to do away with political evils that would bring about suffering in living family life.[481]

Moreover, the Church as an example of Jesus Christ has a role to play in accepting all people just as Jesus did. The Church is obligated to offer support and care to the sick, the poor and the oppressed persons in the family and the community at large. Clergy men and women should be ready to assist families facing difficulties in their Christian family life so that they can feel loved as members of the "Family of God." When the children of God go astray, the Pastors and Priests should be brought back to the house of God and followed closely to ensure that they do not move away from the path that leads them to a happy Christian family life. The Scriptures should be used to encourage, correct, console and empower Christians to handle the hardships that they encounter in their everyday life. They will then be filled with hope that despite the problems that they go through, God will eventually come to save and be with them in paradise where there will be no tears and sufferings.

Furthermore, living with the people will reassure the Priest to journey with the Christian families towards achieving their salvation. Understanding their congregation will enable them to be more committed to be with the people even as they go through difficulties in their lives. For

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[480] Pope John Paul, Encyclical Letter *Familiaris Consortio,* Vatican ,1982, no. 44.
[481] Ibid., no. 44.

example, in Kĩambaa Sub-county, a Christian family woman narrated to the researcher of how she is not able to attend mass with her fellow Christians because of her sickly husband. She has to look after her husband who is paralyzed and cannot be left alone. Without visiting this Christian family and understanding why they do not attend Church, a priest cannot know how to handle them. But the Priest in this Parish realizing that the family stopped coming to Church, paid them a visit and got a clear picture of their situation. Since then, he offers Mass for them in their home and do not only support the family spiritually but also ensures that they have food to eat and that their children go to School. It is a good model to other Church leaders who have the duty to journey with Christian families as they seek Salvation.

6.4 Emerging Recommendations

The following are the emerging recommendations drawn from the study. They can be used as the way forward in handling problems that Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County and other areas face.

1. Recovering and realizing the importance of community elders in handling family life disagreements on the issue such as ownership and inheritance of property. The contemporary society should involve elders as peacemakers who are eligible in handling disputes instead of involving Courts of Law which end up bringing lifetime enmity among family members. The involvement of Lawyers and the Court procedures generally cost a fortune and may end up not solving conflicts in the family. Moreover, some judges and lawyers can be comprised to rule in favor of one party hence passing an unfair judgment.

2. The Church should organize more family days so as to bring families together more frequently for the realization of healthy relationships among families. It is during these family days that Christian families come together to celebrate the God-given gift of life and share amongst themselves. Vitality is treasured, respected and celebrated best in the community and the Church as a community of Christians should show a good example in organizing functions that are aimed enjoying life to attain its fulfillment. Family days also give people the opportunity to contribute towards assisting the needy people in the society.

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3. Solidifying SCCs and encouraging Christians to join these groups which unite people hence having that feeling of togetherness. These SCCs should be used not only as prayer groups but also as assemblies that allow the members to share their family life hardships. That sense of belonging enables people to share freely among themselves. The strength of a SCC is reflected by its members since it is here that these Christians are able to assist one another spiritually, mentally and also financially. Visiting individuals in their own homes will enable the members to understand themselves better and ensure that none of them is left to suffer when they can support each other as a "family of God."

4. Parents should be in the frontline towards raising their children in the appropriate manner. As the first educators, they should teach the children the values of the family and the community at large. Parents should create adequate time to be with their children and understand each of them according to their personality. Moreover, children should be monitored closely so that they do not engage in activities that can land them into problems such as imprisonment and death as seen in Kĩambaa Sub-County.

5. Drug addicts and alcoholics should be rehabilitated so as to do away with the risks accompanying these addictions. Use of money wastefully in drugs and alcohol leads to "secondary poverty" and irresponsibility in Christian families. Parents should also encourage their children to abstain from the use of these drugs which can lead them to thefts so as to acquire money to purchase the substances. A number of youths have also suffered the consequences of using such drugs as bhang which affect them mentally. An individual indulging in drug abuse is known to pose threats to other family members hence endangering their lives.

6. Being educated and empowered by their parents, children, especially the male ones, should take up the responsibility of buying their own pieces of land away from home specifically when they are ready to marry. This aims at avoiding inevitable family wrangles and quarrels between the wife and the in-laws when they are put together in small tracts of land where every family member is trying to acquire it even using

violence. It also helps to prevent the destruction and breaking up of young couples due to interruption by close relatives.

7. HIV/AIDS victims should personally accept their status and live positively. Close relatives, friends and the community members in general should be ready to assist both the infected and the affected. Proper medication, diet and care for such individuals will prolong their lives and they will be able to continue supporting their families. Discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS should be highly discouraged and encourage the embracement and support of these persons. On the other hand, the victims have the responsibility to follow medical instructions and avoid engaging in sexual relations with others with the intention of infecting more people because of the misconception that if they do so, they are freeing themselves from the virus - a delusion which will only hasten their deaths.

8. In cases where families have no children due to barrenness and infertility, the couple should be given an opportunity to consider adoption as one of the solutions to their problem. Given that legal adoption procedures may be long and difficult, the childless consorts can also volunteer to take in close relatives whom they can live with to avoid loneliness and emptiness in their home. Children are known to be a source of happiness and therefore, every family would wish to have a child or children. From the research, a couple in Kĩambaa suggested the opening up of a School whereby they can be able to provide education to pupils and assist the less fortunate children by catering for their School fees. To them, this is the way they have managed to handle their issue. Their joy is to see the children getting proper education, good meals in School and above all having a smile in each other's faces every other day. By opening up of this School, they have also created job opportunities for the teachers and the support staff.

9. Individuals, no matter their financial status should be of the habit of working and earning a descent salary to support their families. Engaging in inappropriate acts such as theft, carjacking and gambling that pose risks to one's life should be discouraged. Families have gone through great pains in witnessing the deaths of their loved ones who have lost their lives because of engaging in illegal activities. Some have

contracted deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS because of engaging in illicit affairs and families also break up because of the same. Instead of involving oneself in unhealthy actions, one should seek for assistance from the Church and community.

10. The Church in collaboration with community and other Government authorities should develop programs that are meant for supporting families especially the less fortunate ones. Assisting these families will help in educating bright children who score very high marks and grades and providing them with job opportunities. This will go a long way in solving the matter of youths engaging in drugs and joining illegal groups out of frustration because of missing out the chance to continue their education due to financial constraints.

11. The youths should be educated on the importance of having their own families. This will be achieved by parents being good role models to their children at home. A number of families in Kĩambaa have expressed their worries because young men refuse to marry and they ruin their lives because of involving themselves in sexual acts with many women some of whom infect them with STDs.

Additionally, the study recommends the following areas for further research. Due to the scope and limitations of the study, the research limited itself to the communality aspect of the African world-view. Thus, a study can be carried out to investigate Christian family life problems in relation to any of the other items in the African philosophy of life.

Furthermore, a study can be done to investigate the difficulties of family life basing itself on another religion as Islam or Hinduism and their respective communities. It will be useful to this research and other readers to compare and contrast the problems faced by families especially given different socio-religio and cultural values of diverse communities.

6.5 General Conclusion

The study has examined the problems of Christian family life among the Agĩkũyũ in relation to African world-view and ecclesial instructions basing itself in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County. From the study, the researcher confirmed that there exist a vast number of struggles encountered by families especially the Christian ones. These issues then impact negatively on

them hence blocking them from realizing a fruitful Christian family life as God intended for them in His Salvific plan for humanity and specifically family. Exposing these concerns will create awareness among the people hence motivating them to fight for their emancipation hence attaining an authentic Christian family life.

In addition, the study employed the use of the African world-view to understand the hardships of Christian families among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambaa Sub-County. By focusing on the community and their philosophy of life, the researcher was able to appreciate the importance of the aspects of African world-view on family life. The study has shown that there are those traditional socio-religio and cultural values that are effective in guiding the family towards handling their family life problems and lead as true Africans should.

Similarly, the study used the Church teachings on family to show God's salvific plan for the family. As the domestic Church, the Christian family is guided by Church doctrines and theologian reflections which assist Christians to appreciate their calling to family life. Commitment to one's duties in the family as husbands, wives, parents and children promotes family life. The emulation of Jesus as the liberator enables Church leaders and the Christians to free themselves and their brothers and sisters from sin as the root cause of problems experienced in the family. The combination of the African world-view and Church teaching in examining Christian family life troubles shows that traditional African values and Christian values on family life should be used to complement each other with the view of realizing true African Christian family life.

Furthermore, the study calls upon the Church to be involved in the life of Christians by being with them so that they can understand their desires, fears and ambitions in life. This way, they will be able to know how to deal with different families going through diverse complications and guiding them with the Scriptures and Christian Tradition. Using the above, Christian families will be able to tackle their fears and live the way they ought to live as the 'Family of God.' Critical investigation of these problems and the recommendations extracted from the study will go a long way in assisting Christian families to effectively handle the issues that they encounter and strive to be better their lives.

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Appendix 1: Government Research Permit

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officer will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NACOSTI

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

RESEACH CLEARANCE PERMIT

Serial No.A 3138

CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MISS. ANNE JEMOSOP KIPKALUM
of UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, 36-30401
KABARTONJO,has been permitted to conduct research in *Kiambu* County

on the topic: *CHALLENGES OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE AGĨKŨYŨ IN RELATION TO AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW AND ECCLESIAL INSTRUCTIONS: A CASE OF KĨAMBAA SUB-COUNTY,KĨAMBU COUNTY*

for the period ending:
7th March,2018

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/53664/16040
Date Of Issue : 9th March,2017
Fee Recieved :Ksh 1000

....
Applicant's Signature

....
**Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation**

140

Instructions

The questionnaire aims at collecting data on problems of Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-count, Kĩambu County. You are kindly requested to take part in the exercise by responding to the questions given in various sections as indicated below. The information provided will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for this academic purpose only. Your participation in facilitating the study is highly appreciated.

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

2. Age: Below 30yrs ( ) 30 to 40 yrs ( ) 41 to 50 yrs ( ) Above 50 yrs ( )

3. Marital status: Married ( ) Single ( ) Widowed ( ) Divorced ( )

4. What is your level of education?

   Certificate ( )

   Diploma ( )

   Degree ( )

   Other (Specify)…………………………………………………………………………

5. What is your occupation? …………………………………………………………...

6. How many children do you have? ……………………...

7. Which Church do you attend? …………………………………………………………

8. Do your children also attend Church?

   Yes ( )

   No ( )
   Please give reasons for your answer above
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………………………………………………………………………………….

9. In your own view, who is a Christian?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………

10. How long have you been a Christian? ....

11. How often do you participate in Church's activities?

Once in a while   (   )
Often   (   )
Rarely   (   )
Never   (   )

b) Give reasons for your level of participation above?

………………………………………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………

12. As a Christian what family life problems do you encounter?

a) Marital challenges

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………

b) Parenting problems

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………...............................

c) Cultural/ Traditional problems

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

d) Other

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

13. As a person, how have you overcome some of these difficulties?

…………………………………………………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………….

14. Have your relatives been helpful in addressing some of the family life issues that you encounter?

Yes   (   )

No   (   )

Please indicate reasons to support your response above

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

15. Has the community played a role in helping you handle some of the complications?

Yes   (   )

No   (   )

Give reasons for your answer above

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

16. What role has your Church played in addressing any of the above issues?

………………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………………...

…………………………………………………………………………………...............

17. What suggestions would you make to the community, fellow parents and the Church in view of fruitful Christian family life?

a) Community

………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

b) Fellow parents

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

....

c) Church

………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for the Youth

Instructions

The questionnaire aims at collecting data on problems of Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County. You are kindly requested to take part in the exercise by responding to the questions given in various sections as indicated below. The information provided will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for this academic purpose only. Your participation in facilitating the study is highly appreciated.

1. How old are you? ………………………………………………………………………

2. Gender   Female   (   )

                       Male   (   )

3. Marital status ……………………………………………………………………

4. What is the level of your Education?

    Certificate   (   )

    Diploma   (   )

    Degree   (   )

    Other (specify)   (   )

5. What is your Occupation? ……………………………………………………………

6. Which Church do you attend? …………………………………………………………

7. How long have you been a member of your Church? ....

8. Do your parents also attend Church?

    Yes   (   )

    No   (   )

    Explain your answer above

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

9. Does your Church have any devotional groups?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Please mention some if any

………………………………………………………………………………….......
....

10. Do you belong to any of the devotional groups mentioned above?

Yes ( )

No ( )

Please indicate the reason(s) for your response above

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

11. How often do you participate in your Church's activities?

Rarely ( )

Regularly ( )

Never ( )

Indicate reasons for your level of participation above

………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

12. What is your understanding of a family?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

13. What are the problems that you experience in your family?

……
……
…………………………………………………………………………………………………..............
....

14. What are the causes of these hardships?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..
……
…….

15. How have these struggles affected you?

……
……
……

16. As an individual, how have you handled some of these difficulties?

…….
……

17. In cases where you encounter some family life problems, whom do you turn to for guidance
and why?

……
……

18. What would you recommend to your parents, Church and community as a whole in view of
realizing a fulfilling Christian family life?

Parents

……
……
……

Church

……

……

……

Community

……

……

……..

Appendix 4: Questionnaire for the Church Leaders

Instructions

The questionnaire aims at collecting data on problems of Christian family life in Kĩambaa Sub-county, Kĩambu County. You are kindly requested to take part in the exercise by responding to the questions given in various sections as indicated below. The information provided will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for this academic purpose only. Your participation in facilitating the study is highly appreciated.

1. Gender: Male (   )   Female (   )

2. Age: Below 30yrs (   )   30 to 40 yrs (   ) 41 to 50 yrs (   ) Above 50 yrs (   )

3. Marital status: Married (   )   Single (   )   Widowed (   )   Divorced (   )

4. What is your level of education?

    Certificate   (   )

    Diploma   (   )

    Degree   (   )

    Other. Specify………………………………………………………………………………..

5. What is your position of leadership? …………………………………………………………

6. How long have you served in that capacity? ....

7. What are some of your responsibilities?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. Do you have devotional groups in your Church?

> Yes   (   )
>
> No   (   )
>
> Mention a few if any
>
> ……
>
> ………………………………………………………………………………………………..

9. How is the institution of family handled in your Church?

> ………
>
> ………

10.   What are some of the family issues reported to you as a leader?

> ………
>
> ………
>
> ………

11.   How have you handled such difficulties?

> ……
>
> ……
>
> ……

12.   How else does your Church address family life issues?

> ……
>
> ……

13.   Do you have any program directed towards effective Christian family life?

> Yes   (   )
>
> No   (   )
>
> Discuss your response above
>
> ………………………………………………………………………………….................................
>
> ……

14. What is the members' response to any of the programmes?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………...

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

15. What recommendations would you make to the Church and its members in view of effective Christian family life?

    a) Church

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    b) Members

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix 5: Interview Guide for the Elders

1. How old are you?

2. What is your marital status?

3. Are you a member of any Church? If yes, which one?

4. Who in your view is a *Mũgĩkũyũ*?

5. What defined *Mũgĩkũyũ* world-view in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society?

6. What is the traditional Agĩkũyũ understanding of a community?

7. What in your view is the place of communality in the contemporary Agĩkũyũ society?

8. In your own view, what is the composition of a family?

9. How were family life issues handled in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society?

10. What roles did the elders play in settling family life problems in the traditional Agĩkũyũ society?

11. Are the elders involved in handling family life disputes in the contemporary Agĩkũyũ society?

12. Did the community participate in addressing family struggles?

13. What difficulties do the contemporary families encounter?

14. How have they been handled?

15. Does the community play a role in addressing them?

16. In your view, what do you think can be done to address the problems facing families in the contemporary society?

17. In case of the birth of twins, how are they treated among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambu County?

18. What is the reason behind the killing of twins among the Agĩkũyũ?

19. Are there any other instances whereby children born are killed?

20. Please give the reason(s) behind the killing of these children?

21. Among the Agĩkũyũ of Kĩambu County, are women allowed to own property?

22. Do women in Kĩambaa Sub-County inherit property from their parents?

23. How does a father from a Christian family in Kĩambaa Sub-County, Kĩambu County distribute his property amongst his children?

24. In a case where a father dies before making his will on the sharing of property among his children, who is left with this responsibility and why?

25. According to The Constitution of Kenya, women have the right to own and inherit property. How has the Agĩkũyũ community, especially the Christian families, taken this?

26. In a situation where disputes arises between the sons and daughters of a Christian family among the Agĩkũyũ, concerning the distribution of their father's property, who settles these cases?

27. How do cases taken and settled in Courts of law arising from disputes on inheritance of property affect Christian families in Kĩambaa Sub-County?

Appendix 6: Plagiarism Test
Report

Problems of Christian Family Life among the Agĩkũyũ in Relation to African World-view and Ecclesial Instructions: a case of Kiambaa Sub-county in Kiambu County

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