

BIRTH AND INITIATION INTO ADULTHOOD  
IN RELATION TO  
BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION  
AMONG THE AVALOGOOLI OF KENYA

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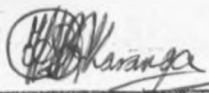


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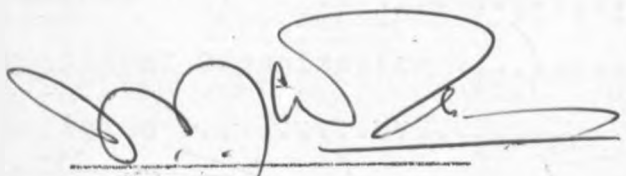


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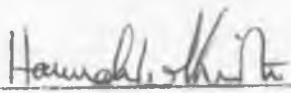
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DR. J.N.K. MUGAMBI

10/11/87

DATE



DR. (MRS.) H.W. KINOTI

10/11/87

DATE

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ABSTRACT

There is an outcry by parents, Educators, Politicians and the Clergy about the deterioration of moral standards in Kenya. One of the responses to this situation has been the Introduction of the African Heritage Course in the School and College Curricula with the objective of helping students to appreciate traditional values. This aspect of the Curriculum has made a great impact in the schools, thus necessitating further research on various ethnic communities in this country.

This study is about Birth and Initiation Into Adulthood in relation to Baptism and Confirmation among the AVALOGOLI of Western Kenya. The AVALOGOLI of Kenya had their own traditional beliefs and practices that were observed before the coming of the European missionaries in this area. In this study, the History, Economy, and Religious beliefs of the LOGOLI people are studied as they were practised before the arrival of the European missionaries. When the European missionaries arrived in Maragoli, they proclaimed christianity while looking down upon the LOGOLI beliefs and practices. One such aspect that is studied in this work is the history, theological development and continuity of the two sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, with special reference to the Roman Catholic Church in Maragoli. It is emphasised that the Christian Sacraments are closely linked with the LOGOLI rites of passage. Hence, some parallels are drawn between Baptism and Birth rites on

one hand. A similar relationship study is made between Initiation Into Adulthood and Confirmation.

It is noted that the Incorporation of the traditional African practices in the church is a positive attempt to the understanding of certain Christian teachings in the contemporary Kenyan Society. Such similar researches when carried out by both the clergy and the laity will be of great value in bridging the gap between the traditional African beliefs and practices, and the Christian teachings.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks are due to the University of Nairobi for granting me a scholarship to cover the cost of this research.

Last but not least, I express my gratitudes to Miss J.M. Mwenesi for typing the final draft of this study

OPERATIONAL/TECHNICAL DEFINITIONS

- Adulthood - The state of complete development of being an adult.
- Age-set - This term is used in this text to refer to boys or men who were circumcised in the same year. The term may also refer to boys or girls who were born in the same year.
- Baptism - This is the first sacrament that is received by an individual who desires to be converted into the Christian faith. In this text, four types of Baptism are mentioned - Infant, Adult Baptism, Blood Baptism and Baptism of desire.
- Birth - This is an act of the mother <sup>bearing</sup> an offspring. It is an act of being born and the beginning of an individual's existence or coming into the world.
- Catechumen - A Catechumen is a person who has attained the use of reason and definitely desires baptism. This term also refers to boys or girls who have received Infant Baptism in the Roman Catholic Church and have a desire to learn more in the catechism to strengthen their spiritual lives by being accepted to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, Holy Eucharist and the other remaining Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church.

- Catechism - This is a manual of Christian doctrines which is often in the question and answer form that is learnt and recited by those who desire to be converted to the Christian faith.
- Catechist - A male or female Instructor who is charged with the responsibility of instructing those who have the desire to become christians (Catechumens) in the christian faith teachings.
- Ceremony - This refers to an outward rite or observance, which is performed in a certain order. This formal act or observance is established by custom and is also of social significance to all those who participate in it.
- Childhood - This is the state or stage of life of a child. It also refers to a time when one is a child. This period covers from birth to puberty.
- Christian - This name applies to the followers of the Gospel of Christ. The disciples were first called christians at Antioch. This was the church which first accepted in its membership uncircumcised gentiles.

- Confirmation - This is the second sacrament of christian Initiation which is characterized by the anointing with chrism and the laying on of Apostolic hands.
- Initiation - This term is used in this context to refer to the formal introduction by preliminary instruction or initial ceremony into some position in life or society where some principles and observances are observed. Emphasis is laid on Instruction and acquisition of knowledge in the elements of any subject or practice.
- Proselyte - A true proselyte was a Gentile who accepted Jewish beliefs and practices in their entirety and became ritually incorporated as a member of the Jewish Community participating in the religious life of the Hebrew heritage.
- Religion - Religion is a six-dimensional organism typically containing doctrines, myths, ethical teachings, rituals and social institutions animated by religious experiences of various kinds. God is the focus of worship in Religion.

- Ritual - This term is connected with rites. It is a prescribed order of performing religious or other devotional service.
- Roman Catholic Church - This term as used in this text refers to all those christians who owe their allegiance to the pope who is also the Bishop of Rome.
- Sacrament - The primal meaning of sacrament is the sign mystery of christ's manifestation of the God-head in his own incarnate person. This is an incarnational sign - symbol that indicates and contains the redemptive and eschatological reality of irrevocable value and ineffable efficacy for human-kind.
- Sign - Signs are things that have meanings and which represent something other than themselves. A sign is a result of creative faculty of human imagination. It deals with the observable and measurable aspects of human experience. People agree and follow it accordingly. A flag is an example of a sign.

## Symbol

- A symbol is different from a sign. A symbol is not created but is born out of life. Symbols are more universal than signs. Symbols refer to a variety of things at different times and places. A symbol does not refer to another. A symbol is therefore something concrete and specific that is intended to convey something spiritual or general either as an indicating sign or as an actual representation in which the dynamic divisions of the sign is abolished. Symbols stand for abstract notions and not events or concrete activities. That which is symbolized is effectively charged.



ABBREVIATIONS

- B.A. - Bachelor of Arts
- °C - Degrees Centigrade
- C.P.H. - Central Publishing House
- D.C. - District Commissioner
- E.A.L.B. - East African Literature Bureau.
- E.A.P.H. - East African Publishing House
- ed - Editor
- F.A.M - Friends African Mission
- ff - Following pages.
- fig. - Figure
- Ibid - Ibidem (Same author and work quoted above)
- ITCZ - Inter-tropical convergence zone
- K.L.B. - Kenya Literature Bureau.
- M.A. - Master of Arts
- MM - Millimetres.
- NN - North Nyanza
- Op.cit - Opus citatum (work quoted above)
- OUP - Oxford University Press,
- P,PP - Page, Pages,
- P.A.G. - Pentecostal Assemblies of God
- Ph.D. - Doctor of Philosophy.
- R.C. - Roman Catholic
- R.S.V. - Revised standard version.
- S.A. - Salvation Army
- SCM - Student Christian Movement.
- S.P.C.K. - Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge

T.M.P. - Tanzania Mission Publications

Vol. - Volume

## INTRODUCTION

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study among the Avalogooli of Western Kenya is based on three main objectives. First, it seeks to explore the rites of passage, where emphasis is laid on birth and initiation into adulthood rituals. Secondly, the study examines the history, theological development and the symbols used in baptism and Confirmation. Thirdly, an attempt is made to determine if there is any relationship between birth and initiation into adulthood on one hand and Baptism and Confirmation on the other hand. In this way, the traditional African beliefs and practices will be of help in the interpretation of certain christian teachings.

This study is a continuation of a short research paper that was presented in the Department of Religious Studies in the first year of study for the Master of Arts degree programme.<sup>1</sup> The present generation of christians do not consider certain African religious beliefs and practices as being compatible with christianity. There is a tendency to disregard them in favour of the western values. Since some of the rites of passage are still observed by the Avalogooli, hence the need to re-examine their importance in relationship to the Christian teachings.

The current major concern in Kenya is to promote the African Cultural Values. In this aspect the government, educators and the entire Kenyan population is concerned with the attempt of correcting the negative impact of the western values on the traditional African way of life. This has led to a crisis of identity among the young generation. The objective here is not to revive the traditional Cultural Values, but rather to incorporate the desirable practices.

This study therefore provides some content in the Comparative Studies where some parallels are drawn between some African practices and Certain Christian teachings. Such studies are necessary because the African Heritage has been Incorporated in the Curricular of the various Educational Institutions in Kenya.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

The sources that have contributed to this study are both oral and written. Written sources have been classified into three categories: History of the Avalogooli, the Rites of passage and lastly the History and Theology of the sacraments.

### History of the Avalogooli

In this category, various scholars have been cited. This section is of great help in studying the general setting of these people. The scholars whose works have been cited are: S. Jumba<sup>2</sup>, E. Ndanyi<sup>3</sup>, G. Wagner<sup>4</sup>, J. Osogo<sup>5</sup>, G. Were<sup>6</sup>.

### Rites of Passage

There are various scholars who have discussed the rites of passage in general and also at a greater depth among the Africans. This includes works by J.S. Mbiti<sup>7</sup>, E. Ndanyi<sup>8</sup>, G. Wagner<sup>9</sup>. The rites of passage among the Africans are cited as integral rituals in life. These works have been of great help towards a deeper analysis of Birth, child naming and Initiation into Adulthood rituals.

### History and Theology of the Sacraments

The third division of literature cites the general history, practice, theology and symbols found in the sacraments. The scholars whose works have been cited include: D.M. Baillie<sup>10</sup>, W.F. Flemmington<sup>11</sup>, O. Cullman<sup>12</sup>, J.K. Howard<sup>13</sup> and B. Haring<sup>14</sup>. This section of literature was of great assistance in discussing Baptism and Confirmation.

The work by J.D. Crichton has been of great

inspiration towards this study. In his book, Christian Celebrations: The Sacraments, the liturgy of the seven sacraments is analyzed. The objective here is to help the Roman Catholic Christians celebrate the Roman liturgy in the contemporary world<sup>15</sup>.

Sacraments are viewed as concrete signs of faith, love and life for the Christians. It is stated:

"... Sacraments then are not isolated ecclesiastical rites, but events in the flowing life of the church and in the life of man".<sup>16</sup>

Sacraments must be therefore seen as being integral in man's life.<sup>17</sup>

Since the sacraments have a deeper relationship with the ordinary life of people, there is need for Christian Anthropology. This is an examination of man's nature as he exists in the concrete circumstances of his life.<sup>18</sup>

The life of man is marked by rites of passage, hence, the sacraments and other church rites are closely related to these human situations.<sup>19</sup>

J.D. Crichton says:

"... Birth corresponds to Baptism on one hand and (on the other hand) there are also those (scholars) who would see confirmation as the counterpart of the rites of initiation in more primitive societies' ...".<sup>20</sup>

Apart from mentioning the possibility of relating Baptism to Birth rites and Confirmation to initiation into Adulthood, the author also discusses other sacraments. However, the relationship between these sacraments and the corresponding rites of passage is not studied at depth. This study attempts to bridge this gap.

C. Nyamiti, has made an attempt at relating the resurrection of Jesus Christ with the ritual of Adult initiation.<sup>21</sup>

In another article, G. Lumbasi compares the ordination rite with initiation into Adulthood.<sup>22</sup> These two case studies are stimulating as regards this study where initiation into Adulthood is related to confirmation.

These two later studies point out clearly what the clergy is doing in relating African beliefs and practices to Christian practices. The Gaba Pastoral Institute at Eldoret in Kenya is in the forefront in this aspect. Those involved in carrying out research are mainly the Roman Catholic clergy. There is need therefore for lay scholars to join hands in this valuable task. This study is therefore an attempt at dealing with this problem.

## METHODOLOGY

In carrying out the research, the Informants were interviewed either individually or in groups of three or four. Group interviews yielded the best results. A printed out questionnaire was issued to the informants who were able to read. In this way, they were able to follow on their own and understand what is required of them.

The questionnaire served as a guideline on discussions that were stimulated by probing questions related to the area of study.<sup>23</sup> The questionnaire was printed in English, but the conversations were in Lulogooli. Short notes were made during these conversations and analysed later for accuracy and consistency.

A tape recorder was sometimes used in conversations with the older group of informants. This information was recorded in Lulogooli, transcribed and then translated into English. In the initial stages, a tape recorder was very useful, but on some occasions, the information was repetitive hence short notes were made to complement the already recorded conversations.

Baptism and Confirmation Ceremonies were observed, both in and outside Maragoli. However, it was not possible to take photographs on these occasions. The churches that were visited included - Hambale Catholic Church in Maragoli, Kariobangi Trinity Church



and St. Paul's Chapel both in Nairobi.

A camera was used to take photographs of some informants while they were being interviewed.

The informants that were interviewed included, men, women, boys and girls in Maragoli. The clergy, both priests and the laity were interviewed. The selection of informants depended on their knowledge of the subject, good rapport, age and to some extent, their Religious affiliation. The informants preferred open discussions to the question and answer conversations based on the questionnaire. As a whole, the discussions proved educative both to the researcher and those interviewed.

The validity of the gathered information was counter-checked by asking various personalities similar questions. Their concurring views indicated positive results.

The duration of a single interview ranged from two to four hours depending on the subject of discussion. Several visits were paid to key personalities who proved more knowledgeable on a certain subject.

FOOTNOTES

1. S. Akaranga, "Birth" Its Religious significance - A case study of the Maragoli in the Western Province of Kenya", A Coursework paper presented to the Department of Religious Studies, University of Nairobi, M.A. I - 1984/1985.
2. S. Jumba, Kitabu Kya Mulogooli na Vana Veve, Kisumu; Evangel Press, 1965.
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7. J.S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, London; Heinemann, 1969.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Love and Marriage in Africa, Nairobi; Longmans, 1973.
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Baptism, London; SPCK, 1964,
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Pickering and Inglis, 1970.
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St. Paul's Publications, 1976.
15. J.D. Crichton, The Christian Celebrations: The  
Sacraments, London; Geoffrey Chapman,  
1973 P. 3.
16. Ibid. P. 5
17. Ibid., P. 6
18. Ibid., P. 7
19. Ibid.,
20. Ibid., "Primitive Societies" in this context refers  
to societies which still practice their  
traditional values, with less influence  
from Christianity and other Religions.
21. C. Nyamiti, "Christ's resurrection in the light of  
African Tribal Initiation Ritual".

Revue Africaine de theologie,  
Vol. 3 No. 6.

22. G. Lumbasi, "Ordination and Initiation rites",  
African Ecclesial Review, Vol.  
18 No. 2; April, 1976.
23. See Appendix II for more information as regards  
the questionnaire.

## CHAPTER ONE

### SETTING

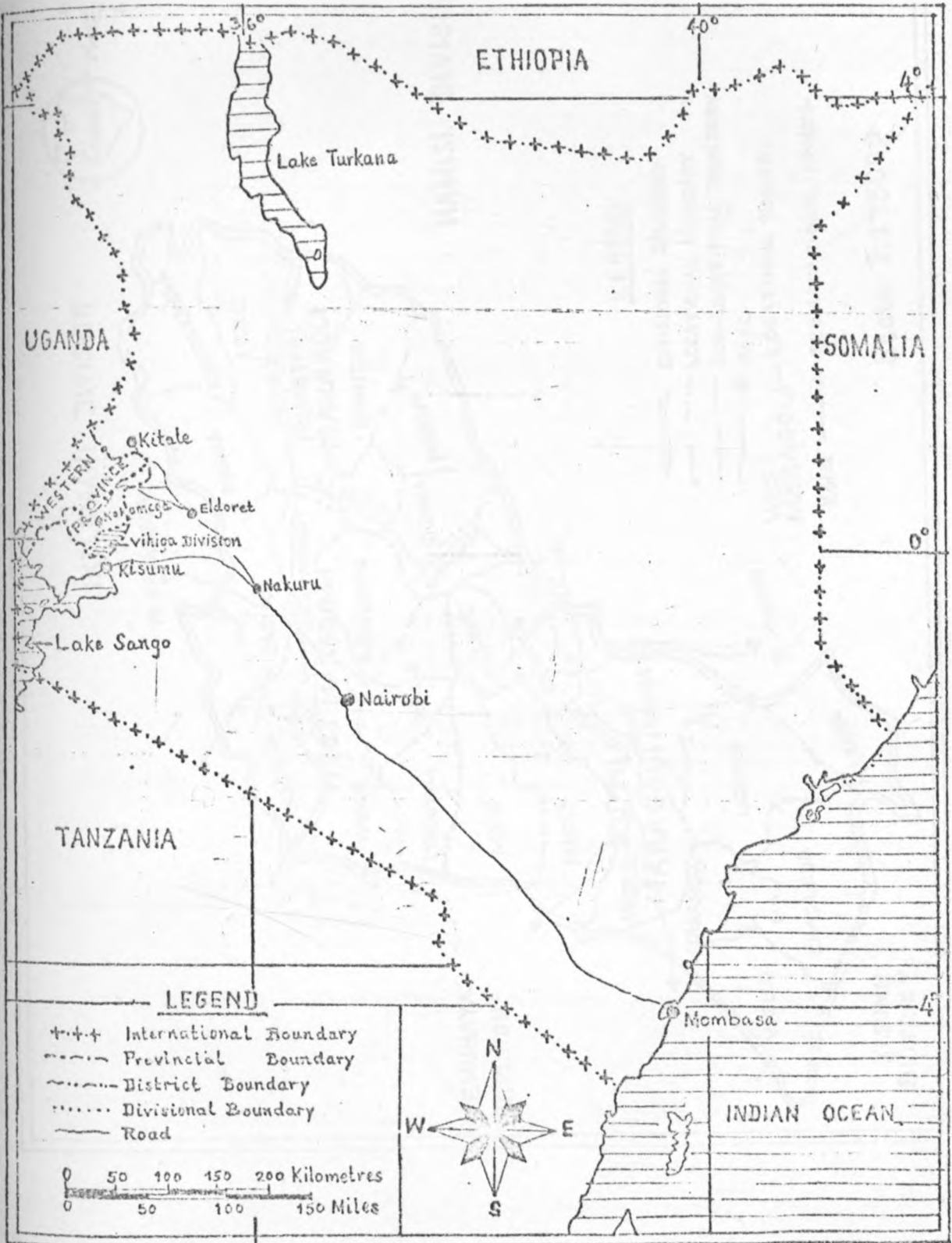
#### GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The Avalogooli are a Bantu speaking people who inhabit Vihiga Division in the Southern part of Kakamega District in the Western Province of Kenya.<sup>1</sup>

Vihiga Division covers an area of approximately 116.8 sq. Km (73 sq. Miles).<sup>2</sup> There are granitic extrusions of boulders and rocks of different sizes and shapes. It is also well drained with numerous rivers which have wide river valleys. The most significant river here is - edzava. The soil is red laterite and the natural vegetation is noticeable only in Sout. Maragoli. Or else in other parts, the indigenous vegetation has been depleted and replaced with exotic trees, coffee, tea and banana groves. The Avalogooli are densely populated and on the average, the land occupied by a family is less than half an acre.<sup>3</sup> The most significant market centres are Mbale, Chavakali, Mudete, Majengo, Bendera, Savatia, Mahanga, Lusengeri and Lunyerere.

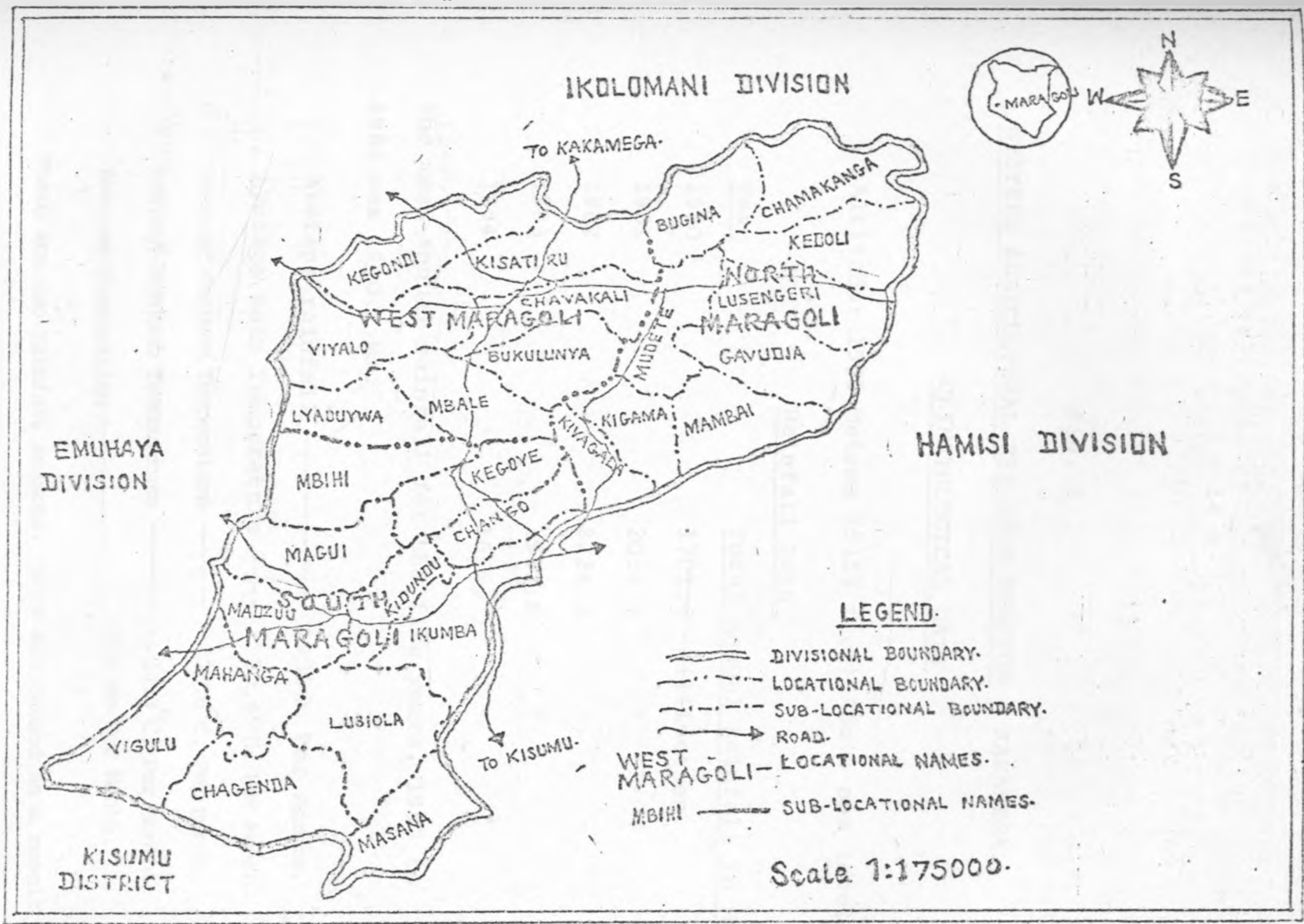
For the basis of this study, Kakamega town which is twenty two kilometres from Mbale market will be the centre for our climatological statistics.<sup>4</sup>

# MAP OF KENYA: Location of the study area



Map. 1

# MAP OF VIHIGA DIVISION



Map. 2

Fig. i

WESTERN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION - KAKAMEGA..

CLIMATOLOGICAL DATA

Altitude: 1585 Metres (5151 feet) Above sea level.

Rainfall Data

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Annual Rainfall in Mm.</u>
1980	1701.6 Millimetres
1981	2034.7 "
1982	2224.3 "
1983	1933.9 "
1984	1656.1 "

The mean annual rainfall for the five years, 1980 to 1984 was 1910.1 Mm.

Average rainfall -----	1935mm Per Annum.
Average mean Temperature -----	20.6°C. Per Month
Average Maximum Temperature -----	26.8°C. Per month.
Average Minimum Temperature -----	14.3°C. Per Month.
Average Evaporation -----	1836 mm Per Month.

There are two rainfall seasons. They are caused as a result of the shifting of the inter-tropical convergence Zone (ITCZ). This Zone moves from approximately latitude 15° North to Latitude 15° South of the Equator.



Long rains are experienced from March to May, while the short rains, from August to November.

The driest month is January.

- Sources:
1. Western Agricultural Research Station, Meteorological Office, Kakamega.
  2. S.H. Ominde, "Land and Population in the Western Districts of Nyanza Province," Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1963, p. 48.

## HISTORICAL SETTING

According to oral tradition, the Avalogooli trace their ancestry back to Mulogooli, the son of Andimi who was the son of Muhindila. However, B. Ogot suggests that the Avalogooli came from Asia Minor and travelled south to "Misri" - a mythological location which does not refer to the present country of Egypt.<sup>5</sup> They sailed by boat upstream and settled on the Rusinga Islands, before migrating further to Maseno. Due to pressure from the neighbouring ethnic communities, they moved further to Mwigono in Maragoli hills, It is believed Mulogooli was buried here.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, G.S. Were suggests:-

"It is false to claim that the Avalogooli came from either the West or the South. Oral tradition suggests that the Tiriki, Kabarasa, Nyole and Vugusu claim that 'Misri' is their cradle land".<sup>7</sup>

Concluding remarks on the Abaluhya point out:-

"It is a long time since the Baluhya left (their migration centre), thus their geographical information of places mentioned is misleading, but we cannot dismiss their claims".<sup>8</sup>

There are several reasons that led to the migration of the Avalogooli from the South. For example, there was pressure from the neighbouring

Fig. ii

MULOGOOLI AND HIS LINEAGE

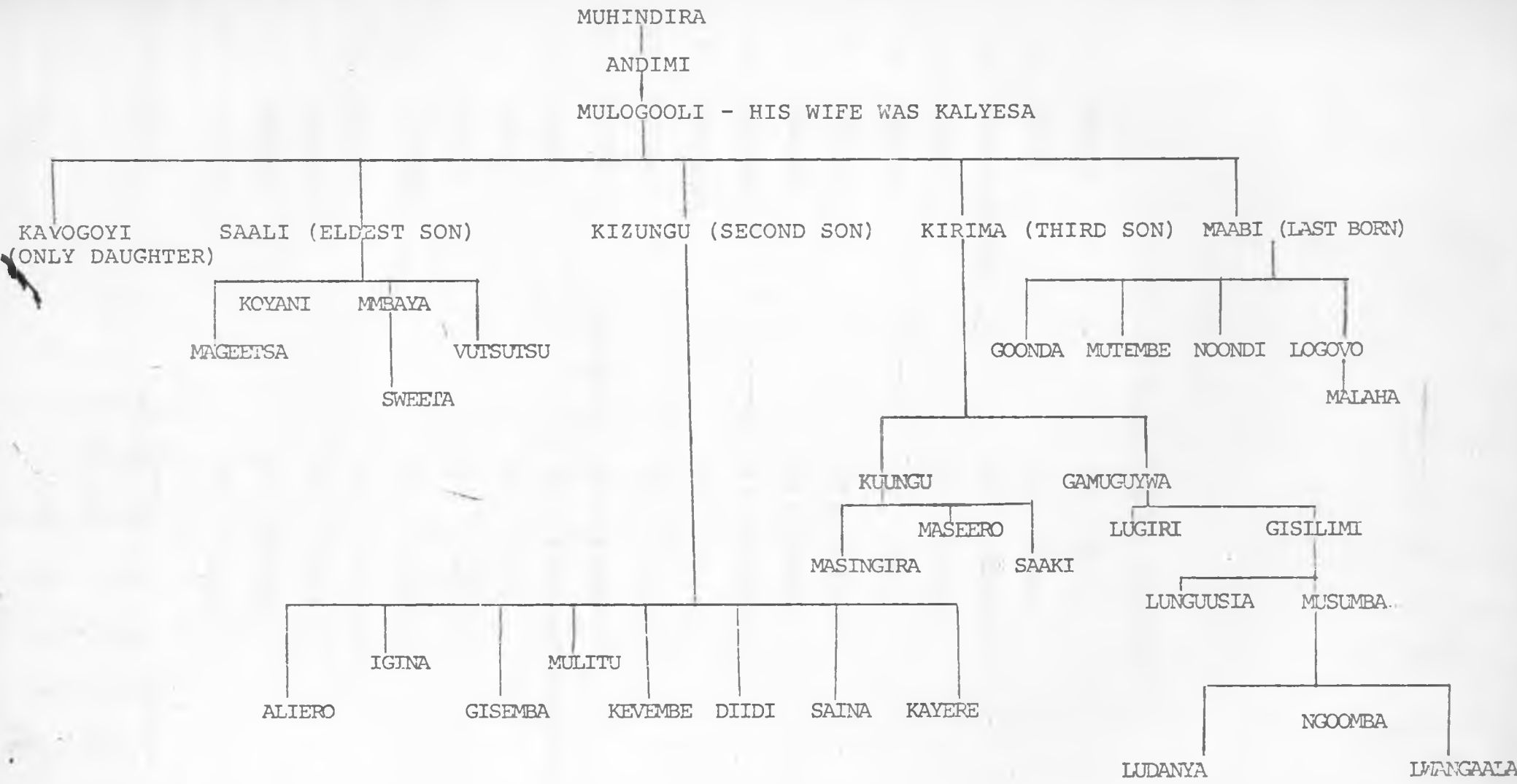
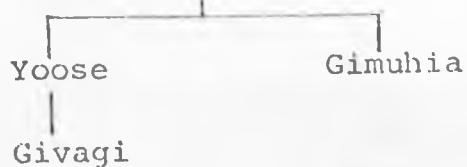


Fig. iii

OTHER CLANS IN VIHIGA DIVISION

- |                  |                       |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Damaai        | 20. Mooi              |
| 2. Diidi         | 21. Mufwa             |
| 3. Funami/Kamaai | 22. Mugeetsi          |
| 4. Genya         | 23. Muheevi           |
| 5. Geetsere      | 24. Muku              |
| 6. Gihaayo       | 25. Muluga            |
| 7. Gisiisi       | 26. Ndeega            |
| 8. Gisindi       | 27. Ng'ang'a          |
| 9. Gisuunda      | 28. Saalia            |
| 10. Givaagi      | 29. Saanga            |
| 11. Gusihi       | 30. Sagala            |
| 12. Guuga        | 31. Saniaga/Kamunaala |
| 13. Itavati      | 32. Suva              |
| 14. Kivuta       | 33. Tembuli           |
| 15. Kuveera      | 34. Tsalaala          |
| 16. Mahero       | 35. Tsatsaala         |
| 17. Mahoolia     | 36. Vigulu            |
| 18. Meenge       | 37. Vulugi            |
| 19. Migangu      | 38. Yoonga            |



Sources:

1. G. Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya, London;  
OUP, 1949 P. 58.
2. E. Ndanyi, Avalogooli: 1200 - 1985, Nairobi;  
Jothwilnor Publishers, 1985, p. 12ff.
3. S. Jumba, Mulogooli na Vana veve, Kisumu; Evangel  
Press, 1965, P. 1ff.

ethnic groups, especially the Nandi and the Luo. Moreover, the Avalogooli were always on the move due to family quarrels, local warfare and famine. However, oral tradition suggests they are closely related to the Abasuba and the Gusii.<sup>9</sup>

Mulogooli had four sons - Saali, Kizungu, Kirima and Maavi who form the major clans in Vihiga Division.<sup>10</sup> Mulogooli's only daughter was Kavogoyi. The people who are referred to as - 'Avalogooli' comprise the descendants of Mulogooli and adopted strangers from the neighbouring ethnic groups. This therefore helps to explain why there are some Nyole immigrants in this Division.<sup>11</sup> population increase and the search for jobs to earn a living have led to migration into urban areas and the newly created settlement schemes in various parts of Kenya.

#### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND EDUCATION

The Logooli society was based on the kinship system. The basic family - traced its origin to one particular clan that was closely linked to Mulogooli, their ancestral progenitor. The family comprised a father, mother and unmarried children of both sexes. Each family lived in a separate homestead in a round, grass thatched, mud-walled house. The

house was divided into four compartments - The sitting room, domestic animals' compartment, kitchen and the bedroom. The Central house pole - etiru held the house firm and also served as a religious shrine.<sup>12</sup> The back door of the traditional house faced west and the bananas were planted in the back yard. The whole land parcel was surrounded with a eurphorbia hedge.

A married woman wore a kind of front apron - Muliivu and a back apron - Kevoja They were both fixed at the waist. Younger boys and girls went naked until they were formally initiated into adulthood. An old man wore a piece of goat skin patch - Oluhale or Limooli and carried a leather bag - Limauya<sup>13</sup>

Men, women and children had distinct roles to play in their family. The old man was the head of the family. Old men were classified as either uncles or grandfathers. Most men were monogamists, but in case one was polygamous, one ensured that his wives lived far apart from each other on different parcels of land. Men swept the open courtyards in front of their houses, tethered animals in their compartments and constructed houses. They also repaired them or summoned specialists to perform the task of repair. They grazed animals and protected their families from

PHOTOGRAPH i



Celia Vigedi and Cornel Kalegi and their grand children. See also Appendix I for further details. Photograph taken on 10th October, 1985.



foreign invasion, cleared bushes for cultivation and helped in sowing, harvesting and threshing cereals. Old men taught boys their traditional history, beliefs and practices. They also ensured that they got married to appropriate spouses. The old men of the oldest existing age-set were regarded the wise men of their society. They decided on all matters affecting their society. Young men gathered round the open fire places Oluhvia (singular) and listened to the old men's conversations. It was at these gatherings that potential leaders were selected.

A married woman performed all her chores. She kept the banana plantation clean, milked the cows and watered them. Lastly, she taught her children good moral conduct. Aunts and grandmothers played a significant role in moulding the lives of the youth. Grandmothers who acted as matrons, instructed girls to observe chastity before marriage and be faithful to their husbands when they got married. The teachings were conducted in their respective cottages - Kerono at night. These matrons also acted as inter-mediaries in courtship and betrothal of girls under their tutelage. The girls were also taught their traditional history, beliefs and practices through riddles, proverbs and oral stories.<sup>14</sup> The roles played by the

parents and their children were well defined in the traditional society. There were prohibitions, oaths, curses and taboos which acted as social controls in their society. There were other social gatherings in the traditional logooli society where people danced to the tune of the drums, wind and string instruments.<sup>15</sup>

#### ECONOMY

The Avalogooli are mainly agriculturalists. They practice mixed farming on their small parcels of land. Some of the crops grown are - maize, cassavas, eleusine, bananas, vegetables and tropical fruits of many kinds. They originally used a wooden stick - muhaaya to cultivate their land before the introduction of the iron hoes. According to oral tradition, the Nandi supplied the Avalogooli with grinding stones, arrows, spears, hoes and knives. In exchange, the Nandi were given cereals. The traditional iron hoes were also forged by the Wanga.<sup>16</sup>

The early system of exchange was barter trade. Apart from the items mentioned above, the Logooli people also traded in domestic animals, pots, baskets, skin clothes and banana fibre aprons. The iron hoes were highly valued in the traditional society. They were used in the settling of bride wealth. They were safely

kept after marriage and were refunded if a marriage was unsuccessful.<sup>17</sup> Domestic animals were acquired by raiding -kulanya or by exchanging their farm produce for the animals - kutunda. Lastly, goats, sheep and hens were exchanged for cattle - kuhambulanya 18

The wealth of the Avalogooli was determined upon counting the herd one owned and the size of his family. Various crafts were taught by specialists differently to both the boys and girls when they were initiated into Adulthood. Some of the crafts that were taught included pottery, basketry, leather tanning and fibre work.

#### POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

In the traditional Logooli society, there were many clans. In these clans, distinguished old men were selected to constitute a council of elders - kiruazo. They maintained law and justice. In every village, a senior man was appointed to this council.<sup>19</sup>

Before the coming of the Europeans, there were two local leaders in North and South Maragoli respectively. They were Guyumba and Esebwe.<sup>20</sup> In the year 1894, the British government declared a protectorate over Uganda. At that time the Eastern Province of Uganda which extended up to Naivasha was partly inhabited by

PHOTOGRAPH i.j.



Reuben Kagai addressing the 1985 Vihiga Cultural Festival at Mbale Market on 26th December, 1985. Reuben Kagai is a retired Maragoli leader.

the Luyia. In the same year, an administrative station was set up by Sir. H. Colville who was then the Commissioner for Uganda. F. Spire was appointed ruler in this area. In 1895, C.W. Hobley became the first Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza.<sup>21</sup> The first administrative centre which was located at Mumias was later transferred to Kisumu.

The Avalogooli were very much affected when in 1899, an attempt was made to levy hut-tax by the colonial government which was paid in terms of hoes and domestic animals. When the Eastern Province of Uganda was made part of Kenya in 1902, there was a higher demand for casual labourers in the Kenya highlands which led to the massive migration of the male population to the European owned farms. This exercise was enhanced by the colonial government when they appointed the first headmen in 1903. Their duty was to collect hut-tax in their various areas of jurisdiction.<sup>22</sup> The introduction of poll-tax in 1910

further accelerated the massive exodus of the male population into the Kenya highlands. In 1936, the Lugongo's who were later called Muruka then headmen and now referred to as Assistant Chiefs were installed by the colonial government.<sup>23</sup> Maragoli Location which later became Vihiga Division was then sub-divided into

Fig. iv

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN VIHIGA DIVISION

PRE- COLONIAL RULERS

South Maragoli

Esebwe and Opati

North Maragoli

Guyumba

CHIEFS IN COLONIAL AND POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

South Maragoli

Omondi Amambia

Ayuya Muzizi

Mufuogo Ayuya

Munubi Amuyunzu - 1907 - 1939

Odanga Amuyunzu - 1939 - 1940

Paul Agoi - 1940 - 1951

William Selenge

Meshack Omino

Reuben Demesi

Fanuel Kaiga

Timona Isinga

North Maragoli.

Paul Agoi - 1940 - 1951

Joel Abele

Matayo Mwenesi

Jamin Mwavali

Stanley Chabaaga

Kenneth Jumba

WEST MARAGOLI

Alfred Ayodi

Senior Chief in Vihiga Division is Meshack Agoi.

The current member of Parliament for Vihiga constituency is Moses B. Muḁavadi.

Source:

Samuel Mwanzi Kevogo, Oral Interview, 19th  
October, 1985, Ondeyo, Mbale  
Sub-Location.

two locations - North and South Maragoli for effective administration. The former North Maragoli Location was further sub-divided into two Locations in 1980 - West and North Maragoli respectively.

Before independence, the Old Nyanza District had been divided into North and Elgon Nyanza, but after independence the Western Province was created. It consisted of Kakamega, Bungoma and Busia Districts.<sup>24</sup>

#### RELIGION

The concept of religion is important in studying the traditional life of the Avalogooli. In this study their religion will be discussed by focusing on their rites of Passage. Emphasis will be laid on birth and initiation into Adulthood rituals. At a later stage in this study they will be related to Baptism and confirmation.

The Avalogooli believed in the existence of God almighty, the beseeched one - Nyasaye who was approached in prayers that were conducted communally by the entire society. God was omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and immanent.<sup>25</sup> They also believed in the existence of spirits - Emisambwa. There were benevolent ancestral spirits - Emisabwa gya Vaguuga and malevolent spirits - Viqingqi.<sup>26</sup> A living person had a body -



mbili, a soul - and a shadow - A corpse was referred to as not having a shadow.<sup>27</sup> The concept of shadow represented the termination of physical life.<sup>28</sup>

When an individual died and reappeared to the living members in bad dreams or visions, he or she was referred to as being a malevolent spirit - kigiingi. All possible funeral rites were conducted to bid farewell to the deceased from the material world into the spiritual world. The malevolent spirits were appeased by a hair shaving ceremony *luvego*<sup>29</sup>. This ritual indicated that the Avalogooli venerated their ancestors. According to oral tradition, the wandering malevolent spirits had their abodes in caves, forests and on river banks.

Death was a transitroy stage in life. The traditional beliefs and practices were concerned about their welfare in genral. On the other hand greetings were highly regarded. It was in these greetings that the health conditions of other people was investigate. Illness was consoled and necessary precautions were undertaken to help the sick recover.

There were various specialists in the Logooli society. Firstly, the Sacrificial priest - *musaalisi*

PHOTOGRAPH iii



Zipporah Vugudza. See also Appendix i for further information. She was one of the oral informants. Photograph taken on 8th October, 1985.

who presided over all the social and Religious rituals. Secondly, the Diviners - Vakumu who identified dangers in life and with the aid of the departed spirits, they were able to avert evil. Thirdly, the Herbalist - .mwahi wo lunyasi who worked in close collaboration with the diviners in curing various ailments. Fourthly, the rain magician - mugimba and farm magician - mukingi wo mulimi who both solicited for rain and good harvest respectively.<sup>30</sup>

Just as in other traditional African societies, the Avalogooli observed various rituals and ceremonies. J.S. Mbiti suggests that most of the visible demonstrations of Religion occur in rituals and festivals.<sup>31</sup> Rituals therefore generated a sense of certainty, familiarity and provided continuity and unity for all those who participated in them.<sup>32</sup>

FOOTNOTES

1. See Map 1 and Map 2 On page I2 and I3.
2. S.H. Ominde, "Land and Population in the Western Districts of Nyanza Province, Ph.D thesis, University of London; 1964 p. 113.
3. The Author's observation.
4. See Fig. (i) on page I4 to I5.
5. B.A. Ogot (Ed), Zamani: A Survey of East African History, Nairobi; Longman, 1980 p. 187.
6. S. Jumba, Kitabu Kya Mulogooli na Vana Veve, Kisumu; Evangel Press, 1965 pp. 1ff.
7. G.S. Were, A History of the Abaluyia, of Western Kenya, Nairobi; EAPH, 1967 p. 58 ff.
8. J. Osogo, A History of the Baluyia, Nairobi; OUP, 1966 p. 21.
9. Ibid, p. 40 ff. See also S. Jumba, op.cit p. 4ff and G. Wagner, The Bantu of Western Kenya, London; OUP, 1949 p. 58.
10. See Figures ii and iii on pages I7 to I9.
11. The Author's observation.
12. Cornel Kalegi, Interview, 5th October, 1985, see also photograph I and appendix I.

Luhulu, West Maragoli.

13. Samuel Mwanzi, Interview, 19th October, 1985,  
Ondeyo, West Maragoli.
14. Celia Vigedi, Interview, 5th October, 1985,  
Luhulu, West Maragoli.
15. Samuel Mwanzi, op.cit.
16. See photograph v on page 45.
17. Celia Vigedi, op. cit. A marriage was considered  
successful when a woman had given birth  
to several children.
18. Samuel Mwanzi, op.cit.
19. Ibid.
20. Reuben Kagai's Public address at the Vihiga  
Cultural Festival on 26th December, 1985  
at Mbale Market, see also photograph ii p.26
21. G. Wagner, op.cit. p. 32. See also Government of  
Kenya, Kenya National Archives, DC/NN/3/  
1, p. 25.
22. \_\_\_\_\_, op.cit., p. 21. See also Government of  
Kenya, Kenya National Archives, DC/NN/  
3/1 p. 21.
23. See Fig. iv on pages 28- 29.
24. Government of Kenya, Kenya National Archives,  
D.C. Elgon Nyanza, Deposit 1.

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25. Samuel Mwanzi, op.cit. The word Nyasaye which refers to God the beseeched one is also found among the Luo. It is not certain who borrowed the terminology from the other.
26. E.M. Kasiera, "Development of Pentecostal Christianity in Western Kenya, with particular reference to Maragoli, Nyang'ori and Tiriki, 1909-1942", Ph.D thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1981 p. 37.
27. Celia Vigedi, op.cit
28. The Authors interpretation.
29. Zipporah Vugudza, Interview, 8th October, 1985, see also photograph iii on page 32.
30. Celia Vigedi, op.cit.
31. J.S. Mbiti, Introduction to African Religion, New York, Praegar Publications, 1975 p.126.
32. Ibid.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BIRTH AND CHILD-NAMING

#### CONCEPTION AND BIRTH

The life of an individual in any society comprised a series of passages from one stage of life to another, one occupation to another.<sup>1</sup> These changes were accompanied with ceremonies that were observed by the entire community.

Child birth was not a single event among the Avalogooli. It was characterized by rituals, ceremonies, prohibitions and observances by all family members.<sup>2</sup> Their system of kinship rendered a special place to the newly born baby. Marriage was not sealed unless a baby had been born to a wedded couple.<sup>3</sup> A man who was suspected impotent allowed one of his brothers to beget children with his wife. Men or women who did not have children were not mourned with sorrow. When they died, a thorn was pinned in their rectum.<sup>4</sup> This practice protected the family members against their malevolent spirits.

Conception was expected to occur within the first year after marriage. The chances of conception were higher among virgins who were expected to conceive when

PHOTOGRAPH iv



Francis Chakaya and Kedeng'e Anyoso. See Appendix I for more details on the informants. Photograph taken on 7th October, 1985.



marriage was consummated.<sup>5</sup> Delay in conception was due to various factors that were corrected in different ways. One such cause was believed to be the effect of an aunt's curse. Reconciliation by shaking hands made the girl potent.<sup>6</sup> If malicious friends or witches hid a patch of a girl's menstrual flow with some charms, conception was also delayed. In this case, a diviner was consulted to retrieve these items in order to restore potency.<sup>7</sup> Delay in conception was also due to malicious ancestral spirits which were appeased by sacrificing an ewe.<sup>8</sup> However, in certain circumstances, barrenness was due to frequent abdominal pains during the menses - tsingegeta. A herbalist was therefore consulted to prescribe some herb mixtures which lessened these pains and facilitated conception.<sup>9</sup>

When women discovered they were pregnant, they informed their husbands formally, although they would have already learnt to read the signs. These included the cessation of the menstrual flow, the darkening of the breast nipples, a slight protrusion of the navel and the dislike of certain foods.<sup>10</sup>

Conception temporarily halted sexual union between a couple. It was embarrassing if a woman delivered a baby covered with seminal fluid. The matrons scared girls against sexual union during

gestation when they attributed abortion to continued sexual union.<sup>11</sup>

The gestation period was nine months. To keep count of these months, a woman had a small pot and nine small sticks which were placed in the eave of her house. At the appearance of every new moon, the expectant mother took one stick at a time and placed it in that pot.<sup>12</sup> The expectant mother was in a special ritualistic state, although normal relationships with her friends and relatives was maintained. She performed her chores carefully to avoid miscarriage. Her diet constituted thin sorghum porridge. She avoided eating fillet steak and the cow's heart. These foods were believed to impair the life of the expectant mother and the foetus.<sup>13</sup> The expectant mother was prohibited from using sharp tools. She was not also allowed to shed any blood from an animal. This was associated with profuse bleeding at delivery.<sup>14</sup>

The husband assisted in most of the duties in the family. In some instances, a household assistant who was either a sister in-law to the expectant mother or her sister was assigned to the pregnant woman to help her in performing the household chores.

An expectant mother visited her parents and was offered a banana fibre apron -- mulivu, which was fixed around her waist. During the last month of her

gestation period, she was prohibited from lifting heavy loads, splitting firewood or bathing. It was feared that premature delivery or haemorrhage could occur.<sup>15</sup> In addition, she kept a sharp sorghum stalk blade near her sleeping mat which was used to cut the umbilical cord after delivery.<sup>16</sup> At the onset of labour, she informed her husband who then informed his mother. She then went round the village and summoned qualified midwives to assist her. No medicine was prescribed to lessen labour pains.<sup>17</sup> There was no specific place that an expectant mother was supposed to deliver from. Many women delivered from their bedrooms. On rare occasions, cowardly women were taken to the banana groves where they delivered from.<sup>18</sup>

After delivery, one of the midwives cut the umbilical cord with a sharp blade and then tied both ends with a banana fibre to stop bleeding. If a woman gave birth unaided, she cut the umbilical cord on her own or summoned her mother in-law to perform that task.<sup>19</sup> The after birth items were gathered together and disposed at a secret spot at night. They were either buried near a banana stem or covered with rubbish in the banana grove. Productivity was solicited by burying these items near a banana stem which was regarded highly productive. If the after

birth items were tampered with by witches, she failed to have more children. If on the other hand, a dog or any other animal ate these items, the woman had less milk to suckle her baby. This therefore made it undernourished.<sup>20</sup>

A delay in the extraction of the after birth items was corrected by a prescription of herbal concoctions. If this treatment failed, her father in-law fluttered a rooster on her body. This ritual was meant to offer blessings to the mother and the foetus.<sup>21</sup> The placenta was of great religious significance to the mother and the baby. It was the physical link between them. The foetus obtained its food nutrients through the umbilical cord. This therefore called for its special treatment after delivery. The cutting and separation of this cord separated the baby from its mother, although it was still related to its mother through breast feeding.<sup>21</sup>

The navel wound of the newly born baby was well cared for, lest it protruded. It was first treated with crushed charcoal dust. Later, crushed lizard's faeces were applied to this wound. If the navel took a longer time to heal, this was believed to be due to adultery on the man's part.<sup>23</sup>

The mother and her baby slept on special mats which were laid on the floor in her bedroom. Child legitimacy was tested immediately after delivery. A special banana - endahulwa was suspended on a ceiling pole - mwamba close to where the baby had been laid. The banana sap was let to ooze and drop on the body of the baby. If the baby was born out of adulterous conception, it died immediately this ritual was performed. Next, eleusine flour porridge was poured on a dish and eaten by the baby's mother. A small amount of this porridge was placed on the lips of the baby.<sup>24</sup>

After the child legitimacy test, the baby was washed by its paternal grandmother. A clay dish - lubaago served as a washing basin.<sup>25</sup> The water that was used to bathe the baby was mixed with certain medicinal herbs which were meant to protect it from various ailments. The baby was inspected for any physical deformations. Crushed dust acted as a powder. The baby was then wrapped in a cow's skin which acted as a towel. The dirty water in which the baby had been bathed was poured in the bedroom, or at the spot where the after birth items had been disposed in the banana grove.<sup>26</sup>

The first born baby was suckled after one day, while the subsequent children were suckled one or two

PHOTOGRAPH v



Material culture of the Avalogooli.

1. Clay bowl (Lubaago)
2. Traditional stool (Ekituva)
3. Traditional hoe (Embago)
4. Drum (Induumba)
5. Ground pounder (Omuhini)
6. Milk pail (Ehaati)
7. Basket (Enguungi)
8. Shield (Ikuuti)
9. Shield (Likuumba)
10. Bow (Oluhiingu)
11. Arrows (Ovuta)
12. Spear (Litimu).

hours after delivery. This interval enabled the breasts to produce sufficient milk for suckling the baby. The right breast was suckled first, followed by the left. However, this pattern was not strictly adhered to.<sup>27</sup> If the mother had less milk, special herbs were prescribed to induce milk flow, or her baby was nursed by another lactating mother.

#### CONFINEMENT AND CHILD PRESENTATION

The new mother was confined to her house for three days if she gave birth to a boy or for two days if it was a baby girl. In case of a twin birth of different sexes, the confinement period was three days.<sup>28</sup> A small skin strap - keseero or a banana fibre ring - engata was suspended at the door way to warn visitors of the ritual situation in that house. This house was avoided by visitors until the end of the confinement period. This period protected the mother and the baby from the witches. Special utensils were used by the new mother. The household assistant prepared meals and served the husband from the sitting room, while the wife ate from the kitchen. She was prohibited from touching food with her bare hands. During the confinement period, she was fed on dried meat, milk, bananas and quails. She used only the

back door to get in or out of her house. The end of the confinement period was marked by rituals and ceremonies, which involved the whole family and invited relatives. The chief guest at the child presentation ritual was the baby's maternal grandmother. On this day, she was accompanied to her daughter's home by other women friends and took gifts to the newly born baby. On arrival at her daughter's home early in the morning, she entered the house through the backdoor. Next, she cut the symbols suspended at the doorway and brought out the baby for the first time to see the sun. She examined it in the day light and uttered words of blessings. The baby's mother came out of the house through the main door and was made to sit in the courtyard. The baby was then handed back to her. Her misconduct towards her in-laws was revealed. As a punishment, she remained in the sunshine and promised to be obedient after being rebuked by her mother.<sup>29</sup>

The baby's head was shaved and the hair was placed on a clay dish which was kept at a secret spot for disposal at night. Next, the mother's head was shaved symbolizing the end of the seclusion period and re-acceptance into the community. This ritual was followed by a hand washing ceremony. In preparation, the new mother



stretched out her hands above the baby that was laid in the water drainage furrow near the front eave of the house. The unmarried brother in-law poured water out of the calabash over her palms. The water that dripped on the baby cleansed it and its mother from the misconduct of the mother towards her in-laws. These were some of the evil deeds that were rebuked on this occasion.<sup>30</sup>

After the performance of this ritual, the baby and its parents were anointed with the cow's ghee. This ghee rubbing ceremony was presided over by the baby's paternal grandfather. This old man took a curved stick, dipped it in a clay dish containing the cow's ghee and smeared it on the lips of the baby and its mother. The remainder of it was rubbed on the foreheads of the baby, its mother and the father respectively. As the grandfather anointed them, he said:-

"I anoint you with this oil as a sign of blessings for you and the baby. May the baby have a brighter vision".

"Muvakanqa maguta gano munihe olwibulu  
ludinye, tsimbavasi nindi tsingavi  
zimedekke ku mwinye halala na amitu/  
mbotswa, dzimoni zilave, umundu wa  
masah madamanu avule kumunyangiza  
dave." 31

PHOTOGRAPH vi



Dina Miroyo and her grandchildren. See Appendix i for more details on the informant. Photograph taken on 18th October, 1985.

The ghee rubbing ceremony was an occasion where the old man pronounced blessings to the family. The relatives were then invited to a communal meal which ended the confinement period and incorporated the mother and its baby into the family. The firewood that was used in kindling the fire was brought by the mother of the newly delivered woman. A reciprocal visit was made later by the new mother to her parents.

#### CHILD NAMING

Child naming among the Avalogooli was an important occasion after child presentation. It was conducted separately or jointly with the ancestral ritual - liswakila. Each traditional African name is important and has a meaning. Child naming was therefore marked with ceremonies. There were three significant names that were given to an individual in life.<sup>32</sup> The first one was chosen by the baby's mother while she was in confinement. This name was related to the events that occurred at delivery. It was not marked with any ceremonies at all. Secondly, the ancestral name which was the baby's most important name was marked with ceremonies which were witnessed by all family members and invited relatives. Lastly, was the name which was given to an individual by his or her peer group at adolescence. This

study focuses on the ancestral name in discussing child naming.

The decision to name a child was undertaken by the father of the baby. He invited friends and relatives to his child's naming ceremony. The naming ceremony for a baby boy was different from that of a baby girl. A baby boy was named in the morning on an appointed day. On this day, the mother of the baby took the infant outside the house through the main door to the courtyard. She held the baby in her arms and faced East. The baby was then named by its paternal grandfather who fixed an iron amulet on its right wrist. He then uttered the following words-

"I name you (the name of the baby is pronounced). May you have a brighter vision and overcome your enemies".

"Ngulanga yive (.../ edzimoni zikulave goi, nuloli omusigu omwanguhe".<sup>33</sup>

A girl was named in the evening after sunset. In this case, the baby was brought to the sitting room by its mother. The paternal grandfather named the baby girl and uttered words of blessings similar to those already mentioned in naming boys<sup>34</sup>.

The ancestral names linked and dedicated the children to their society. These names were chosen from a wide range of names of the departed relatives.

The naming ceremony was witnessed by relatives and neighbours. If a baby was not given the right name, it cried persistently. This indicated that one of the departed relatives was not happy with that name. A second naming ceremony was therefore conducted. On this day, the old women presided over the ceremony. They entered the house of the family that intended to conduct this ceremony through the back door and sat in the sitting room. All possible names were called aloud, one by one. The name that calmed the baby was given to it instead of the previous one.<sup>35</sup> At the end of this ceremony, the invited guests ate a communal meal.

#### ANCESTRAL RITUAL

After the child naming ceremony, the ancestral ritual was observed. It came mid way between childhood and initiation into adulthood.<sup>36</sup> Two or three months after child birth, this ritual was observed. On this day, the parents dedicated their baby to the departed ancestors. The purpose of this ritual was to solicit good health from the departed spirits on behalf of the baby. In preparation for this ritual, the child's father selected a he or she goat, depending on the sex of the

PHOTOGRAPH vii



Esau Segenyi Bagada. See Appendix i for further details on the informant. Photograph taken on 8th October 1985.

baby. The sacrificial animal was of one colour and without any blemish. It was selected from his own herd or borrowed from one of his relatives. The sacrificial priest - musaalisi presided over this ceremony.<sup>37</sup>

A day before the appointed date, the sacrificial animal was tethered at the central house pole - etiru overnight. On the following day, the invited friends and relatives arrived at this home. The child's father untethered the sacrificial animal from the central pole and took it outside the house through the main door to the courtyard. It was then examined thoroughly by the sacrificial priest who patted its back with his right hand and said-

"May the baby be well"

"Ai, Ai, Omwana agase, agase,  
ombili gumuhulilane".<sup>38</sup>

If the goat urinated, it was a sign of a good omen. The sacrificial victim was then handed over to the child's father or uncle who then strangled it by plugging leaves in its nostrils. These special leaves- tsiminu were placed overnight at the central house pole before the sacrificial date. The position of the spleen was also examined. A straight positioned spleen symbolized a good omen.<sup>39</sup> The meat was then

placed on banana leaves and cut into smaller pieces which were roasted in the open fire. The rumen was inflated by the child's father and the open end was tied with a banana fibre string. The child's right hand was stretched to touch the inflated rumen while the child's paternal grandfather uttered the following words-

' "May this family be blessed".

Hango hano hagase, omwana  
aviruke vulahi".<sup>40</sup>

Other children were called upon to tap the distended rumen before it was deflated by the baby's paternal grandfather who uttered these words-

"If there is any malicious person here, let him or her collapse as this distended rumen".

"Omundu woosi oveye nindi ovudamanu  
nindi omwana uyu, ayele vuza kole  
kifu yiki keyelanga ndi"<sup>41</sup>

The chyme from the sacrificial animal was rubbed on the baby's chest, shoulders and its back. The child's mother was also rubbed with this chyme. Small skin straps were then made and tied around the wrists of the baby and its siblings. They were tied on the right or left wrist for the boys and girls respectively. Next, an old man gulped a mixture of water and eleusine flour and blew it over the child, its siblings and



parents. The mixture was consencrated overnight at the central house pole before the appointed date. These two processes were held in the door way - mukivitu. The sacrificial priest sprinkled some blood on the shrine in the homestead. Next, he rolled some Ugali and scattered them in various directions of the homestead. These actions were accompanied with these words-

"(Names of the ancestors) partake of this meal and accept our sacrificial offering".

"(... mulilage yaho, mukugasidze)".<sup>42</sup>

Those who witnessed this ceremony shared in a communal meal after it had been dedicated to the departed spirits. The ancestral ritual prepared boys for circumcision and permitted the parents to resume sexual union.<sup>43</sup>

#### RITUAL FOR SICKLY CHILDREN

A baby that cried ceaselessly day and night even after the second naming ceremony was coaxed by old women. In preparation for this ritual, the baby's parents brewed beer and invited the baby's maternal grandmother who presided over this ceremony. On the appointed day, the baby was taken out of the house and hidden at the roadside. Arrangements were made before hand so that an appointed old woman picked up

the baby and pierced its left or right earlobe if it was a baby boy or girl respectively. The old woman took the baby in her arms and entered the house through the front door. She then joined other old women who were seated in the sitting room. They sat in a circle and shook small gourds containing small stone pellets in a rhythmic pattern while singing the following song -

"May I coax the baby until  
the house blazes"

"Mbumbelee, mbumbelee ndole  
nigwaka".<sup>44</sup>

After this ceremony, the women drunk beer and took some to their husbands at home. The coaxing ritual promoted good health for the baby.

#### TWIN OR MULTIPLE BIRTHS

In the earlier days, twin or multiple births were regarded a bad omen among the Avalogooli. It was difficult to nurse these children. Healthier children were selected and the weaker ones were ignored to die of starvation.

After delivery, the twins were tested for legitimacy. The first born baby was named Makwana while the later to be born was named Malongo. They

were suckled the right and left breasts respectively. Fraternal twins were rebuked by their paternal grandfather. These twins were said to be notorious, for they cried persistently.<sup>45</sup> Identical twins were not bothered with, for they were friendly and hardly cried. The child presentation ceremony for the twins was conducted differently as compared to that of single births. The baby's maternal grandmother was the chief guest at this ceremony. On this day, she was accompanied by friends to her daughter's home. They smeared their bodies with soot and armed themselves with thin flexible canes. As they approached this home, they sung:-

"Our twins are hereditary, Oh our twins are on the way".

"Amalongo gitu galaza, amalongo gitu na golovono".<sup>46</sup>

This song alerted their hosts who also armed themselves in a similar manner for a mock fight in the open courtyard. The twins were not given ancestral names as the single born children. If one of the twins died a tree stump was carved and placed near the survived baby. In this way loneliness was avoided. The carved tree stump was revered as a real baby. The deceased twin was buried in a grave which was completely covered with leaves - malande and grass stumps - Visinde. It was believed that a bare grave

PHOTOGRAPH viii



Joseph Egehida and Arthur Matia. See Appendix i for further details on the informants. Photograph taken on 6th October, 1985.

attracted hailstones which devastated their crops.<sup>47</sup>

A multiple birth was characterized by a special tree - mugavagava which was planted in the homestead.<sup>48</sup> It was meant to protect these children from the danger of death. However, they died a few days later due to inadequate feeding. These children could have survived in the earlier days if the mother's milk was supplemented with the cow's milk.<sup>49</sup> Twin or multiple births are common among the Avalogooli. With the advanced medical care, their survival is as high as those of single children. Parents are more informed these days on dietary matters, hence they take great care of these children. They are no longer looked upon as agents of mystical powers as was the case in the traditional society.<sup>50</sup>

#### OTHER RITUALS

A blemishless she goat was slaughtered by the father in-law if her daughter in-law had haemorrhage. A long skin strap was made from the skin of this sacrificial animal. It was split at the middle lengthwise and was worn around the neck by the expectant mother. The Logooli oral tradition states that this ritual was effective. The skin strap - 'lukaya was kept in a small pot when the pains ceased. It was worn by a

woman on subsequent occasions when she had haemorrhage or abdominal pains.<sup>51</sup>

Early childhood mortality was prevented in two ways. A woman whose children never survived after birth informed her father-in-law who chose a small boy, not related to the family. He was instructed to preserve his urine overnight. In the morning, he climbed on the roof of the house and passed his urine onto the mother and the baby who were seated under the eave of the house. This ritual was effective according to the interview with the informants.<sup>52</sup> In appreciation for his services, he was rewarded a cockerel.

In another ritual the father of the newly born baby made an opening on the wall with his heel through which the baby was presented to its grandmother outside their house. She took the baby to the roadside where it was picked up by an appointed old woman who pierced its right or left ear lobe if it was a baby boy or girl respectively. The baby was then handed back to its mother through the main door and was suckled without the fear of death.<sup>53</sup> According to oral tradition, this ritual was effective. There are some people who have been named - Chanzu indicating that the above ritual was performed on them.<sup>54</sup>

Birth and early childhood rituals ensured good health for both the baby and its parents. The

transition period between childhood and adulthood was marked by other rituals some of which will be discussed in the following chapter.

FOOTNOTES

1. A. Van Gennep, The Rites of Passage, Chicago;  
Chicago University Press, 1960 p. 1ff.
2. Samuel Mwanzi, Interview, 19th October, 1985,  
Ondeyo, West Maragoli.
3. Kedeng'e Anyoso, Interview, 7th October, 1985, see  
photograph iv on p. 38.
4. Benjamin Esigi, Interview, 16th October, 1985,  
Chavakali, North Maragoli.
5. Gladys Mwanzi, Interview, 9th October, 1985,  
Ondeyo, West Maragoli.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Zipporah Vugudza, Interview, 8th October, 1985,  
Lwunza, West Maragoli.
9. Celia Vigedi, Interview, 5th October, 1985, Luhulu,  
West Maragoli.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Hannah Endekwa Interview, 11th October, 1985,  
Luhulu, West Maragoli
15. Ibid
16. Celia Vigedi, op.cit.



17. Agnes Inyangu, Interview, 19th October, 1985,  
Lwunza, West Maragoli.
18. Kedeng'e Anyoso, op.cit.
19. Celia Vigedi, op.cit.
20. Ibid.
21. Cornel Kalegi, Interview, 26th December, 1985,  
Luhulu, West Maragoli.
22. Celia Vigedi, op.cit.
23. Gladys Mwanzi, op.cit.
24. Samuel Mwanzi, op.cit.
25. See photograph vi on p.44.
26. Celia Vigedi, op.cit.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Dinah Miroyo, Interview, 18th October, 1985, Ivona,  
see photograph vi on p. 48.
32. Celia Vigedi, op.cit.
33. Cornel Kalegi, op.cit.
34. Ibid.
35. Agnes Inyangu, op.cit.
36. Esau Segenyi Bagada, Interview, 8th October, 1985,  
see photograph vii on p. 52.
37. Samuel Mwanzi, op.cit.

38. Ibid.
39. Erastus Kevogo, Interview, 9th October, 1985,  
Ondeyo, West Maragoli.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Isaac Sambaya, Interview, 9th October, 1985,  
Ondeyo, West Maragoli
44. Roselyne Moge, Interview, 13th October, 1985,  
Bukilagila, South Maragoli.
45. Gladys Mwanzi, op.cit.
46. Hannah Endekwa, op.cit.
47. Joseph Egehidza, Interview, 6th October, 1985,  
  
see photograph viii on p.58
48. Erastus Kevogo, op.cit.
49. Ibid.
50. The Author's Comments.
51. Hannah Endekwa, op.cit.
52. Erastus Kevogo, op.cit. and Philip Kabagi,  
Cwivuvu, Interview, 10th October, 1985,  
Lusambwa, North Maragoli. They both  
narrated that they witnessed this  
ritual being performed on some  
people.
53. Truphosa Chalanze, Interview, 10th October, 1985,

Lusambwa, North Maragoli.

54. The Author's observation.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### INITIATION INTO ADULTHOOD

##### INTRODUCTION

Birth and early childhood rituals introduced the baby into the corporate community.<sup>1</sup> The word initiate has been defined by the Websters' Dictionary as-

"... to receive or induct into membership of a society or group or into a certain status ... by special rites or formalities".<sup>2</sup>

Initiation as a process involves rites, ceremonies, ordeals or instructions. Initiation rites among the Avalogooli involved ceremonies which were conducted by the entire community. The system of initiating boys into adulthood was different from that of the girls. The major purpose of this ritual was to make children adjust to the various conditions in their lives. Initiation was a transition period from childhood into adulthood. The initiation into adulthood rituals confirmed boys and girls into their society. They identified themselves with the moral and normative issues of their society. This process was therefore educative and controlled the Socio-Economic and moral conduct of its members. The people therefore respected their system of initiation. The initiation into adulthood rituals are also referred to

as 'puberty rites'.<sup>3</sup>

### GIRLS' INITIATION

Girls were gradually initiated into adulthood as compared to boys who experienced a real crisis in their lives whose climax was circumcision. Young girls were taught by their mothers, aunts and elder sisters. The pattern of initiating girls into adulthood was both formal and informal. They acquired skills in cookery, childcare and hospitality and were taught to respect their husbands, in-laws and elders. Girls also observed chastity before marriage and remained faithful to their husbands in their married life.<sup>4</sup> The teachings were intensified when the girls reached the age of puberty. This stage in life was marked with various physiological changes. They were also taught food and sitting habits. It was a taboo for a woman to let people cross over her stretched legs when she was pregnant. It was believed that any violation of this observance made the woman and the foetus weak.<sup>5</sup> This taboo protected the expectant mother from any harm, if for example a person stumbled and fell over her.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike some other ethnic communities in Kenya such as the Kipsigis, the Maasai and the Gikuyu who practised clitoridectomy, the Avalogooli only

circumcised their male children. The process of initiating girls into adulthood comprised teachings on good moral conduct which moulded them into responsible women in future.

### BOYS' INITIATION (CIRCUMCISION)

#### Preparations

The rites in which boys were initiated into adulthood were collective. Circumcision was not conducted on an individual basis. Oral tradition suggests that circumcision has a long history among the Avalogooli. The decision to conduct circumcision in any given year was made by clan elders. Various factors were investigated which included the proper interval between the age-sets. The boys were therefore circumcised in a 'good year' that was characterized by an abundant harvest and healthy domestic animals. The desire for more warriors also prompted the elders to decide on when to conduct circumcision. Good warriors were only chosen after circumcision. Lastly, boys pestered their fathers and clan elders for circumcision.<sup>7</sup> The average age of the boys who underwent circumcision was eighteen. There were not many special stages in circumcision. The three stages in circumcision were-

Preparatory observances which led to the actual act of circumcision, next, the initiates were secluded from their society, lastly, they were incorporated into their society through a communal feast.

Circumcision was conducted in the months of July, August or September after harvesting the eleusine crop.<sup>8</sup> Before the operation day, boys were exhorted by old men and encouraged to face the operator courageously.<sup>9</sup> In preparation for circumcision, their heads were shaved clean since the initiates stayed in seclusion for six months without washing or shaving their heads. It was said that long hair attracted lice and other skin diseases. On the other hand, the hair shaving ceremony prepared boys for the next stage in life for they transcended from childhood into adulthood.

The teachings were intensified three days before the circumcision day. Boys spent their nights nearby a stream and were led in singing by a male soloist. In these songs, they boasted of their courage in facing the circumcisor. Below are some of the songs that were sung in preparation for circumcision.

1. ADAM IS OUR ANCESTOR (ADAM NI DADA  
WANZIVULA)

Eeh, eeh, Adam is our ancestor,  
Eeh, Eeh, Father, that is how  
we were, Eeh, eeh, sons, that is  
how we were.

Yee X 6 Adam ni dada wanzivula,  
Yee X 6 Dada witu nandyo kwalange, 10  
Yee X 6 Avana vitu nandyo kwalange.

2. THE COWARD WHO FEARS CIRCUMCISION  
(OWATIA ENG'EMBE)

Eeh, eeh, whoever that fears to be  
circumcised should go to the  
South (live among the Luo who  
are uncircumcised) X 2,

Eeh, eeh, Whoever fears to be  
circumcised should be pinned to  
the ground and circumcised by  
force. X 2.

Yee, yee, yee Owatia eng'embe azia embo  
Yee, yee, yee Owatia eng'embe akubwa  
kigalama. 11

3. OH MR. KIBANGA (OYO KIBANGA)

Oh Kibanga, yesodi ooh X 2  
Kibanga yesodi oh, Kibanga ooh,  
Oh Kibanga, yesodi, ooh X 2  
Munubi Kibanga yesodi, ooh Kibanga  
yesodi ooh.  
Oh Kibanga yesodi oh X 2.

Lulogooli translation

Oyo Kibanga yesodi wolololo X 2  
Kibanga yesodi, woi Kibanga yesodi  
wolololo.  
Oyo Kibanga yesodi wolololo X 2  
Mudiri Kibanga yesodi, oyo Kibanga  
yesodi wolololo.  
Oyo Kibanga yesodi wolololo X 2. 12

These songs were led by male soloists who later acted as guardians for the initiated male children in their seclusion huts. There were also other old men in the river valley who instructed boys in their various ways of life, while the candidates were in the river



valley, each one of them chose a life long friend - mwirongo. This pair supported each other in all matters of life. An identification reciprocal ritual was performed by each pair. They smeared their bodies in turns with white riverine clay - ol'longo. This ritual was meant to seal their long lasting friendship.<sup>13</sup>

After the necessary preparatory observances, boys were now ready to be circumcised.

#### The day of operation

On the day of operation, boys washed the clay off their bodies in the river in whose valley they had spent several nights in preparation for circumcision. They washed with cold water which slowed down their blood circulation system and made their organs partially numb. This lessened bleeding after circumcision.<sup>14</sup>

The candidates lined up behind the oldest boys or any other mature uncircumcised men. Circumcision was conducted very early in the morning in the open river valley - lilago. Only men witnessed to this operation. The circumcisor, - mukevi approached the candidate with his operation knife in his right hand. He was accompanied by his sons or neighbours who carried his knives and collected dues for the services he had rendered. The circumcisor stroke the male

genital organ with his left hand, gently circumcised the candidate with his operation knife - eng'embe and then stepped on the mutilated foreskin. In this way it was prevented from twitching.<sup>15</sup> Candidates were encouraged to stand firmly and face the circumcisor with courage.

A cowardly boy was easily detected by the circumcisor who summoned old men to pin down such a candidate and have him circumcised by force - kukubwa kigalama. This exercise prevented the candidate from touching the operator's hand.<sup>16</sup> Such a candidate was not fined unless he had touched the circumcisor's hand, urinated or defaecated during the operation. If this happened, his parents were fined a goat for such miscc. duct.<sup>17</sup>

Circumcision was done with great dexterity. Circumcisors were therefore well trained. Bleeding lasted a few minutes, but if it continued, the operator struck the candidate's chest with his operation knife. This was believed to stop bleeding immediately. However, if bleeding continued, it was believed that the candidate had not cleansed himself well before the operation.<sup>18</sup>

There were also special cases of circumcision among the Avalogooli. Men who had disappeared into the

Kenya Highlands in search of jobs were operated with a special knife and paid heavier dues. If the same knife was used to operate on the boys, their wounds delayed healing.<sup>19</sup>

Special operation was conducted for boys who had some physical impairment, insanity or leprosy. These included boys with a deformed prepuce - kedole. A special knife was therefore used to operate on this candidates who were each fined a goat,.

The initiated candidates remained under shade until their wounds ceased bleeding. Later in the day, they were escorted by old men to the secretly prepared huts and secluded from their family members for six months.

Before discussing the life of the initiates in their seclusion huts, it is important to consider the qualities of a good circumcisor.

#### The Circumcisor

Circumcisors came from either Idakho or Isukha. Those from Idakho belonged to the Masava clan. The circumcisors circumcised candidates among the Idakho, Isukha, Nyole and Logooli people. The Avalogooli never had their own circumcisors.<sup>20</sup> Succession to this office was restricted to his sons, but on rare occasions, the nephews succeeded their uncles in their occupation.

In this way it might be possible to get circumcisors among the Avalogooli as a result of inter-marriage with the clans that have circumcisors from either Idakho or Isukha.

A circumcisor was dressed in an awe inspiring manner. He wore a head-gear made from the skin of a colobus monkey - enduviri and a leopard's skin around his waist. Rattles were fixed around his ankles which produced a sound that warned people of his approach in the neighbourhood.

The knives used by the circumcisor were forged by a blacksmith and had either a single or double blade. These knives were solely used for circumcision.<sup>21</sup> The knives were neither wiped nor washed until the circumcision session came to an end. The circumcisor and his assistants were provided with food and shelter by the community and rested in one single hut at the end of the days' work.<sup>22</sup>

The circumcisor carried a small sounding drum - indindi which was struck to warn the candidates of his approach and marked the completion of each candidate's operation. The circumcisor also used this drum to curse witches who later came to the operation site with a malicious intention of bewitching the candidates by picking the mutilated foreskins and the blood of the candidates.

The circumcisor was paid his dues in terms of fowls and goats. These animals were eaten by his family members and his assistants, while the surplus were exchanged for other goods. He never mixed these animals with his herd because they were obtained out of bloodshed.<sup>24</sup>

The circumcisor was therefore a morally upright man who rendered his services for the welfare of the whole community. He was respected by the society and feared by the uncircumcised boys.

#### Life in the seclusion hut

After circumcision, the elderly men led the initiates into their seclusion huts - zitumbi.<sup>25</sup> These huts were vacated by old men or women, preferably widow or widowers of good moral character. As years went by, the stay in the seclusion huts was modified for the initiates stayed with their grandparents. Nowadays, initiates stay with their parents because they are circumcised at a very tender age of four to eight.<sup>26</sup>

The initiates stayed in the vacated hut for it was believed that the wisdom of the occupier would be inherited by them. While in their seclusion huts, they were referred to as old lads - vakulu.<sup>27</sup> They slept on banana leaves which were laid down in a

pattern and formed a continuous mat - enyang'ongo. They went in and out of this hut through the backdoor because the front door was completely sealed with banana stems to keep away unwanted visitors. The number of initiates in each seclusion hut ranged from twenty to seventy depending on the size of the hut, their kinship relationship and the availability of foodstuffs.<sup>28</sup>

Old men of reputable character - vadili were appointed to look after the initiates in their respective huts. They guided and instructed them in all matters of adult life. The number of male guardians in one seclusion hut depended also on the number of initiates in it. On average each seclusion hut had two or more male guardians.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the male guardians, there were female guardians who were young girls that had not attained puberty. One female guardian was assigned to each candidate. However, the initiate was at liberty to choose his own female guardian who was either related to him or not. If she was not related to him, the relationship between him and her continued even after leaving the seclusion hut. These girls collected firewood, fetched the water that was used in these huts and brought food from the various homes of the initiated boys that was eaten communally by the initiates. The

initiates ate mainly fermented eleusine porridge - vosela bwe kilungu - which was stored in earthenware pots.<sup>30</sup> This porridge was poured on a drinking trough - mulinga or on a traditional stool - kituva.<sup>31</sup> The initiates knelt close to the trough and ate the porridge with their hands folded behind their backs. The initiate who was first to be circumcised - navihaya also ate the porridge first before the others had tasted it. In addition to eleusine flour porridge, the initiates ate mashed banana which facilitated the easy functioning of the urethra. Starchy foods were avoided for it was believed they increased the formation of pus and delayed the healing of their wounds.<sup>32</sup>

The candidates emulated cows in eating porridge because they were expected to herd them when they left their seclusion huts. On the other hand, they were regarded ritually unclean and were therefore not allowed to touch any utensils.<sup>33</sup>

Male guardians ensured that all initiates ate porridge to their satisfaction. Under no circumstances were they allowed to eat on their own in the absence of their guardians.<sup>34</sup>

In the seclusion huts, the married men who were circumcised with boys at the same time were jeered. They observed various eating habits while in

seclusion. Their wives were sent back to their parents. In this way women remained faithful to their husbands because Adulterous sexual union was believed to cause profuse bleeding to their husband's wounds and delayed in healing.<sup>35</sup>

The novices stayed indoors and basked in the sunshine in the backyard until they were healed. The male guardians taught the novices how to care for their wounds. The novices alerted their guardians when they wanted to pass urine. The guardians sounded a warning to all the initiates and ordered them to squat - kwetega. When they were all squated, he ordered them to arise in turns and go outside to help themselves. When they were back to their positions, they were commanded to sleep.<sup>36</sup>

The initiates respected their male and female guardians. Women and mature girls were prohibited from passing near the seclusion huts. In case they aroused the sexual desires of the novices, their wounds bled and hence delayed in healing.<sup>37</sup>

While in their seclusion huts, the novices were prohibited from whistling, crying, quarelling, digging the floor of their seclusion huts, arguing or abusing their guardians.<sup>38</sup> The male guardians who also acted as their teachers taught them various crafts and moral practices. Practical skills were acquired in hunting



and gathering, carving, basketry, weaving, house construction and warfare techniques.

The pattern of instruction in the seclusion huts depended on the age and knowledge of their male guardians. They were taught numerous taboos and prohibitions which guided them in their future lives. In addition, they learnt some songs which they were required to sing at the coming out feast. Instruction never ended in the seclusion huts. The boys were further instructed after leaving their seclusion huts by old men at the open fire places where they learnt leadership skills.

It was learnt that on some occasions, initiates died while in their seclusion huts. If this occurred, the initiates buried the deceased at night without any assistance from the bereaved family. The burial took place in the banana grove of the deceased father's farm and mourning was prohibited for it was regarded a bad omen which could result in more deaths of the initiates.<sup>39</sup>

The initiates were fed on fermented porridge made from eleusine flour for five months while in seclusion. In the sixth month, the Boys demanded to be fed on ugali. The teaching was intensified during this last month which introduced them to the

coming out feast.<sup>40</sup> The initiates stayed in their seclusion huts for six months before the 1910 age-set.<sup>41</sup> Today, this period has been shortened to one month only.

#### Age-set classification

The end of the seclusion period was marked by feasts all over Maragoli. The elders made all necessary arrangements for the coming out feast - kwaluka. The families which had novices in the seclusion huts brewed beer out of eleusine flour in readiness for this feast. Before the 1910 age-set - kegedi, boys weaved small rings which were retained for two days.<sup>42</sup> They were disposed in a hole that was dug at the river bank at the command of their male guardians.<sup>43</sup> A day before the coming out feast, the initiates bathed in a river to cleanse themselves from the ritual impurity after circumcision - yukulu. The washing ritual also cleansed them physically from the dirt that had accumulated on their bodies while they were in seclusion.<sup>44</sup>

On the final day, the initiates heaped all the items they had used in their seclusion huts at the houses' central poles. They then left their hut through the main door and ran out into various directions without looking back. They left for secretly arranged places at the command of their male guardians. Their

Fig. v

AGE- SET CLASSIFICATION

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>
1. Zimangule -----	1750
2. Kigwambiti -----	1760
3. Ngulungulu -----	1770
4. Angaya -----	1780
5. Saave -----	1790
6. Vuzilili -----	1800
7. Inguumba -----	1810
8. Aluse -----	1820
9. Kiguliesi -----	1830
10. Nyoongi -----	1840
11. Likuvate -----	1850
12. Kihungila -----	1860
13. Isaviri -----	1870
14. Ivagale -----	1880
15. Engengeele -----	1890
16. Olololo (Lubwoni) -----	1900
17. Kegeri (Lumili) -----	1910
18. Logochi (Imbalabala I) -----	1913 - 1917
19. Munaane (Imbalabala II) -----	1920
20. Imbalabala III -----	1925
21. Kinan'gooli (Imbalabala IV) -----	1926/27
22. Ifedha (Isigi) -----	1932
23. Lizuridza -----	1938

24.	Nzelolele -----	1946
25.	Selula -----	1952
26.	Ifomu (Ovovoholole) -----	1960
27.	Imuu (Hybrid) -----	1968
28.	Umugelo (Kilo) -----	1975
29.	Nyayo (Muzinduvatiru) -----	1983
30.	(Next One) -----	1993

An analysis of the Age-Set System among the  
Avalogooli, as presented by Gideon Mweresa.

Fig. vi

AGE-SET CLASSIFICATION

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>
1. Kwekoya	
2. Kiqwambiti	
3. Soohe	
4. Makulungenge	
5. Uvuzilili	
6. Uluumbadadia	
7. Munanatsi (Gamunanatsi)	
8. Ngulungulu	
9. Mangule (Gimangule)	
10. Saave (Isaave)	
11. Aluse	
12. Kiguliesi	
13. Angaya	
14. Nyoongi	
15. Inguumba	
16. Ilikuvati	
17. I gihungira	
18. Isaviri	
19. Ilaali (Ivagale)	
20. Engengere	
21. Ololooro (Ulumiri) -----	1880/1890
22. Ulubwoni -----	1890/1895
23. Ikijeedi Kenene -----	1910

24.	Ikijeedi Geke -----	1914
25.	Imbalabala -----	1920
26.	Umwitsukiri (Endege, Isige, Ifedha) -----	1932
27.	Umwitsulitsi -----	1938
28.	Nzelolele -----	1946
29.	Selula -----	1952
30.	Ovovoholole (Ifomu) -----	1960
31.	Imwu (Hybrid) -----	1968
32.	Ekegero (Kilo) -----	1975
33.	Nyayo (Induvatiru) -----	1983
34.	(Next One) -----	1993

An analysis of the Age-Set System among the  
Avalogooli as presented by Elisha Ndanyi, op.cit,  
p. 26ff.-

seclusion huts were then set ablaze by their male guardians. The initiates were met by their sisters at the various pre-arranged places that they ran to. Their heads were shaved clean, before they were anointed with the cow's ghee and clothed in new skin patches - mamooli.

The healed initiates were now referred to as young men and were now officially introduced into the adult life. When all the young men had worn their new skin patches, they teamed up into groups and danced rhythmically with well carved sticks - midigilu.<sup>45</sup> These sticks were carved while they were in seclusion. They joined others in the open ground which had been cleared for this dancing ceremony. The boys wore special dancing costumes - masen'gesu.<sup>46</sup> They sung and danced tirelessly, pounding their sticks on the ground in a circular pattern 'around a bull. The young men danced until the bull fell down and fainted. This fattened bull was selected by the initiates while they were in their seclusion huts. The owner never objected to their decision.

The sacrificial animal was skinned and its meat was roasted. Before the young men ate of this meal, it was blessed by the sacrificial priest - musaalisi who scattered some small pieces of meat in all

PHOTOGRAPH ix



The sticks (Emidigilu) in the background of this photograph were used during the coming out ceremony for the boys who had been circumcised.



PHOTOGRAPH X



Picture of a man wearing a dancing costume (Liseng'esu) that was worn during the coming out ceremony of the initiates after circumcision.

directions of the compass. Women and children were not allowed to eat this meat. This ceremony clearly marked the end of the ritual uncleanness as a result of circumcision - vukulu and welcomed the young men into their families and the society at large. The young men feasted and were addressed by elders who instructed them on various rules of conduct in their society.<sup>47</sup>

The young men were now referred to as bridegrooms-viha or the new ones - vahya. After the sacrificial meal, the young men were re-assembled in the open ground and addressed by various clan elders who decided upon the appropriate age-set name to be given to the new age-set. Young men circumcised in the same year belonged to one age-set - likuula. An individual belonged to his age-set throughout his life. The meaning of each age-set name depended on the prevailing events and the conduct of the initiates in their seclusion huts.<sup>48</sup> The seniority of the old men depended on their age-sets. Decisions on ethnic matters were made by old men who belonged to the oldest existing age-set.

The sacrificial priest offered communal prayers and blessings for the young men. The focus was on good health and responsibility in their society. At the end of the blessing ceremony, they dispersed to their various homes where they were welcomed by their family

members. The whole family feasted on this day.<sup>49</sup>

A married man who underwent circumcision with the boys was not allowed to re-join his family freely and have sexual intercourse with his wife.

The young men were therefore slowly introduced to ownership of property at the end of the coming out feast. They began by visiting their relatives in turns and were given gifts in the form of goats, sheep, cows and fowls.

#### Circumcision today

The practice of circumcision among the Avalogooli has changed over the recent years. This is due to migration to the urban centres and settlement schemes, the influence of Christianity, Circumcision intervals, intermarriage, Education, Science, and our present economic system. The physical meaning of circumcision has remained, but the symbols and the functional and religious aspects have been altered. The practice of circumcision will continue to be altered so long as an attempt is not made to revive some of our traditional African values.

In the earlier days, boys were ready to be circumcised when they had attained the age of eighteen and above. A general survey from 1960 to 1983 revealed

that small boys aged four to eight were circumcised.<sup>50</sup> These children do not understand the purpose and meaning of circumcision due to their tender age and the lack of appropriate teaching on their traditional beliefs and practices. Migration to urban centres and settlement schemes has disrupted the kinship system among the Avalogooli. Efforts are however being made to revive the traditional cultural values of the Avalogooli in different ways. In some areas such as Lugari, Lumakanda, Mautuna settlement schemes and South Nyanza, the immigrants from Maragoli summon a circumcisor to operate on their children in their respective areas. The launching of the Vihiga Cultural festival on the 26th December, 1980 which is since then celebrated annually on the same date has helped to teach the new generation some of the traditional beliefs and practices of the Avalogooli.

The scientific inventions of various drugs has facilitated faster healing of the boys' wounds after circumcision.

The goals and objectives of the curricula in various academic institutions in Kenya is different from that of the traditional African society which was mainly informal. The climax of these teachings were revealed to the boys in their respective seclusion

huts after circumcision.

The symbols used in the rites of passage and their significance in the contemporary society is perceived differently. The traditional African society respected all aspects of the rites of passage. It was the responsibility of the elders to explain to the youth the meaning and purpose of these rites in their lives.

There is a great conflict between Christianity and modernization on one hand and traditional African values on the other hand. Under the newly established 8 - 4 - 4 system of education, it is hoped that the African traditional values will be cited with great care.

#### Some observations on the rites of Passage

Birth and early childhood rituals introduce the baby into the family to which he or she belongs. In initiation into adulthood rituals boys and girls are fully incorporated into their community.

Girls were initiated into adulthood differently apart from the boys. However, Education was a key element that was stressed when an individual transcended from childhood into adulthood.

Circumcision was highly placed in the traditional Logooli society. The same is upheld in the contemporary society. Initiation into adulthood rituals paved the way for marriage. The blood that was shed during

circumcision was of great symbolic significance. It was believed that a link was established between the living and the dead.<sup>51</sup> The cutting of the foreskin of the male genital organ symbolized the casting away of childhood and welcoming adulthood. This practice corresponded to the cutting of the umbilical cord at childbirth.<sup>52</sup>

Initiation into adulthood was but, one of the rites of passage among the Avalogooli. The three other rites of passage were conducted at childbirth, marriage and death.

Birth rites have been already discussed in the previous chapter, however, marriage and death rites will be discussed briefly.

Marriage was the central point of existence in most African societies. The main reason for marriage was procreation. Childless marriages were lowly regarded in the community. The choice of partners was made after initiation into adulthood.

The last stage in the development of an individual which also served as a gateway from the physical world into the spiritual world was death. Death was regarded a decisive break in the physical life of an individual. Death rites were therefore performed to bid farewell to the dead who was physically missed by the family

members. The hair shaving ceremony - luvego was held to bid farewell to the dead and distribute the deceased's wealth for inheritance.

The life of an individual comprised a series of passages from one stage of life to the next. This was characterized by rituals and ceremonies that were observed by the entire community. Therefore, rites of passage were important occasions where some elements of Religion were expressed. In the next chapter, the coming of Christianity into Maragoli will be discussed before studying Baptism and Confirmation.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CATHOLICISM IN MARAGOLI

INROADS OF CATHOLICISM IN MARAGOLI

Missionary work in Kenya began when the Portuguese first visited the East African Coast on their discovery missions between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> However, it was not until the year 1844 when Krapf arrived at the Kenyan coast and attempted to reach the Galla of Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia that the Christian Mission took great interest in evangelization.<sup>2</sup>

As regards serious evangelization in Kenya, R.W. Mutua says:-

"It was not until the last twenty years of the 19th century that (missionary work) gained momentum"<sup>3</sup>

In this study, emphasis is laid on the Roman Catholic Church Mission in Western Kenya and the sacraments.

St. Joseph's Society for Foreign Missions founded by Herbert Cardinal Vaughan in 1866, popularly referred to as the Mill Hill Mission was responsible for the Roman Catholic Church evangelization in Western Kenya.<sup>4</sup>

The White Fathers who were mainly of French origin were initially not successful in Uganda. In order to contain the situation, they sought help from the Mill Hill Mission. This supported the view that the Roman Catholic Religion was not synonymous to French Nationalism. The Vicariate of the Upper Nile was created in 1894 and was assigned to Bishop Hanlon of the Mill Hill Mission.<sup>5</sup>

In May 1895, four priests - Thomas Matthews, James Prendergast, Gregory Kestens and Luke Plunkett accompanied Bishop Hanlon and travelled to Zanzibar. They then set off on foot and with the aid of the White Fathers, they opened their first Mission station on Nsambya Hill in Uganda.<sup>6</sup>

The year 1901 is of great significance in Western Kenya. It was in this year that the railway terminus reached Kisumu. The opening up<sup>!</sup> of the Kenya-Uganda Railway paved the way for more Christian Missions into the interior of Kenya.<sup>7</sup>

In 1902, the Mill Hill Mission Fathers began their endeavours to evangelize in Western Kenya. They established a station in Kisumu in 1903 which catered for the Goans and Baganda Christian immigrants. In 1904, Van Der Bergh was posted to this new station.<sup>8</sup>

After opening up a station at Kisumu, the Mill Hill Fathers advanced further inland and opened another station at Mumias in 1904. This station was assigned to Father Van Der Keller, but it was later abandoned due to Muslim antagonism and unfavourable weather conditions. Mukumu Mission which was established in 1906 by Father Brandsma was followed by other Roman Catholic Missions that were opened up in this area, Eregi - 1913, Buyangu - 1954, Chamakanga - 1959, Hambale - established by Father Rouston in 1961 although he had come to this mission centre on 6th December, 1960.<sup>9</sup>

In Maragoli, Catholicism was centred around Eregi, Chamakanga, Bukuga, Munoywa and Hambale. No force was used in converting children and adults to Catholicism. Since the Roman Catholic Church was tolerant to beer drinking, the Avalogooli found it a more fitting religion unlike the Protestant Missionaries who abhorred the beer drinking habit.<sup>10</sup> In the Roman Catholic sponsored primary and Secondary schools, Religious Instruction was taught in the school curriculum. Children who enrolled in these schools learnt the catechism, morning and evening prayers, the rosary and the sacraments. The parents who took their children to the mission sponsored schools were rewarded

by the missionaries. Moreover education was offered freely to children in these schools.<sup>11</sup> The scramble for converts was solved in the early twentieth century in Western Kenya when the ten mile radius was set aside for each mission so as to avoid overlapping.<sup>12</sup>

The converts to catholicism were instructed in the catechism for one year before they were baptized. It is important to note that Baptism is just one of the seven sacraments that are recognized in the Roman Catholic church; therefore it is vital, to briefly explore them before studying Baptism and Confirmation at depth.

#### THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

A Sacrament has been defined as:-

" ... an outward sign of inward grace ordained by Jesus Christ by which grace is given to our (Christian) souls".<sup>13</sup>

The word sacrament has many meanings in the scripture, but the two most important aspects worth noting are that of sacred secret and its manifestation.<sup>14</sup> There are three categories of sacraments. Firstly, the Religious rites of both the Old and the New Testament and Paganism. Secondly, Symbols or figures. Lastly, the revealed teachings of Christian Religion. In the Bible , Old Testament rituals point to the New Testament. However, sacraments

point to the sacrament mystery of Christ and his church.<sup>15</sup>

Sacraments are not merely matters between an individual and God. They are related to the Church which is a visible society. Sacraments operate through human faith and give grace to those who receive them worthily from the merits of Christ's precious blood which is applied to the souls of faithful christians. Sacraments are for the Roman Catholic Christians, their chief means of salvation.<sup>16</sup> Each of the seven sacraments confers a share in God's own life by the sanctifying grace which makes Christians holy, Godlike.<sup>17</sup>

The seven sacraments do not come from mere arbitrary decisions of Christ and much less from a church which would dominate christ. The diversity of the sacraments comes from the fact that the actions of Christ lay hold of or take up fundamental human situations to make them christian situations.<sup>18</sup> In this case, to be born, to pass to adulthood, to renew ones life with a view of making a new start, to marry, to fall ill, are some of the many situations that are taken up by the sacraments and established as divine human situations.<sup>19</sup> The view as regards the seven sacraments clearly reveals that the christian way of

life is not different from the African traditional way of life, although they are perceived differently.<sup>20</sup>

In the sacraments, God penetrates into the lives of Christians. J.D. Crichton says:-

"... there are no sacraments that do not draw from the world and from man, the materiality of their sign." <sup>20</sup>

Sacraments are therefore human centred and affect all aspects of human existence. They are thus congruous with human conditions. Sacraments are given and are part of Christ's revelation although they are mysteries because they represent the mysterious presence of God, active in human situations. These mysteries also declare the faith of the church members to which they belong. On the other hand, the ultimate nature and effect of the sacraments lies beyond human conception. They are God's gifts for salvation. The significance of the sacraments can be understood by analysing man's salvation history.

The Roman Catholic Church has identified and defined only seven sacraments. The enumeration of these sacraments was unknown for nearly twelve centuries of the early Church history.<sup>22</sup> It was Peter Lombard who fixed the number and names of the seven sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>23</sup> The school men at once agreed to the enumeration and definitions of these sacraments in 1274 A.D. at the second council of Lyons that was held at Florence and also



under anathema at Trent.<sup>24</sup> The seven sacraments as enumerated by Peter Lombard are:- Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme unction, Ordination and Matrimony. These sacraments were instituted by Christ directly or through the Apostles.<sup>25</sup> On the sacraments, the Council of Trent states that:-

"though the church may change the rites and ceremonies, it can not alter the substance of the sacraments".<sup>26</sup>

In the Middle ages, sacraments were regarded sacred actions performed by a priest who alone understood their mysterious secrecy. They were celebrated without any ministry of the word. During reformation, the sacraments were devalued where Concentration was on the word.<sup>27</sup> Sacraments express the faith of the whole church in which Christians approach Christ who is regarded present in them.

Baptism is the first of the seven sacraments which is administered when one is converted to christianity. This sacrament cleanses an individual from the original sin and other man kind sins.<sup>28</sup> Baptism is discussed in detail in chapter six of this study.

Confirmation is the second sacrament that is conferred by a Bishop. It is in this sacrament that the confirmand receives by grace, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Confirmation, the faith of the Christians

is strengthened, deepened and bound more perfectly to Christ and the Church.<sup>29</sup> This sacrament enables Christians witness to other people with courage. A detailed discussion of this sacrament is to be found in chapter seven of this study.

The Holy Eucharist is both a sacrifice and a sacrament in which Jesus Christ's body, blood, soul and divinity is received by the faithful Christians under the appearance of bread and wine. This sacrament was instituted by Jesus Christ in order to renew his sacrifice for the good of the Christians and the whole world at the last supper before he died.<sup>30</sup> The Eucharist is also referred to as the blessed sacrament or Holy Communion.

The sacrament of penance is defined as:-

"the sacrament of God's living forgiveness by which Christians are set free from sin, from its eternal punishment".<sup>31</sup>

This sacrament helps Christians grow in God's grace and strengthens them to avoid sin and lead holy lives. Penance was instituted by Jesus Christ as he gave his apostles the power to forgive sins when he said:-

"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven. If you retain the sins of any, they are retained."<sup>32</sup>

Roman Catholic Christians are required to at least confess their sins to a priest once annually.<sup>33</sup>

The anointing of the sick or extreme unction is the sacrament in which the church minister anoints the sick with holy oil accompanied by prayers.<sup>34</sup> This sacrament is given when a Roman Catholic Christian is on the verge of death due to sickness. Its purpose is to comfort and strengthen the soul, remit sin and restore health when desired by God.<sup>35</sup> The authority in the scriptures states:-

"Is any among you sick?. Let him call for the elders of the church (priests) and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the lord and the prayer of faith will save the sick man and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed sins, he will be forgiven".<sup>36</sup>

Extreme unction may be received by a patient either in hospital or at home.

The sacrament of Holy Orders is defined as:-

"The sacrament by which Bishops, Priests, and other church ministers are ordained and receive power and grace to perform their sacred duties".<sup>37</sup>

This sacrament was instituted by Christ himself at the last supper when he gave the Apostles and their successors the power to offer Mass when he said:-  
"Do this in remembrance of me"<sup>38</sup>

The sacrament of Matrimony is defined as:-

"... a sacrament which sanctifies the contract of Christian Marriage

and gives special grace to those who receive it worthily."<sup>39</sup>

Matrimony enables a couple live in tolerance and remain faithful to each other in order to bring up their children in fear of God.

After discussing briefly the sacraments, it is important to note that rites of passage among the Avalogooli are important occasions where some elements of Religion are manifested. People are born, initiated into adulthood, marry and die. The rites of passage are therefore progressive and give pattern to the life of an individual.

Baptism could be related to Birth and early Childhood rituals, Confirmation to Initiation into Adulthood, Matrimony to marriage feasts and ceremonies, the anointing of the sick to funeral and death rites, Holy orders to the training of various traditional specialists, penance to lustration rites and the Eucharist to the general practice of the sacrificial rites.<sup>40</sup>

After making this appraisal, Baptism and Confirmation will be discussed in the following two chapters with the view of later relating them to Birth and Initiation into Adulthood rituals.

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CHAPTER FIVE

BAPTISM

HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The word Baptism is derived from the Greek word- 'Baptismo' which means - to plunge or dip. Two nouns were therefore derived from this word. 'Baptisis' - which signified ceremonial washing and 'Baptisma' which is Christian in origin was reserved for Baptism.<sup>1</sup> Baptism has come to mean - to purify or cleanse. In Baptism, Christians are made members of Christ and of his body - the church. When the early Christians baptized their converts, they never introduced an entirely new practice, but rather simply transferred a rite which was well known to the ancient world of the first century to a specifically Christian use.<sup>2</sup>

The origins of Baptism are obscure and the New Testament gives us very little help in this matter. The early record of Baptism is indicated in the river Jordan (Mark 1:4). To consider the origins of Baptism would seem that we must turn to the pre-christian illustrations of Zoroastrianism and the Middle East mystery Religions.<sup>3</sup>

Pre-Christian Cleansing Rituals.

It seems possible that Baptism originated in part from the rites of mystery religions, but this is speculative. These religions exerted a considerable influence upon the life and thought of the time. The objective was to provide the initiate with salvation, both physical and eschatological. The gods, 'Isis' 'Serpias' and 'Mithra' were called saviours.<sup>4</sup> People were admitted into the community through a solemn ritual. The actual initiation was preceded by various purification rituals which included fastings and lustrations that led to baptism. It was after these preliminaries that the vision of the deity came. Such Baptisms were considered washings whose purpose was to remove the ritual impurities of the material world and the defilement of the old life. The cleansing of the initiate which was ritual rather than moral prepared the initiate to communicate with god. However, J.K. Howard points out:-

"Care must be taken in deriving Jewish and Christian Baptism from these Pagan rites. We are concerned here with the rite and not the underlying concepts and doctrines."<sup>5</sup>

Jewish Washings and Proselyte Baptism

In dealing with the origin of Christian Baptism, it is vital to consider the preceding Jewish Washings and Proselyte Baptism. It can be tentatively stated that Jewish Proselyte Baptism arose in part from the practices of the mystery religions. This was then interpreted in the light of the Levitical ceremonial washings.<sup>6</sup>

The Jews used water for purificatory purposes in order to restore Levitical purity without which a share in worship was forbidden.<sup>7</sup> These lustration ceremonies were not confined to one particular moment in life. They were repeated as often as possible to maintain a state of purity.<sup>8</sup>

John's Baptism and Christian Baptism have their roots in Jewish Proselyte Baptism. A Proselyte was adopted a Jew by Baptism. The Rabbis argued that -

"As the Jews passed from slavery in Egypt through the Red Sea into Canaan, so the Gentile passed from heathenism' through Baptism into the promised land".<sup>9</sup>

It was a Baptism by total immersion. In preparation, candidate's hair and nails were cut short. The candidate was then stripped naked before three witnesses who acted as god-parents. The candidate confessed his

or her sins and immersed himself or herself in water. Two disciples stood by and repeated some of the precepts of the law. Emphasis was laid on the Torah which the Proselyte abided with. In this way, the Proselyte was born a new through this Baptismal ritual. An individual was expected to live in a state of holiness.<sup>10</sup>

Jewish washings and Proselyte Baptism were ethical washings which provided ritual purity and removed cultic uncleanness. Proselyte Baptism was administered not to the Jews, but to non-Jews - Gentiles who desired to be adopted as Jews. In this way, non-Jews entered the congregation of the New Israel.<sup>11</sup>

At first, the Jewish Proselytes did not receive any specific pre-Baptismal instruction. It took a long time to organize instructions for Baptism to the gentiles.<sup>12</sup> Proselyte Baptism was therefore a purificatory washing without any moral demands.

#### Essene Baptism

A more modified type of Baptism was that of the Essenes. It was extended to both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Essenes regarded themselves as preparers for the coming of the messiah (Isaiah 40:3). They retired to the wilderness and believed that they were fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy. Their Baptism was an act of preparation, an initiation into the faithful

remnant - the Godly few awaiting the promised deliverance.<sup>13</sup> The gumran community which practised this type of Baptism was thus a radical messianic repentance movement which laid great emphasis on ablutions, lustrations or Baptisms.<sup>14</sup>

### John's Baptism

Judaism knew of Proselyte Baptism from 'heathenism', while John the Baptist held all the Jews to be like the Proselytes who demanded a Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. This was necessary for the impending appearance of the Messiah.<sup>15</sup> Baptism as an external act was thus not created by Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

The Gospels give a prominent account of John's activity as unfolding Jesus' ministry. The Baptism and teachings of John were regarded in the 'primitive' church as the immediate prelude of the divine message or action of salvation. John the Baptism in his message explained the difference between his Baptism and Jesus' Baptism. John said:-

"I Baptize you with water unto repentance ... he (Jesus) shall baptize you with the holy spirit and fire".<sup>17</sup>

The description of John's dress and food, sets him in the succession of the Old Testament prophets.<sup>18</sup>

John's message was of a "mightier one" who was to follow him, so great that he was not worthy to do him even a slight occupation.<sup>19</sup> John's Baptism was by immersion with special emphasis on the ethical requirements of Baptism. He was not introducing a new rite or a special act. Thorough ethical and moral cleansing was stressed. John's Baptism was therefore rooted in the Old Testament. His preaching pointed to the immediate fulfilment of the prophetic hopes in bringing about a new exodus for the people of God.

John's Baptism was not merely ethical demanding the repentance of sins. It was also eschatological. It prepared the way for Christ.<sup>20</sup> John administered this sacrament by himself. O. Cullman points out:-

"Proselyte Baptism and Johannine Baptism should be represented as an act of washing, because its effect was that of forgiveness of sins. Just as ordinary water takes away the physical uncleanness of the body, so the water of baptism will take away sins".<sup>21</sup>

Proselyte Baptism was intended for gentiles only, while John's Baptism was for both gentiles and Jews. Proselyte Baptism was seen as a ceremonial purification, while John's Baptism was associated with the confession of sins. As the Baptism of the Proselyte was part of the ceremony of dedication by which a gentile was

incorporated into Israel, so John's Baptism was an act of rededication by which Israelites, who through sin had lost their appointed right were incorporated afresh into the true Israel.<sup>22</sup>

Baptism was realistically understood. Those who submitted to it, were aware that their sins were forgiven and their membership into the future messianic community was secure.<sup>23</sup>

#### Jesus' Baptism

In the four Gospels, there is a close connection between John the Baptist and Jesus. Jesus laid emphasis on the teachings of John and accepted to be baptized by John the Baptist. This event is described in the gospels.<sup>24</sup> Jesus submitted to this Baptism, whose purpose was repentance unto the remission of sins. He could not therefore exclude himself from the movement of John. He therefore associated himself with the sinners whom he had come to save. His baptism coincided with an experience of the Holy Spirit which descended upon him in the form of a dove, making a realization of his divine sonship.

Jesus' anointing with the Holy Spirit was the public pronouncement and confirmation that he was a King-Messiah. The mission of Jesus was to be

accomplished through suffering.<sup>25</sup> All the four Gospels state that Jesus was immediately tested after his Baptism in River Jordan. The Holy Spirit that descended upon him at Baptism helped him face the temptations courageously. Baptism therefore marked the end of the long period of preparation and deepening experience which marked the beginning of the public ministry.

The purpose of Jesus' ministry was to fulfill all righteousness. In this way he obeyed God, witnessed to all mankind and suffered for their salvation. Jesus speaks of his Baptism in terms of his passion when he says:- "the Baptism that I am (Jesus) baptized with you (Jesus' followers).<sup>26</sup>

Jesus never baptized. He rather allowed his disciples to baptize on his behalf.<sup>27</sup> Later on in his life he referred to his death as a Baptism.<sup>28</sup> It was the death of Jesus and the subsequent belief in his resurrection that inaugurated his wider ministry in the world. To be baptized like Jesus means to die for his sake as in martyrdom. After resurrection, the disciples of Jesus administered individual Baptisms with water. Earlier on, Jesus had commanded the disciples-

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, in the name



of the Father and of the  
Son and of the Holy Spirit ... "29

Christian Baptism unlike John's Baptism emphasized the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the earlier Christians, the two were simultaneous. When Jesus was Baptized with water, he immediately witnessed the descent of the Holy Spirit. Later, those who were baptized heard the good news, repented their sins for re-orientation towards God and then committed themselves to Jesus. These candidates were baptized with water to show to the public the reality of their new membership into the new messianic community which was established in and through Jesus Christ. The converts were then sealed with the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup> The mode of Baptism was total immersion. It symbolized death and burial with Christ in the water. When one emerged from this water one rose to new life in the resurrection of Christ.

Throughout the Apostolic period, the two essential requirements for Baptism were; repentance and faith. Initiation into the church throughout the New Testament was thought of solely in terms of the conscious response to the Gospel. Actual Baptism was administered after the repentance of sins. All available evidence in the New Testament point out that without faith, Baptism was invalid. Baptism therefore marked the beginning

of a new life in the Christian community. The early church never permitted infant Baptism. Repentance and faith preceded Baptism. In the New Testament, the Baptism that was referred to was adult Baptism.

The earliest baptism confession was probably the statement- "Jesus is Lord".<sup>31</sup> Later, the instruction incorporated the creeds and some elementary lessons in Christian ethics and doctrines.<sup>32</sup> This was the main concern of the "Didache". It was then followed by instructions in the sacraments and finally teachings on eschatology.<sup>33</sup> This was therefore an important contribution to both Judaism and early Christianity. The "Didache" provided a course on moral and ethical exhortation, based on the way of death.<sup>34</sup> The period of instruction depended on the local conditions in various parishes. The Baptismal formular in Matthew 28:19 was commanded in the trinity. In actual practice, in the early church, there is no concrete evidence in the Acts of Apostles or in the Epistles which emphasizes the Trinitarian baptismal formular.

In the Apostolic times, Baptism was by immersion. In Acts 8:39, it is stated:- "When they came up out of water". This was the incident that referred to the Baptism of the eunuch by Philip. The earliest mode of Baptism attested by Christian art seems to have been affusion, where the candidate stood in water. On the

other hand, there is no evidence that sprinkling was an apostolic practice. This was but a later introduction.<sup>35</sup>

An individual was baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living (flowing) water. If there was no living water, One could be baptized in cold water or warm water if there was no alternative. If total immersion was not possible, Baptism was conducted by pouring water upon the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>36</sup>

Immersion was the regular mode of Baptism. The meaning of Baptism is more important than the form. However, in immersion, Baptism receives its greatest significance and symbolism. Immersion continued to be the general mode of Baptism in Western Christendom until the medieval times. As late as the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas found immersion a more general and commendable practice.<sup>37</sup> It was at the council of Ravenna in 1311 A.D that a choice was made between immersion and affusion. Later, sprinkling became a widespread pattern of Baptism.<sup>38</sup> The Orthodox, Coptic and some Pentecostal denominations do not regard immersion as an accepted mode of Baptism.

Baptism by Christ was not only preparatory and transitory, but was final for it led directly into the

Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit is the most important aspect of Jesus' Baptism. The Holy Spirit was not imparted in Jewish Proselyte Baptism or John's Baptism. It was bound up with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, Baptism is closely connected with the death and resurrection of Jesus. It represents the great spiritual event in which a man or woman is united in faith to the death and resurrection of Christ. One died to himself and rose again to newness of life and became a new being.<sup>39</sup> Baptism by immersion provides a powerful symbol of that process.

Symbolism on one hand is an important aspect of any sacrament. When immersion is substituted with affusion and sprinkling, the symbolism of Baptism seems to disappear. On the other hand, even in the New Testament, especially in Acts 2:41, the Baptism of the three thousands in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecoste was not possible by immersion.<sup>40</sup>

The death and resurrection motif is by no means the only one pursued to determine the meaning of Baptism. The cleansing motif includes the remission of past sins and liberation from the corruption of sin. Sprinkling or pouring of water would therefore be sufficient in symbolism.

Sprinkling was inherited from the Old Testament for it is stated:-

"I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness and from all your idols, I will cleanse you".<sup>41</sup>

The motif of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is the most central of all. This aspect is even symbolized better by sprinkling rather than by immersion.

Theologically, the dying and rising with Christ, the cleansing and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit are not three separate realities at all. They are aspects of the same reality.<sup>42</sup> Christian Baptism from the start was seen as an incorporation into the new Israel - the body of Christ which is the church. This is all by grace a personal relationship between God and man, through Christ's mediation in his church.

People become Christians by a whole process which involves their lives as well as that of the Church community. Christian initiation is the total adherence of an individual adult to Christ by faith. An individual is incorporated into Christ by Baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion in the presence of the christian community. These three sacraments of christian initiation brought the Christians to the full realization of christ.

Baptism admits one to the body of Christ and of the people of God. In this sacrament, sins are forgiven and Christians become new creations and are adopted as children of God.<sup>43</sup> The efficacy of this sacrament is derived from the water that is used and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. The spirit is given at Baptism, but people are sealed with it in confirmation.<sup>44</sup>

Baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion comit the Christians to minister in the church and to the whole world. Baptism as a sacrament of Christian unity cherishes the christian faith, hence the Church's duty is to inspire the catechumens so as to maintain a strong christian community.

The Roman Catholic Christians acknowledge Seven Sacraments. Baptism is regarded the first sacrament to be administered to them. It is defined as:-

"... the sacrament of spiritual rebirth into the life of God ... we (Christians) receive the sanctifying grace which makes (christians) holy, friends and children of God."<sup>45</sup>

There are four types of Baptism that are recognized by the Roman Catholic Church. These are: 'Adult Baptism, Infant Baptism, Baptism of Blood and Baptism of Desire.'<sup>46</sup>

## Blood Baptism and Baptism of Desire

Baptism of Blood takes place when an unbaptized person suffers martyrdom for the sake of Christ. Those who through not their own fault never received infant or Adult Baptism can be saved by Baptism of desire or Blood Baptism.<sup>47</sup>

Blood baptism is derived from Jesus' message:-  
"... whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it".<sup>48</sup>

An unbaptized person may receive Baptism of Desire, if he or she shows the love for God, repents and desires Baptism when it is not possible to receive it. One therefore does what is required for salvation.

## Infant Baptism

Baptism marks the entry of an individual into the church community and of Christ on earth. During the early years of Christianity, converts were mainly adults hence, Adult Baptism was dominant in the New Testament. Later on when one became a Christian, his whole household was baptized. To be a christian meant entry into the community of the church of christ, the new Israel.<sup>49</sup>

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Baptism. It was obvious to a Jew that his children were baptized when he was converted to Christianity. In the same manner, the young sons of the gentiles were circumcised and went through Proselyte Baptism as their parents. It was unlikely that Adult Baptism was administered to persons born of Christian parents. They were either baptized in infancy or it was considered unnecessary to Baptize them. In Adult Baptism, total immersion was a far more powerful psychological effect both to the candidate and the witnesses.<sup>50</sup>

Christian Baptism was therefore administered without delay to children born of christian parents or those whose parents were converted from "paganism". Postponement of Baptism to infants born of Christian parents was seen inconsistent with the New Testament though. Christian Baptism was regarded a fulfilment not only of Jewish Proselyte Baptism, but also of circumcision. Baptism of infants born of Christian parents was therefore necessary. This type of Baptism welcomed the baby into the church of Christ.

Since Christians are saved by faith, Sacraments must therefore be also received in faith in all circumstances. As regards infant Baptism, faith on the part of the parents is an indispensable necessity. Parents and the whole family communicate this faith to the

child.

Some Protestant denominations do not regard infant Baptism as being important as Adult Baptism. They emphasize that an Adult must understand the basic tenets of Christianity in order to enable him or her to take firm decisions before being baptized. Faith as a prerequisite for Baptism is manifested when an individual is baptized as an adult. The argument for total immersion fits with adult Baptism and derives full symbolism of the death and resurrection of the new convert with Christ.

The celebration of Infant Baptism is administered in two ways. It may be performed for either a group of infants or individual infants. All in all, the baptismal ritual is incorporated in mass. The Baptism of a group of infants may be administered by a Priest, Deacon, or a duly appointed Catechist. Before the ceremony is held, the child's parents register their baby at the parish office and an appropriate date is set for Baptism. A notice is then submitted to the Parish council in order to arrange for the baptismal ceremony.

A delay in infant Baptism is due to either the negligence of the baby's parents in observing the church laws, especially the sacrament of Matrimony.

Infant baptism is administered on every first Sunday of each month at Hambale Catholic Mission.<sup>51</sup>

On the appointed date for Baptism, parents' infants, friends, god-parents and the church community assemble outside the Parish office and march towards the church building. The baby's mother holds the baby throughout the whole celebration. A Priest, Deacon or an appointed Catechist presides over the baptismal ceremony. Parents utter the name they would like to give to their baby. They are then advised by the minister to bring up their child in an exemplary Christian manner. A sign of the cross is marked on the infant's forehead. The baby's father and god-parent likewise inscribe a mark of the cross at the back of the child's head.

The liturgy of the word follows. Below is a choice of the Old Testament readings:- Ezekiel 36- 24 - 28, Exodus 17: 3-7 or Ezekiel 47: 1-9, 12. The New Testament readings are:- Romans: 6: 3-5, Romans 8: 28 - 32, I Corinthians 12: 12-13, Galatians 3: 26-28, Ephesians 4: 1 - 6 or I Peter 2: 4-5, 9-10 or any other relevant readings.

The gospel readings are selected from the following passages:- Matthew 22: 35-40, Matthew 23: 18-20, Mark 1: 9-11, Mark 10: 13-16, John 3: 1-6 or any other relevant passage.<sup>52</sup>

The liturgy of the word is followed by the homily which emphasizes the importance of Baptism as a sin cleansing sacrament which also admits individuals into the christian community. The intercessions then follow where the celebrant wishes the children, their parents and god-parents abundant grace.

If the ceremony is led by a catechist, the prayer of exorcism is not said and infants are not anointed with the oil of the catechumens. If the prayer of exorcism is said by the minister, emphasis is laid on Jesus Christ, the forgiver of all mankind's sins. The minister prays for the remission of the baby's sins and marks the chest of the infant with the oil of the catechumens. This mark is a symbol of Christ's forgiveness and everlasting seal. If many infants are baptized, the priest extends his hands over them and says - "may the power of Christ the saviour who reigns everlasting, protect you from all sin. Amen".<sup>53</sup>

The next stage in infant Baptism takes place at the Baptismal font where the baptismal water is consecrated by the minister. The child's parents and god-parents are then reminded of their duties in caring for the baptized infants. Later, they are called upon to renounce evil and profess their faith. Infants are baptized by pouring water over their foreheads three times. As

the celebrant pours this water he says - "(Name of the child) ... I Baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."<sup>54</sup> The infants are then clothed in a white garment and offered a burning candle. Next comes the touching of the ears and the mouths of the infants by the priest as a symbol of "ephphatha".<sup>55</sup>

If Baptism is administered by a catechist, the oil of chrism is not applied to the infants, neither does he say the "Ephphatha" nor apply the oil of the catechumens.

The ending of this ceremony is marked by blessings which are uttered by the celebrant to the parents, god-parents and the whole church community. They are encouraged to guide the infants in an exemplary Christian life towards christian maturity.

If children are not reminded of their Baptism and the accompanying baptismal vows, they are likely to be converted to other religions. It is therefore the responsibility of the god-parents, Church community and the teachers in schools through the pastoral programmes to enhance the spiritual lives of all children. Church attendance is also vital for spiritual development.<sup>56</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church loses many of its Christians who were baptized in infancy to other christian faiths

as compared to those who are baptized as adults. Christians should explain the meaning, significance and symbolism of Baptism to their children. Infant Baptism does not on one hand guarantee a child to receive Holy Communion. On the other hand, one must undergo an intensive instructional course in the catechism and other church doctrines. These teachings prepare an individual for confession that leads to Holy Communion.<sup>57</sup>

#### Adult Baptism

The growth of an individual is physically characterized by various stages in life. The spiritual growth of an individual is systematic and progressive. Anyon who decides to become a christian is welcomed into the church and introduced to the catechism.

Candidates who are admitted into Adult Baptism are mainly adults from other denominations or those who have not been baptized into any other Christian denomination. The family background of the catechumen is investigated in addition to church attendance and the candidate's own desire for baptism. Candidates are grouped into reasonable numbers for instruction. They learn the liturgy, prayers, the rosary and all that

appertains to the Roman Catholic Church. They are instructed twice per week at Hambale Catholic Mission.<sup>58</sup> In addition to the catechism, visual aids are used in instruction. Songs are also taught to enable the catechumens participate fully in church services.

Catechumens are instructed for one year before they are baptized. During this period, they make firm decisions in preparation for Baptism. In the earlier days of christianity in Maragoli, the period of instruction was two years.<sup>59</sup> Catechumens attended lessons in the catechism at Eregi Catholic Mission. Men were instructed separately from women. Their instructors who were mature male catechists taught by memorization. The catechumens brought food supplies from their homes to the mission station on Saturdays to last them one week. Fresh food supplies were renewed on weekly basis. On Sunday morning, they joined other christians in mass. After the daily instruction lessons catechumens worked in the garden, cut grass, and kept the flower beds clean. They laboured for their baptism. This made them compose the following song to remind them of their stay at the mission station.

The Trial at Eregi (Ekihuga Kye Lotegi)

"When will the catechumenate life at Eregi end so that I (the catechumen) can go back home X 2. I am looking forward to learning prayers and mastering the rosary. When will the catechumenate life at Eregi end so that I (the catechumen) can go back home". X 2.

Translation in Lulogooli

"Ekihuga kye Lotegi kilifwa lina go Ndahuya X 2. Nandole nimanyi tsisaaala, nandole nimanyi isabuli. Ekihuga kye Lotegi kilifwa lina go ndahuuya X 2"60

Preparations for Adult Baptism takes place in three stages during the catechumenate training period. Candidates for Adult Baptism are first registered at the Parish office after consultation with the Parish council. They are then introduced to the church community and marked with a cross on their foreheads by the priest. The procession is then led into the church by the church elders. Inside the church, catechumens are supplied with instructional materials and registered officially as catechumens.

The second preparatory stage in adult Baptism begins during lent when the candidates are thoroughly prepared for Baptism.<sup>61</sup> On this occasion they are marked with a sign of the cross on their foreheads



with the oil of the catechumens and welcomed into the church community. The priest continues to pray for the catechumens on the four successive Sundays of lent. Evil is exorcised and hands are laid on the catechumens. The church minister reminds them to be faithful to the christian teachings until they are baptized.

The third stage in preparation for adult Baptism is witnessed by parents, god-parents, friends and the church community. During the Easter Vigil, the successful catechumens are baptized, anointed with Chrism and admitted to Holy Communion. They are allocated a special place in the church and constantly encouraged to grow in christian faith.

The ceremony of Adult Baptism is not conducted separately from mass. Candidates who have been prepared for Baptism assemble at the parish office and it is confirmed that they have successfully completed their course of instruction in the catechism. The priest or the catechist enrolls them in the church's register and issues them with baptismal cards.

Next, the candidates proceed to the church building and gather outside it. They then enter the church and take seats at a special place designed for them on this occasion. As the entry song is sung, the priest leads the procession to the altar. In his introductory

remarks, the celebrant reminds christians of the importance of Baptism in their lives.

The actual celebration of the Baptismal ritual commences when the priest leads the congregation in the liturgy of the word. He then delivers a homily which stresses the importance of Baptism in the christian life. The readings for this occasion are similar to those that are read during the infant Baptismal ritual. The homily therefore ends the first stage in the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism.

The priest then calls upon all candidates for Baptism to stand up, followed by their parents god-parents and the entire church community. The priest uses a prayer book in leading the congregation in this ritual.<sup>62</sup> He calls upon the catechumens and christians to reject satan and other undesired teachings, sin and finally, the apostles creed is recited.

The minister baptizes the candidates one by one by pouring water on their foreheads in turns while uttering the following words:-

"(The name of the candidate) I  
Baptize you in the name of the father  
and of the son and of the Holy  
Spirit. Amen."<sup>63</sup>

A white piece of cloth is then spread on their heads as the minister says:-

"(Name of the candidate) You have been made a new creation, which is symbolized by this white veil. May you retain it for ever. Amen".<sup>64</sup>

The candidates are then given burning candles by their god-parents which are lit from the paschal candle. The god-parents promise to help the newly baptized christians in all matters of the catholic faith.

Children who receive infant Baptism undergo a one year instructional course in the catechism which prepares them for confession and first Holy Communion. Such candidates are mainly children of school going age. They are instructed on Saturdays during the school calendar days, but during the holidays, they are instructed three times per week - Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.<sup>65</sup>

Parents are consulted by church elders before their children are enrolled for instruction. Instruction is mainly by rote learning and the topics covered include:- the original state of man and his fall, salvation history, prayers, sacraments, ten commandments, church laws, mass liturgy, the rosary, christian virtues and teachings on Eschatology.<sup>66</sup>

After sufficient instruction, candidates are introduced to penance which leads to Holy Communion. The instruction in the catechism is similar to that for

adult catechumens. The only difference is that they are not re-baptized. They are instead called upon to recite baptismal vows before being admitted to Holy Communion. It is vital for the catechumens to receive penance before being admitted to Holy Communion. Most parishes admit such candidates to their first holy communion during christmas.<sup>67</sup>

### Baptism and the Christian Community

Baptism incorporates christians with christ and makes them living members of his body, the church. The christian community witnesses the Baptismal ceremony. By renewing their baptismal vows on every occasion that baptism is conducted, christians are reminded of their own baptism and their responsibilities in life.

Parents of the baptized infants are solely responsible for the spiritual growth of their children. It is only after the catechumens have received their first holy communion that parents relinquish their burden of spiritual guidance. It is therefore important that both parents be present at Baptism. The primary role of the god-parents is to assist parents in fulfilling their spiritual obligations. A male baptismal candidate is represented by a male god-parent, likewise, a female god-parent for a female candidate.

God-parents should be mature, baptized and confirmed christians. They must have also been admitted to holy communion. The responsibility of god-parents continues even after Baptism when he or she serves as a sponsor during confirmation.

Baptism is administered by a parish priest, deacon, a duly appointed catechist or any other christian who may administer "Baptism of desire". Baptism normally takes place in the parish's church.

Under no circumstances may one baptize himself or herself. Clean water infused with "Holy Oil" is used for baptism. This water is consenccrated everytime baptism is conducted. In many church buildings, the water may be flowing in a tap. If this is the case, the flowing water is consenccrated and not a certain quantity of it.

After discussing the instructions given to Adult catechumens and the baptismal ritual for both Adults and Infants, it is vital to consider the symbols, signs and actions that accompany this sacrament.

## SIGNS, SYMBOLS AND ACTIONS

### Introduction

Religious symbols, both in the Bible and outside it use seeing, feeling and tasting as well as hearing to

describe the experience of the divine presence.<sup>68</sup>

Before an attempt is made to study the symbols, and signs used in Baptism, it is vital to define the terms "symbol" and "sign". Signs have been defined as:-

"... things that have meanings and which stand for something other than themselves".<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, symbols:-

"... refer directly to an observable object. A religious symbol has a double symbolic reference. A symbol may be an actual object of empirical experience or an imaginary object".<sup>70</sup>

Symbols are not merely conventional, they contain some appropriateness which link up the symbol with the thing that is symbolized. Symbols normally stand for an abstract notion, and not events or concrete activities. That which is symbolized is effectively charged. This effect tends to get transferred to the symbol.<sup>71</sup>

A symbol portrays a conventional meaning and all people who use it unanimously agree to use it in particular contexts.

There are numerous symbols, signs and actions that are used during the baptismal ritual which help to enhance the meaning and purpose of this sacrament to all those who desire to receive it in faith.

## Water

The three essential elements of life and growth are - air, water and warmth. Water is a sign of life for plants. Less water makes plants wither, while excess water leads to stunted growth. Water has also the characteristic of washing clean what is dirty. It is highly valued in deserts for its ability to quench thirst. Excess water leads to disastrous floods which claim many lives. Water has therefore the ambiguous quality of salvation and destruction.<sup>72</sup>

In discussing baptism, we are not concerned with the scientific understanding of water, but rather with the peoples memories of water in the Old and New Testaments. The water that is used in Baptism is clean and is used with holy oil. It is blessed during the Easter vigil. It is on this occasion that Roman Catholic christians are reminded of Jesus' baptism. The water that is used during baptism reminds christians of their salvation too.

Water therefore manifests the plunging into death and resurrection with christ.

## Names

In the traditional society of the Avalogooli, the naming ceremony of an infant was an important occasion.<sup>73</sup>

This was done when the child was officially presented to its relatives. Each name therefore had a meaning in the traditional society. The christian ceremony for Adult and Infant baptism includes the giving of a name to the neophytes. We do not give names to ourselves rather, our names are given to us by other people for the purpose of identification.<sup>74</sup> Adult catechumens have the opportunity of choosing names for Baptism. The names that are given to individuals at baptism are not just new names that have been invented for the first time. In the beginning, these names were of biblical characters and saints, but later, European names were incorporated.<sup>75</sup> These names link up the neophytes with the saints.<sup>76</sup> Baptism is therefore seen as a naming ceremony by many christians rather than a central sacrament of the church. Names therefore remind people of their sense of belonging to the African family and God's family too. An individual is given the name of a particular saint in order to emulate the character of that saint.

#### Touching of the ears and the mouth

During the baptismal ritual, the priest touches the ears and the mouth of the infants. This practice reminds christians of the miracle that Jesus performed



when he healed the deaf/dumb man.<sup>77</sup>

The ears are meant to hear the message and the mouth is to proclaim that faith. In these actions, a christian is given the power to bear witness to christ.

### Exorcisms and anointment with oil of catechumens

At baptism, the priest exorcises satan and evil. Exorcism denotes the power that Christ granted his disciples when he told them:-

"... In my name (christ's) they (the disciples) will cast out demons".<sup>78</sup>

Exorcism signifies the deliverance of the neophytes from the domination of satan and other evil deeds.<sup>79</sup>

After exorcism, the minister anoints the infant with the oil of catechumens on its chest. Oil provides strength and has healing powers too. It is also a symbol of salvation in the name of christ. The anointing of the catechumens provides catechumens with the strength and courage to profess their faith.<sup>80</sup>

### Renewal of faith

In baptismal ceremonies, the minister calls upon the congregation which consists of god-parents,

friends, relatives and parents to renew their faith together with the neophytes. While they are reminded of their duties as christians, they are also called upon to reject satan and sin and be spiritually prepared to bear witness to the baptismal ceremony. In the profession of faith, emphasis is laid on the teachings as contained in the Apostles' creed. Since Communal participation is emphasized in baptism, the baptism of new members involves the faith and actions of all christians present on this occasion.

#### Anointment with Chrism

The anointing with chrism (Holy oil) is also referred to as the second anointing. Its symbolism is not the same as that of the anointing with the oil of catechumens. Chrism is prepared by mixing olive oil with a sweet scented aromatic whose fragrance fills the church during baptism.<sup>81</sup> Chrism symbolizes the spreading of goodness and holiness. It also symbolizes that an individual has been freed from sin.

Oil keeps our bodies smooth and healthy apart from its healing powers. It is used in the anointing of the sick. Oil is also a sign of honour.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, oil is regarded a sign of election and conservation.<sup>83</sup>

The Chrism which is anointed on the candidates' foreheads at baptism symbolizes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand it acts as a seal, for it makes one become a child of God.

The anointing of Jesus prepared him to face all opposition as regards his crucifixion.<sup>84</sup>

Chrism is therefore the oil of salvation that frees an individual from sin.

#### The cross

At Baptism, the candidate is marked on the forehead with a sign of the cross. In infant baptism, the baby is marked with a cross on its chest with the oil of catechumens. The baptismal water is also affused on the candidate's forehead three times in the sign of the cross. The cross is therefore a symbol of faith that Christians bear witness to. It also stands for the character or the spiritual seal that is received in baptism.<sup>85</sup>

The cross also reminds Christians of the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ for the salvation of all Christians. Jesus Christ told his disciples and all those who listened to him:-

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me ..."<sup>86</sup>

After Baptism, candidates are presented with a rosary and a cross bearing necklace which reminds them to be steadfast in their christian life and remain faithful to christ's teachings. The cross as a symbol of salvation is worn by both the Roman Catholic clergy and the laity. Church buildings are identified with a cross on their spires. Among Certain pentecostal and Independent churches, their members make crosses on their clothes as a sign of membership and salvation. This emphasizes the view that christians should carry their crosses daily.<sup>87</sup>

The signing with the cross is an ancient practice which symbolized ownership. The marking with a cross therefore, makes christians belong to God's family.<sup>88</sup>

#### The burning candle

The lighting of the candle from the paschal candle symbolizes the light of christ which is received at Baptism and cherished in life by all christians. Jesus said:-

"I am the light of the world,  
he who follows me will not walk in  
darkness but will have the light  
of life."<sup>89</sup>

The burning candle relates baptism to the paschal mystery.

In infant baptism, the priest hands over a lit candle to the baby's father while in adult baptism, the neophyte is presented with a candle by the priest. The candle which is lit from the paschal candle and consanctated on Holy saturday night represents christ's ressurection.

The lighting of the candle is related to the story of the brides in the bible who were expected to remain awake until the bridegroom arrived.<sup>90</sup> Parents and god-parents of the neophytes are therefore entrusted with the responsibility of keeping the candle burning brightly - keeping Christ in their lives always.

#### The white garment

In the early days of christianity, catechumens wore a white tunic at baptism. In many pentecostal churches, this practice is still observed. White is a colour associated with innocence and purity. It is written in the book of Isaiah

"... though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.<sup>91</sup>

Clothing with a white garment is an outward sign of christian dignity, non-defilement and cleanliness. This clothe is put on after the candidate has been

anointed with chrism. The colour of the robe also implies the sharing in lordship of the messiah who will come with great majesty to the christians.<sup>92</sup>

#### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON BAPTISM

The word baptism in this text is related to spiritual cleansing through which, an individual is incorporated into christ and his body, the church. Baptism has its roots from the mystery religions and the present form of christian baptism has developed slowly in process from Jewish and proselyte Baptism, John's baptism and finally Jesus' baptism. Christian Baptism as circumcision and birth among the Avalogooli is not repetitive. Both Jewish/Proselyte baptism and John's baptism was by immersion.

In the New Testament the two modes of Baptism that were conducted were - Immersion and Affusion.<sup>93</sup> Baptism creates a new link between the believers and christ. It is related to the accompanying remission of sins. Jesus' baptism is associated with the Holy Spirit, while John's baptism is a seal of salvation in view of the coming judgement. In the Old Testament, the covenant relationship was based on family relationships. Faith was not an individual's affair. Circumcision was regarded a seal of the covenant relationship.

An individual adult was circumcised with all his male relatives. Jews circumcised all their male infants when they were eight days. Those who were not circumcised were cut off from the covenant relationship (Genesis 17: 14).<sup>94</sup>

Circumcision indicated the child-father relationship was a reality.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, candidates who were admitted into christianity in the early years of christianity were mainly adults who showed explicitly their readiness for baptism. Later, infant baptism was introduced into the church community. If infant baptism is denounced, the spiritual demands of the infants will have been overlooked too.

Baptism is not merely a symbol, it is an event, an act of incorporation into christ. It is a process of initiation which leads a christian to confirmation to Holy Communion. The early church referred to Baptism as spiritual circumcision. Paul says:-

"In him (christ) also, you were circumcised with a circumcision, made without hands, but by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of christ and you were buried with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead ..."<sup>96</sup>

Salvation and baptism are inseparable. The baptismal washing by itself effects nothing. It is

faith which effects what Baptism signifies. The efficacy of Baptism is not in the use of water, but rather in the washing (the spiritual event dependent on faith). The amount of water used at baptism is not significant. What is important is the water symbol in Baptism. An object does not need to be big enough in order to be a symbol.<sup>97</sup>

Baptism is therefore a sacrament of justification which symbolizes the reception of an individual into the New Israel. Christ is the key figure at the reception of this sacrament. Therefore, the death of Christ on the cross is the greatest presupposition underlying baptism.<sup>98</sup> Baptism into the Christian community dramatically represents the Easter events.

The next sacrament that comes after Baptism is confirmation. It is regarded a sacrament of Christian maturity. In the next chapter the history, theology and symbolism of confirmation will be discussed.



FOOTNOTES

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17. Holy Bible (RSV), Mathew 3:11, Luke 3:16.

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19. Holy Bible (RSV), Mark 1:7, Mathew 3: 11ff.
20. J.K. Howard, op.cit, p. 24 ff.
21. O. Cullman, op.cit, p. 11.
22. W.F. Flemmington, op.cit p. 17
23. Ibid, p. 23
24. Holy Bible, Mathew 3:13ff, Luke 3:28ff Mark 1:9ff,  
John 1:28ff.
25. J.K. Howard, op.cit, p. 29
26. Holy Bible (RSV), Mark 10:38, Luke 12:49ff.
27. Holy Bible (RSV), John 4:2.
28. Holy Bible (RVS), Luke 12:50.
29. Holy Bible (RSV), Mathew 28:18-19, Mark 16:15ff.
30. Holy Bible (RSV), Acts 8:35, Acts 2:37ff.
31. Holy Bible (RSV) Romans 10:9ff.
32. Holy Bible (RSV) Hebrews 6:12.
33. Holy Bible (RSV) Hebrews 5:12, I Cor. 11:2.
34. J.K. Howard, op.cit, p. 21. See also Kirsopp Lake,  
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The "Didache" is an earliest Christian Document  
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orders". It contains Catechetical  
teachings on worship and Ministry. It is

a record of the Apostles' teachings by  
Eusebius.

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36. Ibid.
37. J.K. Howard, op.cit. p. 49
38. Ibid.
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the Roman Catholic Christians.
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## CHAPTER SIX

### CONFIRMATION

#### HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

The process of Christian initiation begins with Baptism and is not completed in one ceremony. It is rather a process which incorporates an individual fully into Christ. This process therefore extends over a whole lifetime and even beyond our physical existence.<sup>1</sup>

Confirmation is also referred to as the sacrament of the laying on of hands. It comes after Baptism and precedes Holy Communion. This sacrament is connected with the giving of the Holy Spirit in the Roman Catholic Church. This promise was fulfilled by Christ at pentecoste. Confirmation and Baptism are closely linked to each other. Confirmation developed from the sacrament of Baptism, but the early Baptism ceremonies included the imposition of hands and a series of anointments which were performed by the local Bishop. These were at first seen as separate acts from Baptism.<sup>2</sup> It was the hand laying and the anointing of the confirmands that led to confirmation. Earlier in this study when discussing Baptism, it was noted that the disciples of Jesus baptized candidates in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living/running water.



If cold water was not available, warm water was used as an alternative.<sup>3</sup>

In the days of Tertullian, Hippolytus and Ambrose, the church had no confirmation rite.<sup>4</sup> The sealing with chrism and the hand laying gesture after Baptism which was later referred to as confirmation, were but mere integral parts of the rite of Baptism. These were acts that were closely associated with the giving of the Holy Spirit. It was for this reason that the Bishop administered this sacrament.<sup>5</sup> Later, situations arose where some people died or became ill and were to be baptized, But as the church grew in size, the Bishop was not readily available. It was vital that these adults and infants be baptized before they died. This therefore led to haphazard Baptisms that were not officiated by the Bishop.

It is not clear when the church considered the second anointing and the imposition of hands as a separate rite. It was rather a slow process of development. However, due to the increase in the Episcopal duties, confirmation became a separate sacrament. By the year 439 A.D., The expression "confirming Neophytes" in Southern Gaul referred to a post-Baptismal ceremony which was normally performed by a Bishop although he delegated his duty to his assistant.<sup>6</sup>

When emperor Charlemagne came to power in the Roman empire, he ordered the use of the Roman rite throughout his empire. This rite which was already in use in Southern Gaul for many years led to the separation of Confirmation from Baptism. Confirmation described the separate post-baptismal rite whose liturgical meaning was the completion of Christian initiation. It never had the theological meaning of strengthening.<sup>7</sup> When these two sacraments were separated, their theology was separated too. The spirit which is given in Baptism is the principle of new life. In confirmation, the spirit given is a gift of the prophetic force for witness.

Confirmation was separated from Baptism in the 12th century and has remained unaltered in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>8</sup> This sacrament became popular when infant baptism was accepted by the early Christian Church Community. Confirmation by the laying on of hands was performed on people who had been converted from a heretical sect, but they were not rebaptised.<sup>9</sup>

Theologians of the middle ages who struggled with the ordering of the sacraments pointed out that there were seven sacraments. The council of Trent further decreed that Confirmation was a separate sacrament from Baptism.<sup>10</sup> However, it is pointed out in the

Catholic Dictionary:-

"Protestants have universally denied that confirmation is a sacrament, either rejecting it altogether, or retaining a spurious imitation of it, in which young people renew and confirm the promises made for them in Baptism".<sup>11</sup>

In the Anglican Church, confirmation has the greatest meaning when it is associated with (infant) Baptism. It denotes the full reception into the Church, with or without the imposition of hands by the Bishop.<sup>12</sup>

In this study, confirmation will be defined as:-

"A sacrament by which christians receive the Holy spirit in order to make them perfect (christians) and soldiers of christ".<sup>13</sup>

In general terms, confirmation strengthens the purpose and meaning of baptism among the Christians. Confirmation makes christians spiritually mature. In this sacrament christians are also made witnesses to christ. Lastly, confirmation perpetuates the occasion of pentecost in the church.

The theology of confirmation is found in the Apostolic constitution and in the actual rite itself. When Christ was baptized, the spirit came upon him.<sup>14</sup> He also began his ministry under the same spirit.

Later, Jesus promised his disciples the spirit which would enable them bear witness to their faith.<sup>15</sup>

Christians are incorporated into Christ by baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion. In Baptism sins are forgiven and an individual is adopted as a child of God. So that he or she can share in the priest hood of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

In confirmation, christians receive the Holy spirit and are signed with the character that binds them more perfectly to the church. In one of his articles, Thomas Marsh says:-

"in its practice and basic interpretation of confirmation, the Roman Catholic Church sees itself as the heir of a long tradition reaching back over the centuries to the church Fathers and the Apostolic church itself".<sup>17</sup>

In the New Catholic Encyclopaedia, it is pointed out - "there is no direct evidence from the Gospels that suggests Christ instituted Confirmation himself".<sup>18</sup> The question of scriptural evidence as regards the sacramental context for the gift of the spirit is problematic. There is a discrepancy on one hand between the Acts of Apostles which attributes this gift to the imposition of hands after Baptism.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand the Pauline and Johannine literature

attributes the descent of the Holy Spirit at Baptism.<sup>20</sup> Protestant scholars interpret the Acts of Apostles in the light of the Pauline/Johannine position, while the Roman Catholic scholars argue that John's and Paul's silence as regards a post-baptismal rite of the spirit does not mean that it should be disregarded.<sup>21</sup>

The concept of the "gift of the holy spirit" is rooted in the Old Testament, Judaism and in the life of Jesus.<sup>22</sup> The spirit of God is mentioned in Genesis as regards the creation of the world and man.<sup>23</sup> In this account, God's spirit is creative and life giving. The spirit continues to play a significant role in shaping the history of Israel through Moses, Joshua, David, Samson, Judges and the Prophets.<sup>24</sup>

The prophetic spirit is significant in the Old Testament, but at the time of Jesus, it had been withdrawn pending the arrival of the Messiah and the Messianic age. The concept of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus is seen in the Gospels as regards John the Baptist's teachings on Baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire.<sup>25</sup>

The order of events at Jesus' Baptism was immersion in water, followed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, the gift of the promised spirit

was received at pentecoste. It was a prophetic spirit. After pentecost the community received new members into the Christian faith. This led to the establishment of Christian initiation. The Acts of Apostles describes two distinct and successive events - Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>26</sup>

The first evidence of the laying on of hands was at Ephesus and Samaria.<sup>27</sup> Peter and John Extended their hands on those who had been baptized by Philip in order to ratify what Philip had already done. It also acted as a sign of acceptance of the Samaritan church by the Apostolic church in Jerusalem.

### Confirmation and the Christian Life

Confirmation is not a sacrament of either childhood or adulthood. After confirmation an individual is bestowed with a spiritual seal. It has been suggested that confirmation be delayed until an individual attains the age of seven.<sup>28</sup> This age limit is based on the principle that whoever that is confirmed was already baptized in infancy. The Roman Catholic Church Canon states:- "Confirmation should be administered before an individual receives Holy Communion".<sup>29</sup>

In Maragoli, candidates for confirmation who are mainly school children are instructed on Saturdays.

Instruction is later intensified during the school vacations. The faithful are trained into a fuller and enthusiastic devotion to Christ.

The confirmation lessons are held at the mission station and the early age of adolescence is regarded more suitable for confirmation. However, the theology of confirmation as set out in the liturgy does not establish fully that this sacrament is administered to adolescents only. This is so because adults are confirmed too.

Confirmation in Maragoli is held towards the end of the month of August. A schedule is drawn before hand to enable the Bishop administer this sacrament to the faithful. However, candidates for the first Holy Communion are confirmed during christmas.<sup>30</sup> When christianity was first introduced into Maragoli, Adult christians were confirmed immediately after Baptism.<sup>31</sup>

The people who are involved in the preparation and administration of confirmation ensure that this sacrament is administered in a successful manner. The parents of the candidates to be confirmed play a leading role in the spiritual development of their children.

Each candidate presented for confirmation has a sponsor who presents the candidate to the officiant. A male candidate is assigned a male sponsor, while a female candidate is represented by a female sponsor. The sponsor is preferably the christian who acted as the candidate's god-parent during infant baptism. However, any other suitable person can act as a sponsor. This even includes the parents of the candidates. The characteristics of a good sponsor are as follows. He or she must be a member of the Roman Catholic church, baptized, confirmed and have at least received their first holy communion. Sponsors are therefore mature and responsible christians. The presentation of candidates for confirmation does not end their spiritual motivation towards the confirmands. Sponsors are rather supposed to have a continuing influence on the confirmands.

At confirmation, a candidate is at liberty to adopt a "confirmation name". However, the "christian name" chosen at baptism can be used on this occasion so long as it is a saint's name. The confirmand chooses the name of a saint whom he or she wants to emulate. Therefore, there should be a reason for choosing a particular name.<sup>32</sup>



The confirmation ritual is presided over by a Bishop who is the original minister charged with this pastoral obligation. J.D. Crichton points out that

"in the Eastern churches, the bishop blesses chrism and the priest regularly confirms. This is also true in the western churches. The priest receives this special authority in order to delegate these duties."<sup>33</sup>

The Bishops confer this sacrament because they are regarded successors to the apostles who received the spirit at pentecost . They also received the power to transmit this sacrament on behalf of Christ. During the confirmation ritual, the priests co-celebrate confirmation with the Bishop.

#### Confirmation Ritual

The confirmation ritual is celebrated in mass after the ministry of the word and the homily. Next, the bishop is led to the chair that is placed in the centre of the chancel, between the altar and the congregation. A cushion can be placed at the foot of the bishop's chair to give place for the candidates to kneel and raise them up slightly.<sup>34</sup>

Adult candidates for confirmation are presented to the bishop by the parish priest, church elders or catechists. The homily which is delivered by the

bishop is related to the readings and leads candidates to a deeper understanding of the mystery of confirmation. W.A. Baumann gives a detailed analysis of the readings from both the Old, the New Testament and the Gospels.<sup>35</sup> After the scriptural readings, the candidates, their parents and sponsors continue to stand before the bishop and the co-celebrating priests.

The bishop then leads the congregation in celebrating the special confirmation mass. All Christians who witness to this sacrament are called upon by the bishop to renew their baptismal vows too and the responses to these promises are affirmative.<sup>36</sup>

The renewal of baptismal promises leads to the hand laying exercise, whereby the co-celebrating priests stand near the bishop and face the congregation with their hands joined together. The bishop then chants or says the following words:-

"My dear friends: In baptism  
God our Father gave the new birth  
of eternal life to his chosen sons  
and daughters. Let us pray that he  
will pour out the holy spirit, to  
strengthen his sons and daughters  
with his gifts, and anoint them  
to be more like Christ the son of  
God."<sup>37</sup>

After this exercise, the Bishop and the Co-celebrating priests lay their hands upon all candidates in turns

(by extending their hands over them). The Bishop then says:-

"All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin, and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit guide, Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgement and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen."<sup>38</sup>

The candidates are expected to remain calm all through and pray silently for the reception of this sacrament.

The hand laying exercise is followed by the anointing with chrism, whereby the Deacon or priest who acts as the bishop's helper holds the chrism container while the bishop anoints the candidates in turns. He marks them with a sign of a cross on their foreheads after dipping his right thumb in chrism. As the bishop anoints the candidates, the sponsors put their right hands on the candidates' shoulders and give the name of the candidate to the bishop. The following words are said by the bishop as he anoints the candidates:-

"(... name of the candidate) be sealed with the gift of the holy spirit. Amen."<sup>39</sup>

Confirmation is accompanied by various songs which invoke the descent of the holy spirit on the confirmands.<sup>40</sup> The ceremony of confirmation ends when the bishop offers the sign of peace to the congregation. In the earlier days of christianity, the bishop slightly stroke the candidates' cheeks and said 'Pax tecum - peace be with you'.<sup>41</sup> This sign reminded the confirmands of their readiness to suffer for christ. Finally, the candidates are embraced marking their acceptance into the church community. After the confirmation ritual the normal order of mass is resumed. General intercessions are said followed by the liturgy of the Eucharist but the apostles creed is neither sung nor recited. The confirmands then bring the gifts and offerings to the altar. At the reception of the Eucharist, confirmands are first admitted to this sacrament followed by the congregation.

At the end of the confirmation mass, the bishop extends his hands, implying that the actual growth of a christian continually manifests itself as the christian matures spiritually.

## SIGNS, SYMBOLS AND ACTIONS

The words sign and symbol have been defined elsewhere in this study.<sup>42</sup> However, there are various signs, symbols and actions that accompany confirmation. In discussing them, christians will be able to understand the theology behind this sacrament.

### Hand Laying

The gesture of the laying on of hands is also referred to as "the imposition of hands". It symbolizes the giving of power and strength which helps to link up christians closely to christ. The imposition of hands and the anointing with oil have their roots back into the ancient religious traditions of Israel. The imposition of hands which is a gesture of blessings, consecration and investiture was originally used by Jesus Christ in healing the sick.<sup>43</sup> In this account, Jesus is asked to lay his hands on a girl who is sick. In the early christian church, deacons were ordained when hands were laid on them.<sup>44</sup> The laying on of Apostolic hands did not appear as an element of christian baptism or a rite of admission into the Early christian church. It was at Samaria and Ephesus that Peter and John were sent to lay hands on the gentiles.<sup>45</sup> In this way the gentiles received the holy spirit.

It is also stated that the spirit descended on Jesus at baptism in the form of a dove.<sup>46</sup> The priests who co-celebrate confirmation with the bishop impose their hands on the candidates so that they can witness God's love abundantly.

### Anointing with Chrism

The importance of the oil that is used in the church is three fold- Healing, consecration and strength provision. The oil that is used in the anointing of candidates for confirmation is chrism. It is prepared by mixing olive oil with sweet smelling balsam. This oil is consecrated by the bishop every year at a special mass ceremony in the diocesan cathedral on Holy Thursday morning during Easter. It is on this occasion that Christians are reminded of the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>47</sup>

Oil is a natural symbol for healing and suppleness. It is also used in healing, lighting, and strength provision. During ordination, priests are anointed and then chosen to their offices. Therefore, the anointing with chrism is a sign of consecration for the Christians. After Anointment, an individual is made a prophet and witness of Jesus Christ. The sacramental anointing with chrism

perfects the christians who have been already baptised.

J.D.C. Fisher says:-

"... for the Father anointed the Son, and the Son anointed the Apostles who anointed us (christians). He who is anointed possesses the resurrection, light, the cross<sup>48</sup> (trinity) and the holy spirit".

The anointing with chrism is a symbol of the imparting of the spirit and the fragrance of chrism symbolizes the diffusion of God's love and goodness to all those who witness to confirmation.

### The Cross

At confirmation, the bishop dips the right thumb in a container with chrism and marks the candidates' foreheads in the form of a cross while saying:-

"(name of the candidate)  
receive the seal of the Holy  
spirit. Amen."<sup>49</sup>

A seal is a permanent mark or sign. In the ancient Roman empire, slaves were branded with a sign of ownership. Therefore, christians who are anointed with chrism are marked with an everlasting symbol in their hearts and made God's property.<sup>50</sup> The sign of the cross with chrism portrays the power of the spirit which enables candidates bear witness to christ. The cross also makes christians perfect members of the church.<sup>51</sup>

The giving of the spirit is directly related to the death and resurrection of Christ while the seal guarantees the presence of the spirit among the christians. The cross also represents God's triune nature and finally reminds christians of the crucifixion of christ on the cross.<sup>52</sup>

### Sign of Peace

The bishop concludes the ceremony of confirmation by giving the sign of peace to the new confirmands. Since it is the bishop's duty to unite the church in his diocese, the sign of peace indicates that christians belong to God's family-the church.<sup>53</sup>

### SOME OBSERVATIONS ON CONFIRMATION AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION.

There are three ways in which confirmation is conducted. First, confirmation of adults in mass. Secondly, confirmation apart from mass. Thirdly, confirmation in danger of death.<sup>54</sup> On many occasions Adult catechumens are admitted into the christian church through christian initiation rituals in a single ceremony. In this case, they are Baptized, confirmed and lastly admitted to their first holy communion.<sup>55</sup> There are very few changes if confirmation is



administered outside mass. In this case, the ceremony begins with an opening hymn, the ministry of the word, homily, renewal of baptismal vows, administration of confirmation, general intercessions and finally the Lord's prayer. The ceremony then ends with blessings from the celebrant.<sup>56</sup>

According to the teachings of the Roman catholic church, every faithful member of the church must undergo a complete christian initiation ritual.<sup>59</sup> It is for this reason that a person who is in danger of death is confirmed before he or she receives the eucharist. However, this should not be confused with the anointing of the sick. The anointing of the sick in danger of death is done on a different occasion. Confirmation in danger of death is therefore different from the anointing of the sick. The anointing of the candidates during confirmation and the laying on of hands should be seen not in isolation.

Sacraments use gestures and objects which help to elaborate the theology behind them. Therefore, all church liturgies are rich in symbols and gestures. According to the Roman Catholic Church teachings, christians are called upon to renew their baptismal vows on Sundays in the creed, during baptismal ceremonies, and lastly during the ceremonies of confirmation.<sup>58</sup>

A delay in the reception of confirmation makes Roman Catholic Christians incomplete spiritually. This renders them easily converted to other Christian denominations.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, not all Roman Catholic children are able to go to schools sponsored by their church where they can receive further instruction in the catechism after infant baptism. Moreover, even in the Roman Catholic sponsored schools, there is a shortage of experts in catechesis. On the other hand Religious instruction is poorly taught to children who are baptised in infancy. In this way children fail to understand the purpose of the sacraments in their lives. During the earlier years of formal education, children are theologically immature to comprehend the nature, purpose and symbols used in the sacraments.

In Kenya the curriculum in primary schools provides pastoral instruction lessons for Protestants, Seventh day adventists Roman Catholics and Moslems. However, these lessons have not been fully utilized in the schools. This is due to a shortage of trained catechists in primary schools and chaplains for secondary and post-secondary institutions. Many girls change their religious affiliation when they get married to husbands from different denominations.

In this way, their sacramental life is not fulfilled.<sup>60</sup>

The age of confirmation has been a question of debate over the centuries. Vatican 2 (1962 - 1965) states:- "confirmation must be postponed until the candidate has attained seven years of age"<sup>61</sup> This decision is made by the local diocesan bishop. In some dioceses, confirmation is delayed until children attain the age of twelve.<sup>62</sup>

If confirmation is to have its full place in the sacramental structure of the church, first, it should provide a conscious understanding act of faith on the confirmand. Secondly, it should if possible be administered by the bishop.

Through the sacraments, God prompts in the Christians his law of charity and justice and characterizes them as true members of the church. Since the faithful are incorporated into Christ by baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion, there is need for careful instruction of candidates before these sacraments are administered to them.

Baptism and confirmation are distinct sacraments, but they complement each other mutually as Christian initiation rituals. The baptismal bath in the name of Jesus (which is the first imparting of the spirit) the (complementary) imparting of the spirit at confirmation

and the Eucharist complete the christian initiation ritual.<sup>63</sup>

Like Baptism and ordination, confirmation may not be repeated. The separation of Baptism from confirmation has one advantage—that of drawing attention of the christian to a process of spiritual maturity.

In the next chapter, an attempt will be made to relate birth and early childhood rites to Baptism on one hand and initiation into Adulthood to confirmation on the other hand. An interpretation of these two facets will help to establish if there is any inter-relationship between the sacraments and the rites of Passage.

FOOTNOTES

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17. M.J. Taylor (Ed), The Sacraments: Readings in  
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(RSV) Acts 8:14-19. 19:1-6.
20. M.J. Taylor, Ibid. See also Holy Bible (RSV)  
I Cor. 12:13, The Gospel According to  
St. John 3:5.
21. M.J. Taylor op.cit. p. 106ff.
22. Ibid. p. 107.
23. Ibid., See also Holy Bible (RSV), Gen. 1:2, 2:7.
24. M.J. Taylor, op.cit. P. 107. See also Holy Bible  
(RSV), I Sam. 10: 5-12, 16:13, 19:20-24;  
I Kings 22:10-12, Judges 6:34, 14:6,

15:14 Numbers 11:25, 27:20, Ne 9:30,  
Isaiah 34:16 Mc. 3:8.

25. M.J. Taylor, op.cit, p. 108 See also The Gospels  
According to St. Matthew 3:11, Luke  
3:16.
26. M.J. Taylor, Ibid, See also The Holy Bible (RSV),  
Acts 2:38.
27. M.J. Taylor, op.cit, p. 107. See also Holy Bible  
(RSV), Acts 8:14-17, 19:1-6.
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31. Celia Vigedi, Interview, 4th October, 1985, Luhulu,  
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33. J.D. Crichton, op.cit. p. 110
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Ave Maria Press, 1973 p. 34ff.
36. J.D. Crichton op.cit. p. 106.
37. W.A. Baumann, op.cit p. 74.

38. Ibid.
39. Tumshangilie Bwana, Kenya Episcopal Conference,  
Nairobi; 1976, p. 208
40. A full list of the songs that are associated with  
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41. W.A. Baumann, op.cit, p. 79. See also A Catholic  
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44. The Holy Bible (RSV) Acts 6:6
45. The Holy Bible (RSV) Acts 8:14-17, 19: 1-6.
46. The Gospels According to St. John 1:13, Luke 3:22.
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48. J.D.C. Fisher, op.cit. p. 8.
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50. Tumshangilie Bwana, op.cit, p. 208. See also the  
Holy Bible (RSV) Ephesians 1:13.
51. A.J. Mc. Callen, op.cit, p. 43.
52. Ibid. P. 45.
53. Ibid. p. 47
54. W.A. Baumann, op.cit p. 86ff



55. Father Duran Meza, op.cit.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid.
61. J.D. Crichton, op.cit. p. 111
62. Father Duran Meza, op.cit.
63. B. Neunheusser, Baptism and Confirmation, London;  
Burns and Oates, 1964 p. 46.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SACRAMENTS AND THE RITES OF PASSAGE - SOME PARALLELS  
BETWEEN BAPTISM AND EARLY CHILDHOOD RITUALS.

Introduction

The life of an individual is a series of rites of passage. They commence at conception and extend through the life of an individual. These rites emphasize the communal participation of all members. An individual born of Avalogooli parents underwent all the rites of passage for it was in these rites that some aspects of Religion were evidently seen. An individual was therefore incorporated into a particular community by observing these rites of passage.

On the other hand, the spiritual development of Roman Catholic Christians is identified by studying the sacraments.<sup>1</sup> Christian sacraments can be relatively matched to the rites of passage. Therefore, both the rites of passage and the sacraments are concerned with the life of man.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to draw some parallels between the sacraments and the rites of passage. Baptism is the first sacrament to be administered to anyone that is converted into the christian faith for it introduces an individual into

the christian community. It is the sacrament of salvation to all those who receive it in faith.<sup>2</sup>

After Baptism, one is expected to change one's life style by dropping his traditional heritage and adopt a christian oriented western culture.

Birth rites on the other hand commence at conception and are manifested in various rituals in life. The birth of a baby is regarded a welcome event both in the christian and the African tradition context. An attempt at interpreting Baptism and Birth rites will therefore help to establish if there is any relationship between these two practices.

#### Rituals and community participation.

Baptism and confirmation have a long history in christianity. These sacraments are both important to the African christians. As there are different types and modes of Baptism, there are also various rituals that are associated with Birth and Early childhood.<sup>3</sup>

After childbirth, parents of the newly born baby inform the parish priest who sets out an appropriate date for infant baptism in consultation with the parish council. In case of Adult Baptism, individual candidates show their willingness for Baptism when they

accept to learn the catechism for one year.<sup>4</sup>

Candidates are tested in the mastery of the church doctrines in three stages before baptism in which the whole christian community was involved in preparation.

Childbirth is not determined in advance, hence, the actual birth of a baby is an event that takes place anywhere, but preferably under roof. The gestation period which is marked with various prohibitions is meant to safeguard the health of the expectant mother and the foetus. The husband, relatives and neighbours therefore pay special attention to the expectant mother before the last days of gestation which are marked with intensive instruction in child care and other house wifery duties.<sup>5</sup> This can be linked to the instruction classes in preparation for Baptism.

During Baptism, an adult candidate chooses his or her god-parent. As for infant Baptism, parents choose god-parents for their children. At childbirth, an expectant mother and her mother in-law select women of good moral character to act as mid-wives at delivery.

In preparation for Baptism, candidates are taught at the mission station on specified days by trained catechists. Previously the training was residential. On the other hand, childbirth preparations

and child care was taught to the expectant mothers by older women, aunts and mother in-laws.

Baptism is presided over by a deacon, priest or an appointed catechist and the entire ceremony is held in the church. The altar and the font are the most significant places that are associated with Baptism. Men and women are welcome to witness Baptism. On the other hand, birth rites are presided over by women who act as mid-wives. The places associated with child birth and early childhood rituals are the bed room, the central house pole and the sacrificial shrine in the open courtyard. Unlike baptism, child birth is witnessed by women only. However, other rituals associated with early childhood are witnessed by both men and women.

At birth, the cutting of the umbilical cord and the separation of the placenta are of great symbolic meaning. At birth, the baby is separated from the mother's womb and welcomed into the community.<sup>6</sup> Child legitimacy tests and other ritual washings are aimed at incorporating the baby into the existing community.

In the christian context, the actual pouring of water on the forehead is a symbolic action which cleanses an individual from sin and welcomes the

newly baptised into the christian community. Water is therefore of great symbolic significance in both Baptism and birth rites because the element of ritual cleansing is emphasized in both aspects. Body and face washing is observed daily even after baptism and the observation of birth rites. In Baptism, water has another symbolic meaning of salvation from past sins.

Naming is common in both Baptism and birth rites. The child-naming ceremony is observed differently depending on the sex of the child. As in Baptism, the choice of names is carefully considered. The name denotes an individual's personality and identity in one's society. All names in the African Traditional Society and in christianity have meanings. In both ceremonies, the name is given to an individual by a third party. At baptism, the infant or adult/catechumen is named by the priest, deacon or an appointed catechist. Among the Avalogooli, it is the paternal uncle who gives a name to the baby.

In both Baptism and birth rites, oil and Ghee is used for anointing. However, it is prepared in different ways. In Baptism only infants or adult catechumens are anointed. While in birth rites, infants and all family members are anointed with ghee at every birth of a new baby. Both actions are presided over by special people.

The renewal of the baptismal vows and confession before baptism may be related to the rebukes towards a new mother who does not respect her in-laws. At child presentation, the child's mother admits to comply with her in-laws. In christianity, all christians who witness baptism are called upon to renew their baptismal vows, while in the traditional society, it is the child's mother who is rebuked for her unbecoming behaviour.

At baptism, the minister dips his right thumb in chrism and traces a cross on the forehead of an infant or adult catechumen. Secondly, water is poured on their heads in the sign of a cross.

In christianity, the cross is regarded a symbol of faith and also acts as a spiritual seal. It also reminds christians of the death and suffering of christ for the salvation of all humanity and acts as a symbol of ownership.

In the traditional society, the navel scar left when the umbilical wound is healed indicates the separation of the mother from the baby. The amulet that is fixed on the wrist of a newly born baby protects it from evil magical powers. The permanent mark left after circumcision is a good corollary to

to the sign of the cross. They both serve as identification marks. Child legitimacy tests at child birth link the baby to the whole family as the cross seals an individual into the christian community.

Baptism and birth rites take place in stages which are clearly marked so that one stage of the ceremony leads to the next one. This practice gradually incorporates an individual into the existing community. The observation of birth and early childhood rituals in a systematic manner promotes good health for both the baby and its mother.

Communal participation in both baptism and birth rites is emphasized. Parents, invited guests, friends and relatives witness to both the birth and baptismal rituals. The songs that accompany baptism and birth rites are meant to invoke blessings upon the baby, and the mother. Songs on the other hand enable people participate fully in these two rites which are important stages in the life of an individual.

The gestation and seclusion period associated with child birth can be compared to the catechuminate instruction period before adult baptism. In both cases, strict discipline is observed. This enables them understand the serious effects behind contravening the



laid down regulations. On the other hand, the confinement period could be related to the probation period that is observed by the newly baptized adult christians. The newly baptized christians are therefore spiritually encouraged by the mature christians. The suckling of the baby constantly links it to its mother as the holy communion joins christians together.

Birth rites and Baptism are not repeated in an individual's life. However, in the modern society, parents organize birthday parties for their children annually. There is no evidence among the Avalogooli that suggests the yearly celebrations of birthday parties.<sup>7</sup>

The most important aspects to consider in both baptism and birth rites is their purpose, significance and symbolism, rather than the way in which they are conducted.

The rites of passage and christian sacraments are therefore progressive hence it is now appropriate to relate confirmation to initiation into adulthood rituals.

## SOME PARALLELS BETWEEN CONFIRMATION AND INITIATION INTO ADULTHOOD

### Introduction

Confirmation is the second sacrament of christian initiation whereby the Holy Spirit is conferred upon the christians. As already stated in chapter seven, confirmation has a long history and theology. This sacrament completes the process of christian baptism. At every time that confirmation is celebrated, the pentecoste event is perpetuated in the church.

Boys and girls are initiated differently into adulthood. Initiation into adulthood introduces the youth to certain priviledges in their lives. The process of education that accompanies initiation into adulthood has a long lasting impact on its members.

### Rituals and Community Participation

The development of an individual is spiritually important for the attainment of salvation. Roman Catholic Christians are saved by observing the sacraments that are laid down in the church's doctrines. It is therefore important that christians receive these sacraments so that their christian virtues can be fulfilled. The parish priest, parish council and the Bishop consult each other and agree on a specified date to hold confirmation ceremonies.

As already pointed out in chapter seven in this study, candidates are instructed in the catechism by catechists after consultation with the parish council, their parents and sponsors. Candidates are further tested to ascertain their mastery of the Roman Catholic doctrines before confirmation.

The discussion on initiation into adulthood focuses on circumcision among the male children. Many factors are observed before choosing an appropriate time to hold circumcision rituals. Food observances and the ritual cleansing with water is emphasized in initiation into adulthood. There are various factors that delay circumcision among the Avalogooli.<sup>8</sup>

The teaching that was observed before circumcision and during their stay in their seclusion huts enabled boys lead exemplary lives in their society. This can be related to the rigorous instructions that the catechumens undergo in preparation for both baptism and confirmation. The chief officiant at circumcision is the circumcisor, while during confirmation, the Bishop presides over the ceremony assisted by co-celebrating priests.

Unlike birth rites, the centre of activity for circumcision was in the river valleys where boys were

operated upon before being transferred to the seclusion huts. It was in these huts that they underwent training in all matters of life. Women were not allowed to witness circumcision because many of them possessed evil magical powers hence they were prohibited from witnessing circumcision. This was the reason behind the drumming of the Indindi by the circumcisor.

Confirmation among the Roman Catholic Christians involves both sexes and is held in the church. Other christians, both men and women witness the administration of this sacrament without any hinderance.

A mark of identity is left behind by the scar of an individual that has been circumcised. In confirmation, the tracing of the cross on the candidate's forehead with chrism permanently makes an individual belong to the christian community.

During confirmation and initiation into adulthood rituals, candidates are anointed with oil, hence its symbolism is significant in both practices.

Confirmation emphasizes the attainment of spiritual maturity by the confirmands. The shedding of blood during circumcision links the living to the departed spirits, while the reception of Holy Communion by the christian congregation emphasizes the communal aspect

of confirmation.

Communal participation in both confirmation and initiation into adulthood is marked by songs which stress the importance of these rites. The communal meal at the coming out ceremony at the end of the seclusion period in initiation into adulthood links the living to the departed spirits. On the other hand, the the end of the confirmation ritual is marked by Holy Communion which unites christians together. This is followed by reception parties at the various homes of the confirmands.

In both confirmation and initiation into adulthood, there is a second naming ceremony which places people in special categories in their lives. In confirmation, the acquisition of a new name depends on the fact that the confirmand has no saintly name. In confirmation, names are given to each individual, while a general age-set name is given to all candidates circumcised in the same year.

In confirmation and initiation into adulthood, the celebrants are clad in special attire which distinguishes them from other people. Circumcision and confirmation are both held in the month of August. It is important to note that dues are paid for both circumcision and confirmation.

This discussion therefore provides a few facts on some parallels between the rites of passage and the christian sacraments. These two different aspects of teachings are conducted differently, but they are aimed at guiding the life of man to fullness. These interrelationship studies will therefore help the African Christian Comprehend certain Christian teachings and also respect their traditional cultural values.

FOOTNOTES

1. Father Sergio, Interview, 29th December, 1985,  
Hambale Catholic Mission.
2. The Seven Sacraments, Boston; Daughters of St.  
Paul, 1978 p. 3.
3. The Authors comment.
4. Father Sergio, op.cit.
5. Celia Vigedi, Interview, 6th October, 1985, Luhulu  
West Maragoli.
6. See Chapter Three of this study.
7. Celia Vigedi, op.cit.
8. See Chapter four of this Study for a detailed  
discussion on circumcision.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter one of this study, three main objectives have been stated as being the core of the study. First, the rites of passage are stated and discussed as being important in the lives of all Africans. Emphasis is however, laid on Birth and Initiation into Adulthood rituals. The sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are discussed in detail in order to ascertain their historical, theological development and continuity in the Roman Catholic Church. Lastly, an attempt is made to show the parallels that exist between birth, early childhood rituals and initiation into adulthood on one hand with Baptism and Confirmation on the other hand, related to Confirmation. It is through both oral and written sources that these objectives have been achieved in this study.

Christianity has been defined by J.S. Mbiti as:-

"... a total way of life, a world view, a religious ideology ... an existing commitment by Individuals, peoples, Cultures and nations".<sup>1</sup>

Therefore it is now time for Africans to evolve



a form of christianity which can claim to have its genuine roots in the African soli.<sup>2</sup> It is noted that the present christian Africa is living on borrowed or inherited christianity which is full of many non-African cultures, history, ideology and traditions.<sup>3</sup> All these influences have either weakened or strengthened African Christianity. It is worth noting that African Christianity can only evolve out of the interaction of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ with the total way of life of the Africans.<sup>4</sup> Christianity has grown and continues to grow in the local African Setting. In this way, African Values will be of great help in interpreting the christian teachings. African religious beliefs and practices have had the longest and deepest impact on the lives of all Africans, hence, this has rapidly increased the spreading of christianity on this continent.

Various conclusions can be drawn as regards this study with the evidence from both oral and written sources. The Mill Hill Missionaries who entered Western Kenya from Uganda introduced catholicism into Maragoli. At the same time, there were also some protestant Church Missionaries Evangelizing in this area. They introduced and taught new christian principles and Western Cultural Values. At first, the

early missionaries were not receptive to the African traditional values. They uprooted the shrines in the homesteads of the Avalogooli and called upon them to accept salvation through the Gospel message.<sup>5</sup> They were introduced to the christian sacramental life by reciting the catechism at the Mission Stations. They were baptized, confirmed and admitted to their first holy communion as adults.<sup>6</sup> However, from the field-work conducted in Maragoli, there were a few Roman Catholic Christians who had been Baptized, Confirmed and admitted to Holy Communion. Those who are confirmed are mainly young primary and secondary school boys and girls who do not fully understand the theology underlying confirmation in their lives.<sup>7</sup> This is due to improper or inadequate instruction when they are prepared for this sacrament. In some cases, girls who were baptized as infants get married before receiving confirmation and other christian sacraments. They are forced by circumstances to abide by their husbands denominations.<sup>8</sup> Sacraments are therefore Vital to christians for they lead an individual to spiritual maturity. The most important aspect in the sacraments is the use of symbols. A delay in receiving Baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion by the Roman Catholic Christians renders them

easily converted to the more dynamic protestant and Indigenous Christian denominations.<sup>9</sup>

The sponsors have an important role to play as regards the spiritual development of the boys and girls after Baptism and confirmation. However, urbanization, Education and cultural conflicts Inhibit their influence to the Youth. The lack of competent teachers and appropriate syllabuses in the Educational Institutions retards the religious Instruction to the youth. There is therefore the need to employ more qualified and devoted chaplains in various Educational Institutions. However, the situation is still far from being achieved.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand there are various christian denominations that a student is exposed to while at school which are likely to drift him from his religious affiliation.

The Researches that have been carried out by some members of the Roman Catholic clergy have been of great help in making christianity more meaningful to the African Christians. The Roman Catholic Church has enhanced this programme through the Gaba Pastoral Institute at Eldoret.<sup>11</sup> Notable also, is the Catholic Higher Institute in Eastern Africa at Lang'ata which

offers higher studies to the Roman Catholic Clergy. Some important case studies have been published under the spearhead and African Ecclesial Review.<sup>12</sup> Those involved in carrying out these researches are mainly the Roman Catholic Clergy. It is now time for the lay theologians to join hands in these researches. These will help to make the christian practices more adaptable to the African Christian.

It has been emphasized in this study that Religion is important as regards the spiritual, social, economic and political development of the Avalogooli. Emphasis has been stressed on the rites of passage as being central to the African lives. Morality was the most important element that was emphasized in the traditional African Society. Morality was taught to ensure that spouses lived peacefully in their lives. There were oaths, curses, taboos and prohibitions which were taught to the Youth in their sleeping cottages and in seclusion after circumcision. These acted as social controls for both the young and the old. Men and women were faithful to each other during the women's gestation period. Child legitimacy tests were carried out in order to ascertain if the women were faithful to their husbands during gestation. These days, child legitimacy tests are carried out differently. While the hair shaving

ritual is still observed, in addition, the husband buys a towel, sugar, tea leaves, soap, Baby powder and takes them home when he is informed of his wife's delivery.<sup>13</sup> Children born out of wed lock are treated in the same manner. However, the giving of a name is the most significant ritual that is observed at the baby's father's home.

The Rites of Passage played an important part in the lives of the Avalogooli. This evidence is noted in the seriousness they held in performing them. Circumcision was an important ritual in the traditional society. Initiation into Adulthood and other rites of Passage are disappearing in our Contemporary Society due to the impact of Western Education, Christianity, Social mobility, Intermarriage and the present Economic system. The present system of Initiating boys and girls into Adulthood is carried out mainly in the various academic institutions. This system is different from that of the traditional African Society where teachings were aimed at moulding an Individual in all matters of life. One major change was suggested by the Logooli elders in which they increased the circumcision interval period to ten years.<sup>14</sup>

Many children were circumcised at a tender age of

four hence it was suggested that an increase of the interval period would make the boys physically ready for circumcision. However, there are draw backs as regards this decision. Many parents will opt to take their sons for circumcision in Hospitals instead of waiting for the ten year interval period.<sup>15</sup> The Degradation of moral values in our present society is solely due to poor or lack of adequate instruction to our youth. A situation which was catered for by the Initiation into Adulthood rituals. There is very little respect of the youth towards the elders and vice versa.

Generosity and Communal participation is valued in Christianity and in the Rites of Passage. The family members were united together in communal feasts and ceremonies. In the sacraments christians are united to each other. The sharing of foodstuffs and other domestic items fostered generosity and charity in the traditional African Society.

The Government of Kenya is playing a major role as regards the revival of certain valuable traditional practices. Many museums have been set up in various parts of the country to display the material culture of its peoples. The Ministry of Education is also playing a leading role in propagating the African traditional

values through its various academic institutions by incorporating African Religion into its various curricula in schools and colleges. On the other hand the Ministry of Culture and Social Services has encouraged the formation of various cultural festivals annually in many parts of Kenya. The Revival of desirable African Cultural values will therefore help to correct the negative impact that the Western values have had on the lives of the Kenyan population. The objective here is not to revive all African traditional values, but rather to incorporate the desirable values into the lives of all Kenyans.

The role played by pastoral programmes in primary schools and the duties of the chaplains in secondary schools should be encouraged through careful and meaningful instruction.

The Government should encourage more field researchers in various fields as regards African Traditional beliefs and practices in various parts of the country. This will include providing more funds for research and training more research assistants. There is need also for the government to continue providing more funds towards the construction of more museums and social halls to possibly store the material culture of each

ethnic group in its area of operation.

Rites of Passage and the sacraments are important elements to the lives of the African Christians hence the serious attitude that is attributed to both of them. Although the Rites of Passage are disappearing in practice due to the influence of christianity, Education, social mobility, intermarriage and the present economic system; it is vital to re-examine the means of facilitating the teachings that accompanied these rituals. The degradation of moral values in our present society is due to the inadequacy of teaching that is associated with the present system of Education which is school oriented. It is not centred on the whole life development of an individual.

The Churches and the government should continue working hand in hand in sponsoring more researches in various desirable areas so as to incorporate the relevant traditional African values into the Christian teachings. This will therefore help to evolve African Christianity in Kenya. It is through such a study like the one that has been carried out that this objective can be achieved.



FOOT NOTES

1. J.S. Mbiti, Bible and Theology in African Christianity, Nairobi, OUP. p. 7.
2. Ibid
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, p. 19.
5. Celia Vigedi, Interviewed at Luhulu, West Maragoli on 24th December, 1985.
6. In some parishes, the Roman Catholic nuns are involved in instructing the catechumens in the catechism.
7. Father Sebastian Meza, Interviewed on 15th December, 1985.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. The Author's observation.
11. Gaba Pastoral Institute which is located in Eldoret is involved in carrying out Research in various aspects of the Catholic Christian Practices and other related christian practices in Kenya. It publishes these findings in the "Spearhead" series of Booklets and in the "African Ecclesial Review".
12. See C. Nyamiti's article, "Christ's Resurrection in the Light of African Tribal initiation Ritual", Revue Africaine de theologie, Vol. 3. No. 6

-- G. Lumbasi's article, "Ordination and initiation Rites", African Ecclesial review, Vol. 18, No. 2, April, 1976.

There are also numerous articles which have been published by the Gaba Pastoral Institute as regards the relationship between African and Christian practices.

13. A more detailed study as regards Birth and Child naming rituals has been dealt with in this study in Chapter three.
14. Reuben Kagai's address to the attendants of the Maragoli Cultural Festival on 26th December, 1985 at Mbale Market, Kenya.
15. Authors Comments.

A GLOSSARY OF SOME LOGOOLI  
WORDS USED IN THE TEXT

GLOSSARY OF SOME LOGOOLI WORDS USED IN THE TEXT

- Chanzu - This name was given to a baby boy or girl who was born after the subsequent death of its siblings. In order for this baby to survive, an opening was made through the wall (Mwanzu) of the traditional hut and the baby was handed over to another woman who took it to the road side. Some rituals were performed and the baby was then named Chanzu.
- Edzava - This is the major river in Maragoli
- Enduviri - Colubus monkey. In the traditional Logooli Society this animal was hunted for its skin which was made into a head gear that was worn by circumcisors.
- Endahulwa - A banana Species that was used in various traditional Logooli rituals such as Child Legitimacy tests.
- Engata - A banana fibre ring on which a pot was placed in order to remain stable on the floor.
- Engembe - A single or double blade knife that a circumcisor used to operate on the uncircumcised boys.

- Enyang'ongo - A type of a banana fibre mat which was specially woven on which people slept in the traditional Logooli Society.
- Etiru - A central house pole that held the traditional hut firm and also served as a religious consecration shrine.
- Indiindi - This is a small high sounding drum that was sounded to warn people that the circumcisor was approaching their neighbourhood. It was also sounded to mark the end of a single boy's circumcision operation. Lastly, it was sounded to curse witches who intended to come at the circumcision site.
- Inyuumba - A traditional grass thatched and mud walled round structure hut of the Logooli people. Nowadays this word has been extended to mean a house.
- Ituumbi - A traditional Logooli hut in which circumcised boys were secluded from their families. It was in this hut that the Initiates were

instructed in various beliefs,  
practices and ways of life.

- Kedole - A deformed boy's prepuce. A boy with a deformed prepuce paid an extra fee at circumcision.
- Kegono - A traditional old woman's hut in which girls slept and were instructed at night by an old woman in good moral conduct in their society.
- Keseero - An animals hide/skin.
- Kevoja - A traditional apron that was worn by a woman to conceal her nude body.
- Kigiingi - Evil/malicious spirits that were feared by the living members of the society.
- Kiliili - A shadow.
- Kitura - A traditional Logooli stool.
- Kiruazo - A Council of elders.
- Kivitu - A door way passage that extended from the sitting room to the kitchen in the traditional Logooli hut.
- Kuhambulanya - This was a traditional barter system of trade where domestic animals were exchanged. In this system of trade goats and hens were exchanged for a cow.

- Kukuba Kigalama - This was the act of forcing a cowardly boy to lie on the ground on his back and circumcised by force.
- Kulanya - Acquisition of wealth through raiding.
- Kutunda - A form of barter system of trade where foodstuffs were exchanged for domestic animals.
- Kwaluka - The coming out ceremony that was observed by boys after circumcision. It was after this ceremony that they were now re-accepted into their respective families.
- Kwetega - To squat.
- Likuula - Age-set, A contemporary in Age.
- Limooli - A piece of a goat's skin that was fixed at the waist of an Adult Logooli man to conceal his nude body.
- Limuuya - A leather bag that was always carried by a Logooli old man.
- L'longo - White riverine clay that boys smeared themselves with on their bodies before and after circumcision.

- Liseng'esu - A raffia woven dancing costume that was worn by initiated boys during the coming out ceremony.
- Liswakila - An ancestral thanks giving ritual that was observed after the birth of a baby.
- Lubaago - A bowl made of clay.
- Luhale - A piece of a goat's skin that was fixed at the men's waists before they went out for a war.
- Luhyaia - This term refers to a Bantu ethnic group of Western Kenya. It also means an open fire place in front of the traditional hut where old men discussed various issues in life and also instructed boys on their traditional values.
- Lukaya - A long skin strap that was split at the middle and was fixed around the neck of a woman who had haemorrhage. It was believed that this skin strap stopped the haemorrhage and was safely kept for future use.
- Luvego - This term refers to the hair sharing ceremony that was



observed by the Logooli people after burial. It was at this ceremony that the deceased's outstanding debts were settled and the inheritance distributed at this ceremony too.

- Makwana - This term generally refers to twins. As a name it is given to the first twin to come out of the womb.
- Malande - A creeper with broad leaves that was used during certain religious rituals.
- Malongo - This term is used to refer generally to twins, however as a name, it is given to the twin that is last to be born after the first one. /
- Mbili - Body of a human being or an Animal.
- Mudili - An old man of reputable character that cared for the circumcised boys while they were in seclusion.
- Mudigilu - A specially carved dancing stick that was rhythmically pound on the ground by the initiated boys during the coming out ceremony.

- Mugavagava - A three species that was planted in the homestead of a family that had a multiple birth.
- Mugimba - A rain maker/Rain Magician.
- Muhaaya - A traditional carved digging stick.
- Muhyia - An initiate who had come out of their seclusion hut after circumcision.
- Mukevi - A circumcisor.
- Mukingi wo Mulimi - A farm magician who went round the cultivated farms and blessed them before planting and before harvesting the ready crop.
- Mukulu - A circumcised male initiate.
- Mukumu - A diviner
- Muliivu - A banana fibre woven apron that was fixed at the woman's waist.
- Muliinga - A beehive. This name was also used to refer to a manger in which domestic animals were fed from.
- Musaalisi - A traditional Logooli sacrificial priest.
- Musambwa - Plural (Misambwa) Ancestral/ departed spirit. "Misambwa gya Vaguuga" in this text refers to ancestral/depended spirits.

- Mwahi wo Lunyasi - A traditional herbalist.
- Mwamba - Roofing house poles that were used in constructing a ceiling where food stuffs were stored in the traditional hut.
- Mwanzu - An opening made on the wall to allow some light enter the traditional hut.
- Mwigono - This is a place in the Maragoli hills where it is believed Mulogooli, the ancestral Progenitor of the Logooli people was buried.
- Mwiha - A bride.
- Mwilago - An open broad valley in which domestic animals were grazed. It was also in this valley that boys were circumcised. People also gathered in this river valley for entertainment.
- Mwoyo - Heart.
- Navihaya - This name was given to a male candidate who was the first to be circumcised.
- Nyasaye - God almighty, the beseeched one.
- Omwirongo - This name referred to a long lasting boy-friend that was chosen by another boy who was also

preparing to be circumcised.

Tsiminu

- These are leaves that were obtained from a special plant. they were plugged in the nostrils of a sacrificial animal to suffocate it.

Tsingegeta

- These are abdominal pains that a woman feels when she is in her menses.

Vinazogi

- Euphorbia plants that are planted at the edges of the farms as demarcation land marks.

Visinde

- These are grass stumps that are dug with a hoe from the ground.

Vosela bwe Kilungu -

- Fermented porridge made from eleusine flour that was eaten by initiated boys while in seclusion!

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(iv) ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

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2. File of North Nyanza, DC/NN/3/2/12.
3. File of North Nyanza, DC/NN/3/2/13/

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LIST OF INFORMANTS

1. William Adogo , Age: 40 Age- set: Ifomu  
Clan: Muvulugi, Status: Single, Place of  
Interview: Luhulu, Date of Interview: 5th October,  
1985.
2. Kedeng'e Anyoso, Age: 74 Age - set: Lizuridza,  
Clan: Mugisemba, Status: Married, Place of  
Interview: Ivona, Date of Interview: 7th October,  
1985.
3. Zakayo Ayuya, Approximate Age: Over 70, Status:  
Retired School teacher, Place of Interview :  
Majengo Market, Date of Interview: 6th October,  
1985.
4. Esau Segenyi Bagada, Approximate Age: Over 70,  
Age- Set: Imbalabala, Clan: Munangwe (Nyole),  
status: Married with children and grandchildren,  
Denomination: F.A.M., Place of Interview: Ondeyo,  
Date of Interview: 8th October, 1985.

5. Sister Carolline Carmona of Missionaries of Charity, Age: Over 40, Denomination: R.C. Status: Head Mistress Maragoli Girls' High School, Place of Interview: Maragoli Girls' High School, Dates of Interview; 15th and 22nd October, 1985.
  
6. Francis Chakaya Age: 35, Age- set: Ifomu, Clan: Mugisemba, Status: Laboratory technician, Denomination: P.A.G. Place of Interview. Ivona, Date of Interview: 3rd October, 1985.
  
7. Truphosa Chalanze, Approximate Age: Over 70, Clan: Mumaseero (Mukigulu), status: Wife of Kabagi Ovwivu, Place of Interview: Lusambwa Village, Mudete, Date of Interview: 10th October, 1985.
  
8. Alex Chigadi, Age: 27 Age- set: Hybrid, Clan: Mugisemba, Status: Computer Operator, Denomination. P.A.G., Place of Interview: Dandora, Nairobi, Date of Interview: 3rd October, 1985.

9. Pius Dingili, Approximate Age: Over 70, Status: Village Headman, Place of Interview: Luhulu Village, Date of Interview: 25th October, 1985.
10. Joseph Omuhandale Egehidza, Age: 73 , Age-set Lizuridza, Clan: Mulugiri, Status: Married with children and grand children, Denomination: R.C, Place of Interview: Itando, Date of Interview: 6th October, 1985.
11. Hannah Endekwa, Approximate Age: Over 70, Clan: Musaniaga, Status: Window with children and grandchildren: Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Luhulu Village, Date of Interview: 11th October, 1985.
12. Benjamin Esigi, Age: 54 Age- set: Nzelolere, Clan: Mumasingira, Status: Hawker Businessman, Denomination: F.A., Place of Interview:- Chavakali Market, Date of Interview: 16th October, 1985.
13. Herbert Ifedha, Age: 54 Age- set: Nzelolere, Clan: Mulugiri, Status: Primary School teacher, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Kiminini

Settlement scheme Plot 108, Date of Interview:  
29th December, 1985.

14. Bendeda Imali, Age: 40, Clan: Muvuligi,  
Denomination: R.C., Status: Married with  
children and grand children, Place of Interview:  
Bukilagila Village, Date of Interview, 13th  
October, 1985.
  
15. Moses Indunwa, Age: 50 Age- set: Nzelolere,  
Clan: Mumavi, Status: Primary school teacher,  
Denomination: S.A. Place of Interview: Mbale  
F.A.M. Primary school, Date of Interview:  
5th October, 1985.
  
16. Agnes Inyangu, Approximate Age: Over 70, Clan:  
Munondi, Status: Married with children and  
grand children, Denomination: R.C., Place of  
Interview, Mukingi, Date of Interview: 19th  
October, 1985.

17. Bartholomew Jumba, Approximate Age: Over 80, Age- set: Kegidi, Status: Retired School teacher, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Majengo Market, Date of Interview: 6th October, 1985.
18. Lena Kabagi, Approximate Age: Over 60, Clan: Mumaseero, Status: Widow, Denomination: P.A.G. Place of Interview: Ivona Village, Date of Interview: 10th October, 1985.
19. Wilson Kadioli, Approximate Age: Over 60, Clan: Muvuluqi, Status: Plant Operator, Denomination: P.A.G., Place of Interview: Kariobangi, Nairobi, Date of Interview: 10th January, 1986.
20. Emmah Kageha, Age: 50 Clan: Muvuluqi, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Kiminini Settlement scheme, Plot 108, Date of Interview: 29th December 1985.
21. Cornel Kalegi, Approximate Age: Over 70, Age- set: Imbalabala I, Clan: Muvuluqi, Status: Retired tailor, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Luhulu, Dates of Interview: 4th to 23rd October 1985 and 26th to 29th December. 1985.

22. Milcah Kamali, Approximate Age: Over 70,  
Status: Widow, Place of Interview: Luhulu  
Village: Date of Interview: 26th December, 1985.
23. Gerishom Kangayia, Age: Over 55 Age- set:  
Nzelolere, Status: Married with children and  
grand children Place of Interview: Mbale F.A.M.  
Primary School, Date of Interview: 5th October,  
1985.
24. Erastus Kevogo, Approximate Age: Over 75,  
Age - set: Imbalabala, Clan: Mulungusia,  
Status: Father of Samuel Mwanzi, Denomination:  
F.A.M., Place of Interview: Ondeyo Village,  
Date of Interview: 9th October, 1985.
25. Amos Kihugwa, Age: Over 55, Status: Retired  
Provincial Information Officer, Place of  
Interview: Majengo Market, Date of Interview:  
6th October, 1985.



27. Wilson Lugadiru, Age: 38, Age-set: Ifomu,  
Status: Primary School teacher Denomination:  
F.A.M., Place of Interview: Kigama Village Date  
of Interview: 18th October, 1985.
28. Abdalla Maina, Age: 41 Age-set: Selula Clan:  
Munangwe (Nyole), Status: Headmaster, Ondeyo  
Primary School, Denomination: Islam, Place of  
Interview: Mbale F.A.M. Primary School, Date of  
Interview: 5th October, 1985.
29. Arthur Matia, Age: 44, Age-set: Selula, Clan:  
Mulugiri, Status: Teacher at Keveye Secondary  
School, Denomination S.A., Place of Interview:  
Itando Village, Date of Interview: 6th October,  
1985.
30. Father Sebastian D. Meza of Missionaries of  
Guadalupe, Age: Over 50, Status: Parish Priest  
at Hambale Roman Catholic Mission, Denomination:  
R.C., Place of Interview: Hambale Roman Catholic  
Church Mission Office Date of Interview:  
15th October, 1985.

31. Dinah Miroyo, Approximate Age: Over 80, Clan: Muyonga, Status: Mother of Wilson Lugadiru, Denomination: F.A.M., Place of Interview: Ivona, Date of Interview: 18th October, 1985.
  
32. Roselyne Moge, Approximate Age: Over 70, Clan: Musuva, Status: Wife of Philip Lihindi, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Bukilagila Village, Date of Interview: 13th October, 1985.
  
33. Hesbon Moi, Age: 29, Age- set: Hybrid, Clan: Muligiri, Status: Primary School teacher, Place of Interview: Lwunza, Date of Interview: 8th October, 1985.
  
34. Anthony Mugami, Age: 15 Age-set: Umugelo, Clan: Muvulugi, Status: Primary School Pupil, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Luhulu, Date of Interview: 6th October, 1985.

35. David K. Mugami, Age: 40, Age- set: lfomu, Clan: Muvulugi, Status: Senior Clerical Officer, Denomination: P.A.G., Place of Interview: Luhulu, Date of Interview: 19th October, 1985.
36. John Muloma, Approximate Age: Over 60, Clan: Munondi, Place of Interview: Bukilagila Village, Date of Interview: 13th October, 1985.
37. Gladys Mwanzi, Age: Over 40, Status: Wife of Samwel Mwanzi, Place of Interview: Ondeyo, Date of Interview: 9th and 19th October, 1985.
38. Jackson Mwanzi, Age: Over 45, Clan: Mulungusia, Status: Headmaster, Mukingi Primary School, Place of Interview: Mable F.A.M. Primary School, Date of Interview: 5th October, 1985.
39. Samwel Mwanzi, Age: 41, Age-set: Nzelolere, Clan: Mulungusia, Status: Assistant Chief, Mbale sub-Location, Place of Interview: Ondeyo, Dates of Interview: 9th and 19th October, 1985.

40. John Mwavichi, Age: 40 Age-set: Ifomu, Clan: Muvulugi, Status: Hawker Bussiness, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Luhulu, Date of Interview: 6th to 12th October, 1985 and 28th to 29th December, 1985.
41. Delesina Mweleshi, Approximate Age: Over 70, Status: Married with children and grand children Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Bukilagila, Date of Interview: 13th October, 1985.
42. David Ng'alo, Approximate Age: Over 70, Clan: Mulugiri, Status: Church Elder, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Luhulu, Date of Interview: 23rd October, 1985.
43. Sister Elvira Olvera, of Missionaries of charity of Mary Immaculate, Age: Over 45, Status: Teacher at Maragoli Girls' High School, Place of Interview: Maragoli Girls' High School, Denomination: R.C., Dates of Interview: 15th and 22nd October, 1985.

44. Zebedee Otengo, Age: 44, Age- set: Nzelolere, Clan: Mulungusia, Status: Deputy Head Teacher, Mbale F.A.M. Primary School, Place of Interview: Mbale F.A.M. Primary School, Date of Interview: 5th October, 1985.
45. Bernard Ovinjo, Age: 15, Age- set: Omugelo, Clan: Muvulugi, Status; Primary School Pupil, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Luhulu, Date of Interview; 19th October, 1985.
46. Philip Kabagi Ovwivu, Approximate Age: Over 70, Age- set: Imbalabala, Clan: Mugisemba-Mudegu, Status: Married with children and grand children, Place of Interview: Lusambwa-Mudete, Date of Interview: 10th October, 1985.
47. Isaac Sambaya, Approximate Age: Over 70, Clan: Mulungusia, Status: Church Elder, Denomination: F.A.M., Place of Interview: Ondeyo, Date of Interview: 10th October, 1985.

48. Jorum Sibe, Approximate Age: Over 60, Place of Interview: Luhulu Village, Date of Interview: 25th December, 1985.
49. Father Sergio of Missionaries of Guadalupe, Age: Over 50, Status: Parish Priest Hambale Catholic Mission, Denomination: R.C., Place of Interview: Hambale Catholic Mission, Date of Interview: 29th October, 1985.
50. Celia Vigedi, Approximate Age: Over 65, Clan: Mulungusia; Status: Wife of Cornel Kalegi, Denomination: R.C.? Place of Interview: Luhulu, Dates of Interview: 4th to 23rd October, 1985, also 26th to 30th December, 1985.
51. Zipporah Vugudza, Approximate Age: Over 80, Clan: Mukevembe, Status: Married with children and grand children. Denomination: F.A.M., Place of Interview: Lwunza Village, Date of Interview: 8th October, 1985.

52. C.M. Wanungo, Age: Over 30 Clan: (Bukusu)  
Status: Climatologist at the Western  
Agricultural Research Station-Kakamega, Place  
of Interview: W.A.R.S. Kakamega, Date of  
Interview: 22nd October, 1985.

APPENDIX II

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

"BIRTH AND INITIATION INTO ADULTHOOD IN RELATION  
TO BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION AMONG THE AVALOGOOLI  
OF KENYA"

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Denomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_

Age grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Boys: \_\_\_\_\_

Girls: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Sub-Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Village: \_\_\_\_\_

Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Clan: \_\_\_\_\_

1. THE AVALOGOOLI - SETTING AND BACKGROUND

(i) Who are the Avalogooli?. Where did they come from in order to settle in the present Vihiga Division?.

(ii) Name some of the clans that are found in



Maragoli and briefly state how they are related to Mulogooli.

- (iii) How was the traditional society organized?  
(The family - Economic - Social - Cultural - Religious and Political Organization).
- (iv) What were the duties of men, women and children in the society?.

## 2. THE RITES OF PASSAGE

- (i) What were the most important stages that an individual underwent in life?.
- (ii) State briefly how these rites were conducted?
- (iii) Why were these rites of passage important?

## 3. BIRTH AND CHILD-NAMING

- (i) What preparations did a couple observe in readiness to beget children?
- (ii) How did a pregnant woman behave?. How was she expected to behave towards her husband and her in-laws?.
- (iii) What role did the husband play when his wife was pregnant?.
- (iv) State briefly what happened at childbirth?
- (v) How was the umbilical<sup>cord</sup> treated after delivery?
- (vi) What were the characteristics of a safe birth?.

- (vii) What symbols were used to warn visitors about the sex of the baby?.
- (viii) How was child legitimacy tested?
- (ix) How was the baby and its mother protected from the evil eyes of the neighbours?.
- (x) Why was childbirth considered an important ritual among the Avalogooli? State briefly the ceremonies that were observed at childbirth?.
- (xi) How was the child naming ceremony conducted?.
- (xii) What was the Liswakila rite? How was it conducted?.
- (xiii) What role did the father, mother, neighbours and relatives play at the birth of a new baby?.

#### 4. INITIATION INTO ADULTHOOD

- (i) Why do the Avalogooli still practice male circumcision?
- (ii) What preparations were made in readiness for this rite by the parents, boys, elders, and relatives?.
- (iii) What were the other ceremonies that were associated with the process of initiating boys into adulthood?.

- (iv) How did the boys behave after circumcision?.  
How were they expected to behave in their society?.
- (v) What teachings did the boys receive while in their seclusion huts?.
- (vi) Is the practice of circumcision today the same as it used to be carried out in the traditional society?.
- (vii) How were girls initiated into adulthood?.
- (viii) What was the importance of initiating boys and girls into adulthood?.

#### 5. CATHOLICISM IN VIHIGA DIVISION

- (i) How did Catholicism reach the Avalogooli?
- (ii) What was the attitude of the Avalogooli towards Christianity when it was first introduced in Vihiga Division?.
- (iii) What was the impact of Christianity on the traditional practices of the Avalogooli?.
- (iv) What was the attitude of the Avalogooli Christians towards their rites of passage after conversion?.

#### 6. THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

- (i) How many sacraments do the Roman Catholic Christians recognize?.

- (ii) What sacraments do the Avalogooli Christians consider as being important in their lives?.
- (iii) What aspects do they consider important in these sacraments?.

## 7. BAPTISM

- (i) How did Baptism originate?. How is it conducted in the Roman Catholic Church?.
- (ii) Why is baptism considered an important sacrament by Christians?.
- (iii) Why are infants and those in danger of death baptized?.
- (iv) What are the different types and Modes of Baptism? Do they have the same meaning and symbolism?.
- (v) Do the Avalogooli Christians notice any relationship between Baptism and Birth rites?.

## 8. CONFIRMATION

- (i) How did the sacrament of Confirmation Originate and how is it observed in the Roman Catholic Church?.
- (ii) What is the significance of this sacrament to the lives of the Avalogooli Christians?.

- (iii) Do the Avalogooli Christians notice any relationship between confirmation and initiation into adulthood?.
- (iv) What other relationships can we draw between the remaining sacraments and the other rites of passage among the Avalogooli?.

9. EVALUATION

- (i) What are your views as regards this research?. Is it relevant to our contemporary society?.
- (ii) What are the other areas that you consider important for research that have not been covered by this questionnaire?.