

**INVESTIGATION OF KIPSIGIS WORLDVIEW ITEMS TOWARDS  
UNDERSTANDING THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF SALVATION  
THROUGH INCULTURATION APPROACH: A CASE OF  
KERICHO SUB-COUNTY**

**BY**

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THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PHILOSOPHY  
AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**NOVEMBER, 2015**

**DECLARATION**

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

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

Signed ..... Date: .....

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents Zachary and Martha Lang'at, my beloved siblings Nasion, Nathan, Naftali, and Elizeba together with my fiancée Jessica.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I thank God for His grace and good health throughout the study period. A study of this magnitude cannot be undertaken single handedly. Many personalities and institutions have contributed in different ways in helping me complete this work. I may not be able to mention all of them, but only a few in representations of others. I wish to first acknowledge the University of Nairobi for granting me the admission to undertake this study; together with USAID Kenya for the financial support that has seen me this far.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACS:	African Christian Studies
ACT:	African Christian Theology
AFER:	African Ecclesiastical Review
AG:	<i>Ad Gentes</i> (Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church)
AMECEA:	Association of Member Episcopal Conference of Eastern Africa
Art.:	Article
ATR:	African Traditional Religion
CCC:	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CHIEA:	Catholic Higher Institution of Eastern Africa
CUEA:	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
BD:	Dictionary of Bible
DBT:	Dictionary of Biblical Theology
DFT:	Dictionary of Fundamental Theology
DHS:	Denzinger and H. Schonmetzer, <i>Enchiridion Symbolorum: Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum</i> (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1965)
DNT:	Dictionary of New Testament
DV:	<i>Dei Verbum</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)
EBT:	Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology
EN:	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> (Evangelization in the Modern World)
EG:	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> (The Joy of the Gospel)

GS:	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)
<i>Ibid:</i>	<i>Ibidem</i> (in the same work just quoted)
JKML:	Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library
LG:	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)
NA:	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> (Declaration on the relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions)
NCE:	The New Catholic Encyclopedia
NJB:	New Jerusalem Bible
NT:	New Testament
OT:	Old Testament
RCC:	Roman Catholic Church
RH:	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i> (The Redeemer of Man)
RM:	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i> (The Mission of the Church)
SCC:	Small Christian Community
TDNT:	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TI:	Karl Rahner's Theological Investigations
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
WCC:	World Council Churches

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates Kipsigis Worldview items for better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation in Kericho Sub-County using inculturation approach. The problem that led to the study is that even though there has been a deliberate effort by the Roman Catholic Church (henceforth RCC) to inculturate Kipsigis cultural values, the Kipsigis Worldview items have been neglected yet they are very important in Kipsigis philosophy of life. Admittedly, songs, dances and prayers have been inculturated in popular liturgy and catechesis leaving out the other fundamental items. Thus for a more effective ministry to the Kipsigis, the RCC ought to inculturate the main Worldview items to better propagate Good News of salvation thereby assisting the community or communities to own it. This is among the issues the study strives to address. The study also sought to contribute to knowledge by perusing the impact of Kipsigis Worldview items on a beneficial explanation of the doctrine of salvation.

The main goal of this study, therefore, is to investigate Kipsigis Worldview items in Kericho Sub-County so as to enhance a better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation using inculturation approach as a model for other ethnic communities. This is achieved through the following specific objectives: to examine Kipsigis Worldview items that enhance a better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation by means of inculturation; to explore RCC's teachings and theologians' reflections on inculturation; to confront emerging insights from Kipsigis Worldview items with RCC's and theologians' explanation of salvation eventually drawing out the emerging implications of the study areas for further research.

The main hypothesis of the study is that the Kipsigis Worldview items when properly investigated and critically analyzed contribute to a better understanding and propagation of the RCC doctrine of salvation. This is specifically hypothesized as follows: critically examined, employing inculturation approach, the Kipsigis Worldview items enhance better understanding and elaboration of the RCC doctrine of salvation; the RCC and theologians pragmatically advocate for the need to inculturate the aforementioned Christian doctrine thereby providing invaluable teachings concerning inculturation; the doctrine of salvation as expounded by RCC and theologians is invaluable but not sufficient for African world-view; Kipsigis Worldview items *vis-a-vis* RCC together with theologians' insights are invaluable in comprehending and elaborating the doctrine of salvation. On the basis of this, far reaching implications and emerging recommendations can be usefully drawn herewith.

The theoretical framework comprises four complementary theories that guided the study, namely: Congar's general revelation theory; Boffs' mediation theory; redaction criticism theory as propagated by scholars like Käsemann, Marxsen, Conzelmann, Fuchs and Bornkamm; and Nyamiti's *nexus mysteriorum* theory. Boffs' theory supported this study methodologically by giving the three important stages of doing research namely: social analysis which involves inserting oneself into the base community (in our case Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County) to find out the state of affairs; the second stage is that of hermeneutical mediation which involves finding the will of God found in the Scriptures and genuine Christian Tradition on the issue at hand; and finally that of praxis which



involves drawing out invaluable transforming recommendations. Redaction criticism theory advises on the need to treat scriptural texts as unified literally units allowing Biblical passages' analysis at scholarly level thereby enabling us to source scientifically from the Scriptures. Congar's general revelation theory legitimized our effort by arguing that all ethnic groups, including Kipsigis, are endowed with Godly characteristics and means of salvation for its members, which challenged the study to find out the salvation elements vital in understanding the RCC doctrine of salvation. Nyamiti's *nexus mysteriorum* theory enables us to relate our opted for doctrine to other Christian doctrines instructing on essential interconnection of Christian mysteries.

In attaining its goal the study adopted a case study complemented with eclectic approach research design. This enabled the study to investigate and describe Kipsigis Worldview items in detail in context and in totality. The study targeted fifty respondents twenty of whom were Kipsigis traditionalists while the other thirty were members of the RCC in Kericho Sub-County. Snowball sampling technique was used to identify twenty Kipsigis traditionalists; non-probability purposive sampling technique was used to identify leaders and members of the RCC. Data collection instruments used included; questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Data analysis was done at both literal and interpretive level; Charles Nyamiti's methodological approach also played a very key role in data analysis.

In its findings and analysis, the study revealed that the Kipsigis Worldview items are rich with salvation items of anthropocentrism, vitality, dynamism, sacredness and communality. These were drawn from its rites of passage, items that relate to day to day activities and Kipsigis religious aspects. It further emerged that the RCC not only teaches but also instructs on the need and urgency of inculturating the Gospel to enable fit into particular cultural contexts. The insights emerged from various magisterial directives of the Church and theologians' reflections thus encouraging us to undertake the study. It also emerged that the RCC's theologians' reflections particularly the Western ones are still useful but insufficient for our African worldview. On this foundation, the need to inculturate the aforementioned doctrine among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County and others was shown to be indispensable.

Among other recommendations, the study recommended that, so as to make the doctrine of salvation be more relevant and meaningful among the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County, there was not only need to utilize Kipsigis items in catechesis. It is also important to propagate salvation as the fundamental way of life utilizing Kipsigis perception of salvation as elevated by the RCC's teachings and theologians' reflections on it.

The study further triggers important areas for more research. One of these is that, by virtue of the theory of *nexus mysteriorum*, other Christian mysteries like Christology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology can be explored using our case study as a humble model. Another area for further study is that of inculturating the doctrine we opted for from the point of view of other ethnic groups since the theory of general revelation discloses that all communities, and not just that of the Kipsigis, are gratuitously gifted with salvation characteristics that may be usefully exploited for a more useful evangelization.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

**African Theology:** The scientific and systematic effort, guided by reason illumined by faith (faith seeking understanding), to understand and present Christian faith in accordance with African needs and mentality (Nyamiti: 2005: 6).

**African Christian Theology:** A systematic and scientific understanding, presentation and concrete authentic interpretation of the Christian Faith/Gospel/Good News in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought forms and mentality of the Africans (Wachege: 1992: 42).

**Age-grades:** Different ranked phases through which all members of an age-set pass (Kaswiza: 1971: 22).

**Christocentric:** Christ-centered (Wachege: 2000:45)

**Church:** The community of those who have committed themselves to the person and cause of Jesus Christ and who bear witness to it as hope for all men and women; essentially linked to redeemer and Saviour, it is not isolated, self-satisfied religious association, but a community which forms a comprehensive community with others (Küng: 1977: 112).

**Culture:** The ensample of meanings and significations, values and models, underlying or incorporated into the activity and communication of a human group into the activity and regard by it as a proper and distinctive expression of its human reality (Asevedo: 1982: 5).

**Encyclicals:** These are circular letters written by the Pope to convey timely teachings on matters of faith and morals (The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia: 2001: 34).

**Exhortation:** An apostolic exhortation is a type of communication from the Pope of the RCC encouraging a community of people to undertake a particular activity. It is commonly issued in response to a Synod of bishops, hence known as Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia: 2001: 74).

**Inculturation:** Is a process of evangelization by which the Christian life and message are assimilated by a culture in such a way that not only are these life and messages expressed through the items proper to this culture but they come to constitute a principle of inspiration as well, and eventually a norm and a power of unification that transforms, re-creates, and revitalizes that culture. It connotes a relationship obtaining between faith and culture(s), which are realities that reach and embrace the totality of the human life and person, on the individual and communitarian plane (Asevedo: 1982: 23).

**Kinship:** The relationship between persons based on descent (usually by blood), and the relationship brought about by marriage (Kaswiza, 1971: 19).

**Magisterium:** The highest teaching authority in the RCC mandated by Jesus Christ under the leaderships of Pope-the successor of Apostle-the Vicar of Jesus Christ as the uniting shepherd (The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia: 2001: 72).

**Nucleus family:** A domestic family consisting of a married man and with (parents), and their offspring (child/ren) usually considered to be the most basic and universal unit (Kaswiza, 1971: 19).

**Objective Redemption:** This refers to Jesus living, dying and resurrecting for the salvation of many (Rahner: 1979: 199ff).

**Rites of Passage:** Ceremonies marking changes in social status or social position undergone as a person is transformed through the culturally recognized life phases of his/her society (Alviar: 1997: 20).

**Salvation:** A constant transforming process and grace-full reality of divinization, conversion and re-conversion with everlasting happiness in the heaven of eschaton as the goal made possible by objective redemption and realized freely in subjective redemption, endowing one with a chance to start a fresh as one perseveres in the realm of grace which in our Diaspora situation on earth, is in great danger of being disgraced owing to sinful state, sinful deeds, sinful

situations or environment in life imbued not only with good force but also with evil forces (Wachege: 2000: 16).

**Solidarity:** Etymologically the term is a decay of the Latin “*solidum*” and it is derived from Roman juridical circles where it meant that “each of the person in a group is responsible not only in part but for the whole”...It has come to signify “various ways of mutual dependence or belonging together.” The term is often interchangeably used with terms such as “cohesion,” “unity,” “integration,” “balance” and “harmony” (Kaswiza 1971: 11).

**Soteriology:** The doctrine of redemption- the view we take of people’s salvation, and Redemption or deliverance (Schillebeeckx: 1965: 34).

**Subjective Redemption:** The deliberate free response on the part of the recipient of the gift of salvation which is made possible by “objective redemption” (Rahner: 1979; 199ff).

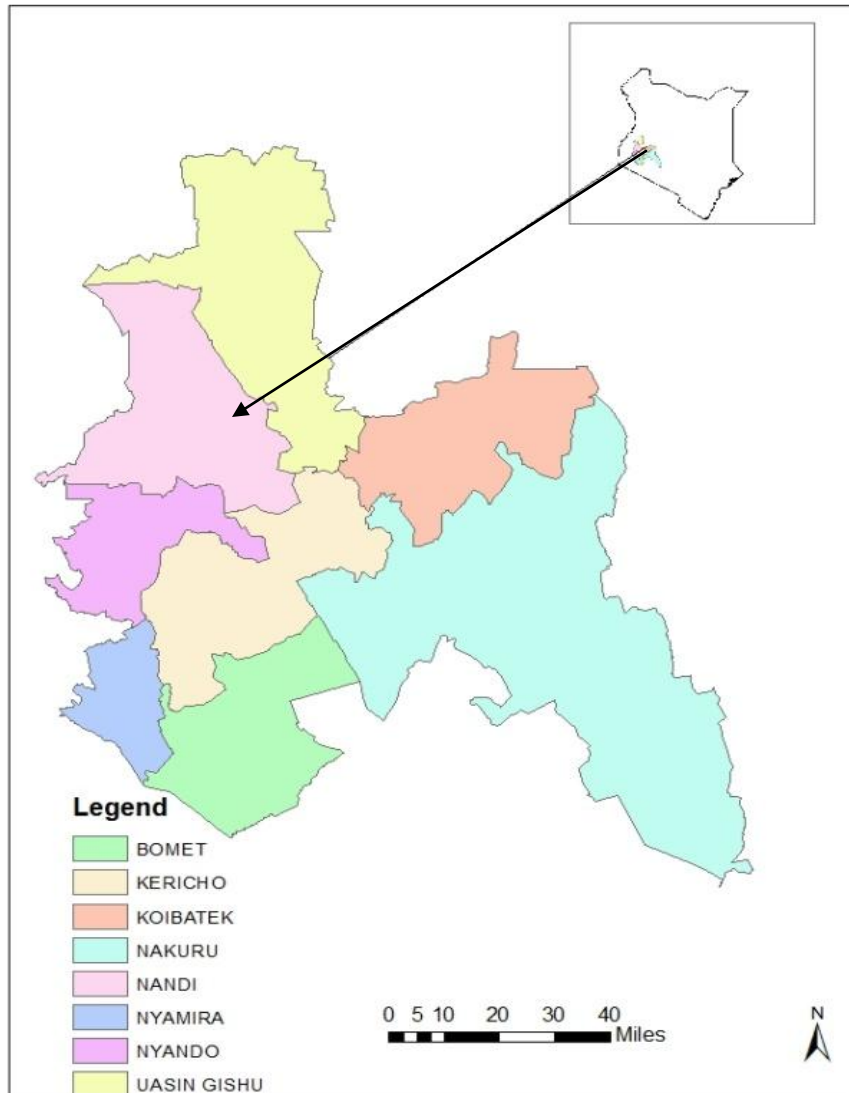
**Synod:** An official assembly of the Church which is held in Diocesan, Provincial, Regional, National and International levels (The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia: 2001: 65).

**Theocentric:** God-centered (Wachege: 2005: 17-18).

**Tribe (ethnic group):** A group of people possessing a common name who are and recognize themselves to be relatively distinctive and different from their neighbors in traditions, their way of life, their social system, culture and values and their language (Gulliver, 1959: 61)

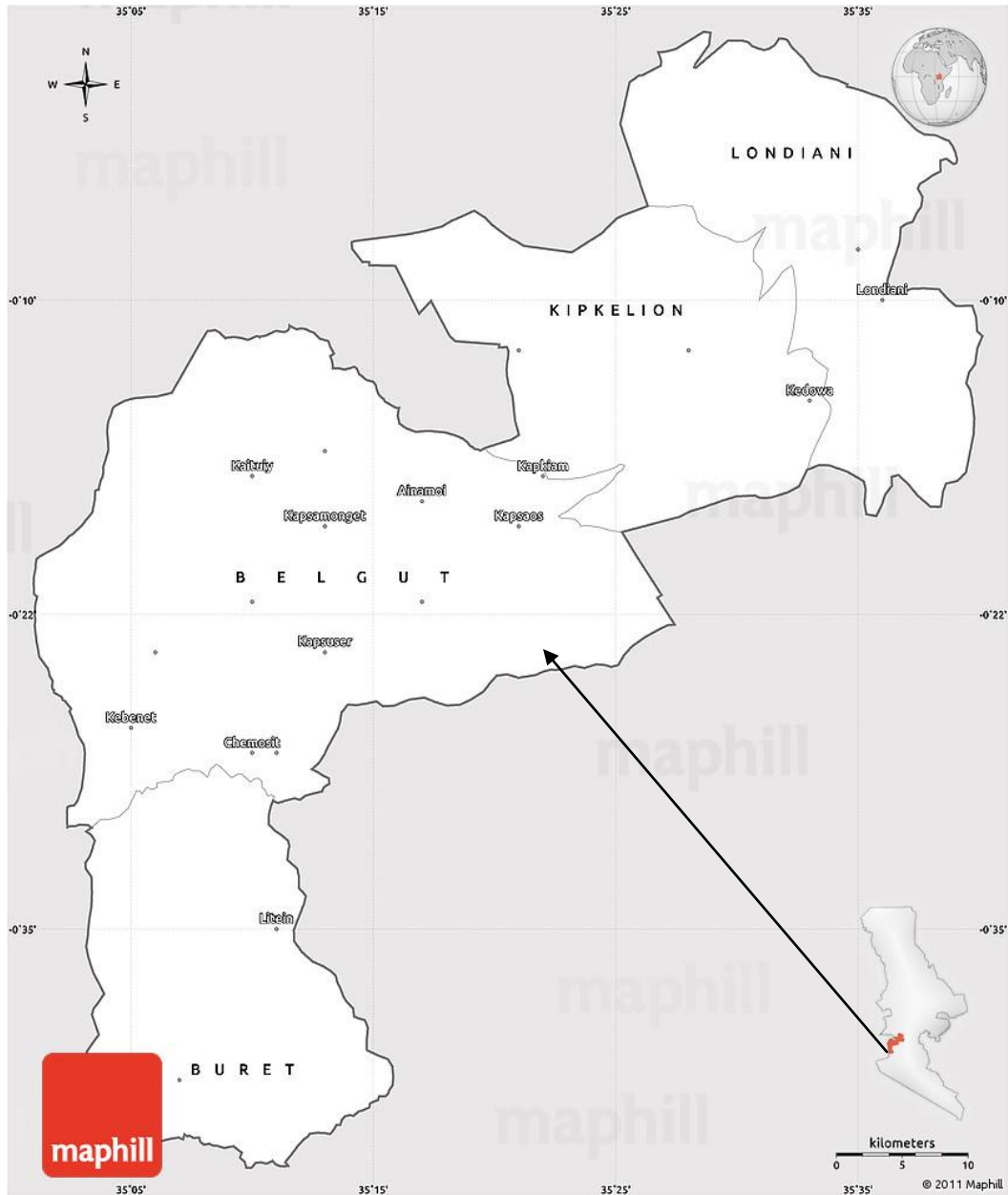
## LIST OF FIGURES

**Figure 1: Map showing the Locale of the study with the neighboring Counties**



**Source:** Kibabii University Geography Laboratory, 2014.

**Figure 2: Map showing the details of the Locale of the study**



**Source:** Maphill International, 2014.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, justification of the study, scope and limitation, literature review, theoretical framework, hypotheses and research methodology. The study aims at investigating worldview items among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County using inculturation approach. This is done to provide a crucial springboard into the study.

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The study on the doctrine of salvation and other related issues has been undertaken with some significant African contributions.<sup>1</sup> In this regard, therefore, we are not breaking a new ground. Yet, to our knowledge, no serious study has been done spelling out Kipsigis traditions, religion, culture and philosophy of life as containing some salvation characteristics as a result of divine general revelation to establish their impact on Catholic understanding and propagation of the above doctrine and the elevation by the Christian teaching thereby.

A considerable number of studies undertaken on the subject by both Africans and non-Africans, to our knowledge, focus on the effects of Christian doctrine of salvation on people's traditions, religions, and cultures and not the former's impact on the latter as Wachege rightly informs.<sup>2</sup> This study intends to set the Roman Catholic Church (henceforth RCC) doctrine of salvation in African beliefs and philosophy of life using the particular case of Kipsigis worldview items since God, through general revelation, has gratuitously instilled in all ethnic groups' worldviews various salvation characteristics. Among the Africans, these items- as we learn from Nyamiti- are: vitality, force, sacrality,

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<sup>1</sup> Among the scholars who have undertaken related study is P. N. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio -Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2000) and S. Bottignole *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity: Self Examination of an African Church* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> P. N. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio -Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2000), p. 28.

communality and anthropocentrism- which when explored and creatively utilized can enhance the realization of the above mentioned doctrine in a more significant way among the Kipsigis in particular and other ethnic groups in general. In this regard, Nyamiti's five items on the African worldview inspired this study to investigate the Kipsigis worldview items in relation to the doctrine of salvation.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, Magesa inspires the study also by the way he emphasizes the Second Vatican Council's instructions concerning the duty to establish a dialogue between the Christian Good News with African worldview – in our case the Kipsigis Worldview items. Magesa is pragmatic in implementing this new mode of theologizing via inculturation as exemplified by his two books entitled; *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*<sup>4</sup> and *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*.<sup>5</sup>

## **1.2 Statement of the Research Problem**

Though the process of inculturation in the RCC among the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County has been somehow realized in some areas, the main worldview items of the Kipsigis community have been virtually neglected. Since the Kipsigis Worldview items which are actually God-given are important because they make a Kipsigis a Kipsigis it follows that there is a valid need for the RCC agents of evangelization to address the issue in Kericho Sub-County which commands a great following of adherents for a more effective ministry particularly in this central doctrine namely, that of salvation. No doubt this would hopefully contribute significantly to the RCC's ministry of making Christian doctrines – especially that of salvation - at home to the Kipsigis in particular and among others in general. Such is the gap the study intends to fill up.

In relation to the above, Magesa points out the need to confront the Christian Good News with African cultures.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, commendable effort to this effect has been made by the

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<sup>3</sup> C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1, Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> L. Magesa. *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: St. Paul's Publication Africa, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> *Id. African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Book, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> L. Magesa. *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: St. Paul's Publication Africa, 2004), p. 19ff.



RCC evangelizers among the Kipsigis to integrate some aspects of Kipsigis worldview items in areas like: communal prayers; liturgical hymns for seasons like Christmas, Lent, Easter, normal Church Sundays, advent and burial together with matrimonial services; implementing musical instruments like drums; and in some dances in worship. Despite all these, yet a lot still remains to be done. Here of particular concern is the understanding and propagation of the Christian doctrines, more so that of salvation, employing the Kipsigis worldview items. This is among the issues the study addresses.

Another important element in the issue of research is that some previous and current studies on the RCC doctrine of salvation dwelt on the influence of the Catholic doctrine of salvation on different people's traditions, religions, and cultures and not vice versa as eloquently pointed out by Wachege.<sup>7</sup> This study opts to peruse also the impact of Kipsigis worldview items for a more meaningful understanding, articulation and propagation of the aforementioned doctrine. Moreover, issues like: what are Kipsigis worldview items that can enhance a better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation by means of inculturation? What do the RCC teach and instruct on inculturation? Are the RCC theologians' reflections on and about doctrine of salvation sufficient for African worldview? What useful Kipsigis Worldview items can be inculturated with the RCC understanding of salvation? And what implication can be drawn from the study? These were the main concerns of the study.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The main goal of the study is to investigate Kipsigis worldview items in Kericho Sub-County so as to enhance a better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation using inculturation approach.

The specific objectives are:

1. To explore Kipsigis worldview items that would enhance a better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation by means of inculturation.

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<sup>7</sup> P. N. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio -Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2000), p. 28.

2. To examine RCC's teachings and theologians' reflections on inculturation in relation to the doctrine of salvation.
3. To discuss RCC's teachings and contemporary theologians' reflections on the doctrine of salvation.
4. To confront emerging insights from Kipsigis worldview items with RCC's and theologians' explanation of salvation for mutual enrichment and accruing implications.

#### **1.4 Justification of the Study**

The RCC doctrine of salvation within the framework of inculturation from an African perspective, particularly Kipsigis worldview items, to our knowledge has not been done sufficiently at a scholarly level. The emphasis has been on Western articulations and world-views rather than a serious African point of view thus somehow ignoring God-given general revelation's benefits. Also as earlier mentioned, such works focus on the effects of Christian doctrine of salvation on people's traditions, religions, and cultures and not the African items' impact on Christian doctrine.

The study is also significant in that it engages Western theology on the RCC's doctrine of salvation into dialogue with an African philosophy of life, especially the Kipsigis one, for mutual benefit. Such a dialogue is expected to promote a deeper, more significant understanding and appreciation of the above stated doctrine. That is why the study endeavors to grapple with Kipsigis worldview items digging to draw out salvation elements they may contain that would go a long way in understanding and explaining the doctrine of salvation that would be more beneficial to them and to the others. The same could be handled from other African ethnic groups like the Agĩkũyũ<sup>8</sup> but for the limitations imposed in our work- that is why ours is a case study.

#### **1.5 Scope and Limitations**

The study was conducted among the Kipsigis of South Rift and especially those in Kericho Sub-County. The Kipsigis were purposely chosen because of their rich and

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<sup>8</sup> A good example in this regard is a book by Silvana Bottignole titled- *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity: Self Examination of an African Church* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984).

persistent worldview heritage. Further to that, a research carried out by Chepkwony<sup>9</sup> among the Kipsigis observed that traditional Kipsigis heritage had been sidelined by researchers including the Christian agents of the Good News. Though Kipsigis people are found in Kericho Sub-County and other areas of South Rift, Kericho Sub-County had been purposefully chosen as it was the cradle home of the Kipsigis people who later dispersed to other areas. There are other Kipsigis people living in Bomet and Bureti Sub-Countys.

The study was limited to the above aspects with a view to draw salvation items in them thus enhancing better understanding of the above RCC doctrine. The political aspect of the Kipsigis community were avoided since it is polemical, highly controversial, and does not fit the subject matter and has been changing due to the influence of Western education, partisan politics and culture. The research was thus addressed to both Kipsigis traditionalist and the RCC Kipsigis for purposes of getting authentic information with the above finality.

It should be noted forthwith that, while it would have been more realistic to base the study on many ethnic groups to have a wider representation, the study chose only one i.e., the Kipsigis. In addition to the reasons pointed out earlier, another fundamental one is that the study is both anthropological and theological. On the theological realm, divine revelation informs that there is family solidarity that embraces ethnic groups. It will be shown in the appropriate section that the endowment is an unmerited gift from God for individuals and common good. With this in mind, whatever is of value in a given ethnic group should benefit others as well. On the other hand, the shortcomings in a particular community ought to be helped by others according to the principle of mutual benefit. Yet it can still be asked: But why the Kipsigis and not any other sub-Kalenjin community namely, Marakwet, Pokot, Tugen, Elgeyo, Nandi, Sebei, Terik and Sabaot? The rationale behind such a limited scope is that among the cluster of the Kalenjin, the Kipsigis are the largest and their worldview philosophy of life has been neglected by the RCC evangelizers especially on the central Christian doctrine of salvation. Another limitation

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<sup>9</sup> A. K. Chepkwony. *"African Religion in the Study of Comparative Religion: A Case Study of the Kipsigis Religious Practices"*, PhD. Thesis, (Eldoret: Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya, 1997), pp. 172ff.

that may be pointed out is that of the choice of inculturation approach rather than that of liberation or even the perspective of re-construction. The argument that may rightly be raised is that by its very essence, inculturation already implies the other two orientations. So it is a question of emphasis and not exclusion.

## **1.6 Literature Review**

Congar's works do enrich this study on the issues related to salvation like ecumenism, ecclesiology, laity and the Holy Spirit as the principle of life that perpetually inspires both the clergy and the lay people to play their respective roles in witnessing and living the Good News of salvation. As shown bellow, Congar's books also provide the study with a clear perception of the Church in relation to God-given salvation ministry to all, the Kipsigis included, respecting people's worldview endowments and settings. This scholar inspires the study in the way he highlights the indispensability of worldview aspects of people with regard to the propagation and catechesis of salvation.<sup>10</sup> This confirmed the study aiming at having dialogue between Christianity- especially on the doctrine of salvation - and the Kipsigis religion and worldview. Congar gives further light with regard to the theory of general revelation and special revelation as taught by the RCC.<sup>11</sup> The theory points to us that the Kipsigis world-view is also gifted with Godly seeds that can be investigated and utilized in understanding and explaining the above doctrine in a manner that would be more comprehensible to this ethnic group- an exercise we call inculturation.

As a renowned ecclesiologist, Congar creates awareness that "it will be useful to look at the Church from each of two points of view: (1) as God's people, the community of Christians, she represents mankind toward Christ; (2) as institution, or Sacrament of salvation, she represents Christ toward the world."<sup>12</sup> According to him, these two perceptions are related. They are not to be dichotomized. As such: "two mediations are joined in the Church, one going up, or representative, the other coming down, or sacramental; and through them she is the place where Christ gives Himself to the world,

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<sup>10</sup> Y. Congar. *Essential Writings Selected by P. Lakeland* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> This theory is handled elsewhere in this sub-section.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.60.

and the world gives itself to Christ, the place where the two meet.”<sup>13</sup> On the bases of this, Congar instructs that: “When she takes root in some human grouping, there she makes Jesus Christ present at work, that Son of God of whom Paul writes that it is God’s pleasure through Him to win back all things, whether on earth or in heaven, into union with Himself, making peace with them through His blood, shed on the cross (Col.1:20).<sup>14</sup> As an authority in ecclesiology, Congar provides an incentive for us to undertake our kind of study to help accomplish such a ministering demand. It gave us such morale as important members of the “Family of God” gifted with different yet complementary talents (1Cor. 12:4-11). It also challenges us to examine the Kipsigis worldview items that can serve in the task of making the doctrine of salvation more meaningful among the Kipsigis and others in their capacity as members of the people of God.

Congar not only makes it explicit that though the Church exists for herself and as sacred thing in the world, nevertheless, she does not exist for herself since she has a mission to and a responsibility to the world.<sup>15</sup> He also explains the double-pronged calls that are seemingly antagonistic namely: that of belonging to the yonder life; and that of mission in the world.<sup>16</sup> He further informs that all are enabled witnesses empowered to testify and teach the Good News to others and among themselves. This is so since they benefit from the “ultimate activating principle” who is the Holy Spirit- the soul of the Church.<sup>17</sup> The scholar, moreover, informs that the Paraclete- so invaluable on the issue of salvation- is actually “a principle of life in the Church that is transcendent and yet active, dwelling in her, polarizing and drawing to Himself every element in the Church which is divine.”<sup>18</sup>

Congar developed the above most profoundly in his trilogy on the *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*.<sup>19</sup> In the light of John 14: 25-26; 16:12-14, Congar further enlightens the study even more with regard to the roles of the Holy Spirit. These are: testifying, teaching and

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p.61.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.61.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, pp. 62-63.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 186-188.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>19</sup> Y. Congar. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol. One: The experience of the Spirit* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983); -----, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol. Two: Lord and Giver of Life* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983); -----; *I Believe in the Holy Spirit, Vol. Three: The River of life (Rev 22:1) Flows in the East and in the West* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1983).

empowering us in view of the Kingdom of heaven in solidarity with our Saviour and Redeemer who left the Holy Spirit as a legacy to us.<sup>20</sup> Congar related the roles of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation and to the individual souls- including those of the Kipsigis- as being given, received, remaining with, witnessing, guiding and teaching (Gal.4: 4-6; Rom 8:15).<sup>21</sup>

While appreciating the above enrichment from Congar the study, nevertheless, identified a gap the study fills up. The shortcoming in relation to our work is that Congar did not focus on salvation as such. Neither did he opt for a specific ethnic group so as to dig for salvation items in a particular cultural setting- in the light of the theory of general revelation nor special revelation- that can help explicate and catechize such a community better on the given doctrine as the study does.

Nyamiti's African theological investigations titled *Studies in African Christian Theology* were God send for this study. The scholarly works equip us with significant inspirations in the task of assisting in propagating the RCC doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis members of the Body of Christ, methodological approach and the main items in African philosophy of life. As explained below, the study drew inspirations in the effort of systematically inculturating this doctrine for a better understanding, witnessing and spreading of the Good News towards the realization of the Kingdom of God.

Nyamiti reminds us that the core of Christianity is the same and our contribution will be in the way we explain the same doctrine the study opted for according to the needs and worldview of the Africans- in our case the Kipsigis of Kenya.<sup>22</sup> As such, Nyamiti helps the study not only to be clear on African Christian Theology but also to distinguish it from sociology, science of religion, philosophy of religion and social (cultural) anthropology- hence the stress on reason enlightened by faith as elaborated in Pope John Paul II's Encyclical titled *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason).<sup>23</sup> He also points out that "it essentially involves the effort to purify, rectify and transform or Christianize African

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>22</sup> C. Nyamiti. *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1- Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> John Paul II. *Faith and Reason (Fides et Ratio)* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1998).

religious and cultural values.”<sup>24</sup> He further reminds us that the main Christian sources of this way of doing theology are; the Bible and Tradition together with the African socio-cultural situation seen in relation to its past, present and future.<sup>25</sup>

Nyamiti is, moreover, keen on the issue of methodological approach which is well documented in his book<sup>26</sup>- which guides this study a great deal. Wachege summarizes Nyamiti’s methodology<sup>27</sup> itemizing it thus: the use of reason, implying the use of the idea of social anthropology and other useful sciences like philosophy, sociology, linguistics and history; the subordination of such anthropological data to Christian faith; the use of analogy when ascribing African categories and other cultured items to Christian mysteries; the employment of the principle of interconnection of Christian mysteries; and the relevance of the specific theology for human welfare/ultimate end thus implying drawing out the consequential pastoral implications. In relation to the above, Nyamiti enriches the study by presenting the five main items in the African world-view as understood by the Africans<sup>28</sup> that are very useful in doing a serious African Christian theology namely: life/vitality, dynamism/power, sacredness, community, anthropocentrism.

Furthermore, Nyamiti assists with regard to the nature of ancestors from an African point of view and the main characteristics of an African ancestor –which are useful in the study- namely: consanguineous kinship between the ancestor or ancestress with his/her earthly kin; super-human sacred status, usually acquired through death; exemplarity of conduct in human community; mediation...playing a mediatory role between his terrestrial kin members and the creator; and right (or title) to regular sacred communication with his earthly kin through frequent prayers and ritual donations.<sup>29</sup> The

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<sup>24</sup> C. Nyamiti. *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1*. (Nairobi: CUEA, 2006), p.6.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-61.

<sup>27</sup> P. N. Wachege. “Charles Nyamiti: Vibrant Pioneer of Inculturated African Theology,” in B. Bujo and J. I. Muya (Eds.) *African Theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Contribution of the Pioneers Vol.2* (Nairobi: Paulines Africa, 2006), p. 154.

<sup>28</sup> For an elaborate explanation on this issue, read- P. N. Wachege, *CRS 560: African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012), pp. 14-22.

<sup>29</sup>C. Nyamiti. *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.2 Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: An Essay on African Christology*. (Nairobi: CUEA, 2006), pp.3-12; ... *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.4. Christ’s Ancestral Mediation through the Church Understood as God’s Family: An Essay on African Ecclesiology* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2010), pp. 2ff.

above went a long way in assisting us formulate research question in relation to the subject we opted for.

Among the gaps noted in Nyamiti's works is that he does not show us how to go about the field research. That was why this study complemented his methodology with that of Boffs'. Another thing is that, although he acknowledges the Bible as a fundamental source of ACT his Biblical sourcing does not come up well. We fill up this gap by engaging redaction criticism as propagated by scholars like; Käsemann, Conzelmann, Marxsen, Fuchs and Bornkamm.

Another book that titled; *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontations to Dialogue*<sup>30</sup> enriches the study. Here, Dupuis while drawing his similitude from Jesus' attitude towards 'foreigners' –who did not belong to Israel and what he thought of their religious ideas, argues that there is need to demonstrate an attitude of sympathy and openness towards them rather than a negative and condemnatory one<sup>31</sup>. He observes that in non-Christian religious traditions are items that have salvation value and thus a positive significance in the divine plan for salvation of humankind and possible positive relationship with Christianity<sup>32</sup>. He further notes that the doctrine of the reign of God provides a theological foundation for interreligious dialogue<sup>33</sup>. He also observes that since all human beings regardless of their adherence to one religious tradition or another are fellow members of the reign of God and together called by God to make his reign grow in history toward eschatological fullness<sup>34</sup>. Dupuis then draws the conclusion that the difference of religious obedience that keep us separated are of less weight in God's eyes than a deep reality in which we are already united even before our common action<sup>35</sup>.

This book thus necessitated and legitimized interreligious dialogue-like the one between Kipsigis worldview items with the Catholic doctrine of salvation for mutual enrichment. This monograph moreover encourages our endeavour by championing a paradigm shift in

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<sup>30</sup> J. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 54.



the theological methods to be applied today; it calls for a change from the deductive approach to an inductive one which appreciates interreligious dialogue as well as which aims at contextualizing the Gospel message<sup>36</sup>. Dupuis adds that since we are living in a world of diverse ethnic groups, multicultural endowment and different religious faith affiliations, negative attitudes towards other and biased evaluation of others and their religious traditions are now obsolete<sup>37</sup>.

In his other publication namely *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*<sup>38</sup>, Dupuis outlines a positive shift in the RCC's attitude and understanding of the other religious traditions to how in God's plan these traditions could mediate salvation to their members.<sup>39</sup> Dupuis aptly puts it that in various traditions there are positive values which if properly inculturated lead to a better perception, understanding and spreading of the RCC's doctrine of salvation.<sup>40</sup> As seen in Dupuis' argumentation, he provokes the work at hand. Nevertheless, although Dupuis' contributions are of great help to the study, it is important to note that there is a knowledge gap to be filled. An example is that he did not only not show how to carry out inculturation, but he also did not show the worldview values that have salvation elements in a particular socio-cultural context, these lacuna among others formed the crux of the study.

Chepkwony in his PhD thesis gives an exposition on the origin, social, political, cultural and religious practices of the Kipsigis community.<sup>41</sup> He then systematically analyzes the religious practices of the Kipsigis with particular emphasis on the beliefs, rites of passage and rituals while showing its parallels and similarity with Christianity.<sup>42</sup> The study benefits from Chepkwony's work by utilizing the beliefs, rites of passage and rituals of the Kipsigis to draw out salvation items from it. However, it is vital to note that Chepkwony's study is on comparative study of religion hence, he does not endeavour to shed light on how the various worldview practices of the Kipsigis can be inculturated. In

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>38</sup> J. Dupuis. *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1997).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.100.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid, p.131.

<sup>41</sup> A. K. Chepkwony. "African Religion in the Study of Comparative Religion: A Case Study of the Kipsigis Religious Practices," PhD. Thesis, (Eldoret: Moi University, 1997), pp. 176ff.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 176ff.

the light of the foregoing, the study fills the gap by analyzing various traditional Kipsigis worldview items to enhance a better perception, understanding and propagation of the RCC's doctrine of salvation.

The other book that inspires the study is that of Fish and Fish titled, *The Kalenjin Heritage: Traditional Religious and Social Practices*.<sup>43</sup> Fishes as the missionaries of the African Gospel Mission in South Rift analyzes the Kipsigis anthropological community; having studied the Kipsigis social cultural and religious practices.<sup>44</sup> The gist of their book is to enlighten other mission groups who endeavour to establish their missions in Kipsigis land and the need to use Kipsigis religious and social practices attracting the community to Christianity. The book demystifies the worship of *Asiis* and brings to focus its corresponding redemptive analogies with the God of Abraham in the Bible. In the light of the above, it is important to note that for an effective evangelization, the histories and the cultural practices of the concerned communities are important. It is also wise to note that though Fishes' book endeavor to focus on corresponding redemptive analogies arising from Kipsigis worldview items, they do not analyze it within the framework of specific Christian doctrine and neither do they focus on a particular religious denomination for specificity and pragmatic sake. Furthermore, the book does not prescribe implications arising from the same. These are the gaps the study strives to fill up while enriching it from what was indicated earlier.

Peristiany carried out a phenomenal study on the social institutions of the Kipsigis and published it in his book titled - *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*.<sup>45</sup> He identifies the ancestral origin of the Kipsigis pointing it to Southern Sudan region<sup>46</sup>. He then proceeds to give customs of the Kipsigis people which was the main goal of his study<sup>47</sup>. He furthermore discusses the rites of passage, from birth to death together with giving both the cultural and religious significance of such to the community.<sup>48</sup> The scholar also

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<sup>43</sup> B. C. Fish and G. W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage: Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kericho, Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 279ff.

<sup>45</sup> J. G. Peristiany, *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1939).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

analyzes the social and political organization of the community.<sup>49</sup> It is notable that Peristiany's book is an ethnographical study on the Kipsigis community. This study appreciates the anthropological information of the Kipsigis community while complementing it with theological perspective.

Towett is another scholar who documented a history of the Kipsigis in his book titled - *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis*.<sup>50</sup> In the book, Towett analyzes the Kipsigis community. He gives an analysis on various oral theories on the origin of the name Kipsigis and the migratory routes of the Kipsigis till they settled in the present day South Rift.<sup>51</sup> Towett further presents the social, cultural and religious practices of the Kipsigis community.<sup>52</sup> Towett's book has a bend towards linguistics as well as the ethnology of the Kipsigis community. It also focuses on the social, cultural, and religious practices of the community with no concern for inculturational endeavour. As such, this study complements Towett's by striving to handle Kipsigis Worldview items for better understanding and propagation of the Catholic doctrine of salvation using inculturation approach.

Rahner provides invaluable reflections for the study. Among the most useful contributions from him is that of his theory of "Anonymous Christianity."<sup>53</sup> In the theory he postulates that all people (including the Kipsigis) are empowered in their own ways to react to God's universal redemptive revelation as God's salvation will for all; and that in accepting himself, man is accepting Christ as the absolute perfection and guarantee of his own anonymous movement towards God by grace.<sup>54</sup> It is also vital to note that in his theory which arises from Christology and anthropology, Rahner asserts that outside explicit Christianity, there is salvation and redemption<sup>55</sup>; and that Christ is the Saviour

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 57ff.

<sup>50</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1975).

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 57ff.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 58ff.

J. Dupuis. *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1997), p.144.

<sup>54</sup>K. Rahner. "Anonymous Christians", *T. I Vol.6* (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1974), pp.391- 4.

<sup>55</sup>*Id.*, "Observation on the Problem of "Anonymous Christians" *T. I vol. 6* (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1974), p. 294.

and Redeemer *par excellence* for both explicit and implicit Christians.<sup>56</sup> In the light of the foregoing observation, Rahner calls for the need to make Jesus and his message of salvation to be present in every generation, human culture, geographic location, historical epoch and situation of life. This legitimizes the endeavour to dig into Kipsigis worldview way of life so as to get positive items that would enrich the understanding and propagation of the RCC doctrine of salvation.

Basing himself on the perception of the Agĩkũyũ notion of an elder in his monograph titled - *Jesus Christ our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of an Elder*<sup>57</sup> Wachege endeavors to “create” an inculturated *Mũthamaki* Christology. He argues that each Church epoch understands, presents and concretely interprets the same Jesus Christ according to its needs, thought forms and aspirations.<sup>58</sup> With this in mind, he strives to come up with what he calls an “Agĩkũyũ *Mũthamaki* Christology” based on the concept of elderhood as understood by the Agĩkũyũ.<sup>59</sup>

First and foremost, after identifying the Christian mystery i.e. Christology, to inculturate he peruses the anthropological data. This he does by documenting the Agĩkũyũ social and religious way of life. Under this Wachege dwells on: historical and social contents of the Agĩkũyũ;<sup>60</sup> elderhood within the Agĩkũyũ world-view;<sup>61</sup> and relevance of the Agĩkũyũ elderhood for today and the future and the general conclusion thereby.<sup>62</sup> He then proceeds to the theological area where he explicates Christ as *Mũthamaki* (Ideal Elder). Here he grapples with: Jesus’ *Ũthamaki* (Ideal Elderhood) in the Bible;<sup>63</sup> inculturation in the Church;<sup>64</sup> and crowns it all with *Mũthamaki* Christology.<sup>65</sup> Using the analogies between Agĩkũyũ *Ũthamaki* and the elderhood of Christ, Wachege concludes that, analogically,

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<sup>56</sup>*Id.*, “Anonymous Christians and the Missionary Task of the Church”, *T.I* Vol. 12 (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1974), pp. 174ff.

<sup>57</sup> P. N. Wachege. *Jesus Christ our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of an Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publisher, 1992).

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, p.147.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 182ff.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-16.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.17-73.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.74-100.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.104-146.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.147-181.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-243.

Jesus Christ is the *Mũthamaki par excellence* based on the Agĩkũyũ philosophy of elderhood. To his credit; the author does not stop here. He actualizes the theory of interconnection of Christian mysteries by relating his *Mũthamaki* Christology to other Christian mysteries like the Trinity, Pneumatology, incarnation, redemption/salvation, eschatology and ecclesiology.<sup>66</sup> He goes on to draw out the consequences of his study. In this he gives the pastoral relevance of his inculturated *Mũthamaki* Christological study. This he does by drawing out spiritual, catechetical and pastoral implications of his study as he employs the theory of interconnection of Christian mysteries.<sup>67</sup>

A closer scrutiny of Wachege' work inspires us to inculturate the RCC's doctrine of salvation utilizing Kipsigis Worldview items. He enriches the study on the issue of methodology, anthropological setting, strong Biblical foundation of the study and scrutinizing objectively to unearth the point of concurrences and divergences between respective African data and Christian sources. He also creates the awareness on the need to employ analogy when attributing African titles to Christ or other Christian doctrines. Furthermore, Wachege exemplifies how to employ *nexus mysteriorum* not just theoretically but practically. One should, nevertheless, note that while Wachege's study is mainly Christological, ours is fundamentally Soteriological by intent thereby endeavoring to focus on the worldview items of the Kipsigis community with an aim to enhance better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis and others.

In his other book titled - *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio -Religio-Philosophical Touch*,<sup>68</sup> Wachege underscores the need to inculturate the Christian doctrine of salvation utilizing Godly salvific elements which should be explored in our African world-view. He explains that such an engagement would not be particular to us since it has been the practice in the history of the Church.<sup>69</sup> This is how he puts it: "We should, therefore, not hesitate to draw from our heritage the positive values in connection with salvation affairs to let our religio-cultural values inspire us. We have it on the authority and, indeed, evidence of history of Christianity that our Christian predecessors

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp.234-243.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp.244-257.

<sup>68</sup> P. N. Wachege. *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio -Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2000).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

in the early Church, mediaeval period, reformation epoch, enlightenment time and even those of the contemporary era did not and do not deem it unChristian to enrich 'Christianity' with 'non-Christian' or even pagan elements and articulations."<sup>70</sup>

He observes that proper critical analysis, modification and Christianization of these positive items would expose believers to mature witness of salvation in all spheres of life and in more understandable terms. Wachege asserts that in indigenous people's riddles, songs, myths, proverbs, plays, oral narratives, legends, idioms, indigenous sage, and religions are imbued with salvation items.<sup>71</sup> Thus Wachege's work not only endorsed our kind of study but also necessitated its urgency to investigate Kipsigis Worldview items for better understanding and propagation of the RCC doctrine of salvation in Kericho Sub-County. Furthermore, Wachege's book triggers the awareness that virtually all the works on the RCC doctrine of salvation over emphasized the influence of this doctrine on people's cultures while ignoring the other point of reference that is people's cultures influence on the articulation and the perception of the foresaid doctrine.<sup>72</sup> While this crucial insight is among the important inspirations to the study, nevertheless, Wachege does not actually reflect from the Kipsigis point of view as this study intended to do. This is the challenge the study takes to complement Wachege's invaluable effort.

The other document that provokes the study is Pope John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio*.<sup>73</sup> In this Apostolic Exhortation, the Pope examines the subject of the permanency of the Church's missionary mandate thus inviting the Church to renew her missionary commitment.<sup>74</sup> He presents the Church as a sign and instrument of salvation divinely mandated to intervene between culture and the Gospel message for a more significant understanding of the Gospel message among the various cultural contexts.<sup>75</sup> In this papal document, salvation is interpreted as offered to all; the universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Christ and have entered the Church but also to those who are not explicit believers. Such a notion is very close to

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 28ff.

<sup>73</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter: Redemptoris Missio (The Mission of the Church)*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2003.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 8ff.

Rahner's theory of "Anonymous Christians" explained earlier; thus the document implores all to make salvation be presented to all in their various geographical, cultural and historical contexts<sup>76</sup>. The document, furthermore, echoes the message of AG art.22 where dialogue with other religions is emphasized for a mutual enrichment arguing that "in the light of the economy of salvation, the Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue."<sup>77</sup> With the foregoing then, the study is then challenged to do an inculturational investigation with an aim of making the RCC doctrine of salvation truly present and genuinely owned among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County in their socio-cultural context and other communities with similar values. While this document gives a powerful go ahead for the study, it is important to note that it does not show us how to inculturate worldview items as this study does.

In his book entitled - *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*<sup>78</sup> Magesa analyses the issue of inculturation in the three Eastern African countries namely: Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania in a general manner. He notes that previous studies on inculturation have been largely theoretical and rarely benefitting empirical research.<sup>79</sup> He commendably cites research evidence and comparative assessment in the three countries on the issue. However, the knowledge gap that the study endeavors to fill is that he looks at inculturation in a general manner while this study narrows itself to a particular case. Magesa does not focus on a specific area such as the Kipsigis worldview items as this study does. In his research in Kenya, he focuses more on Nairobi City which understandably comprises a large population of diverse cultural backgrounds with different faith affiliations. He did not focus enough on an in-depth research on a particular area of inculturation that this study delves into. Magesa's study aims at finding out the extent of the process of inculturation and the areas that have been Inculturated and the accruing benefit to respective people. A number of respondents pointed out the need to inculturate worldview items, an aspect which this study drew its inspiration.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>78</sup> L. Magesa. *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: St. Paul's Publication Africa, 2004).

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

In his other compelling book titled; *What is not Sacred? African Spirituality*<sup>80</sup>, Magesa attempts to answer searching questions like: with the arrival of European missionaries, did Christianity replace African values? Or did African cultures maintain their religious worldviews and distinctive spirituality even after accepting the salvation message of Christianity?<sup>81</sup> Magesa argues that despite the early Christian missionaries' reluctance in acknowledging the worth of African spiritual practices and religious culture terming them primitive, the incarnational spirituality of those cultures remains vibrant and visible today, and have much to offer and teach other cultures, both Christian and non-Christians.<sup>82</sup>

Magesa further notes that African cultural heritage persists and permeates African individual and social consciousness;<sup>83</sup> He notes that concepts of life shape the whole behaviour of men and women in a world of so called modernity and at a time of globalization.<sup>84</sup> He reiterates that even those called intellectuals at some point in their life do not hesitate to go to their traditional roots to find solution to some problems in their lives since this traditions shape and nature their whole life.<sup>85</sup> He cites examples of African elements that are still persistent which include witchcraft, practice of medicine, and the various charismatic movements in Africa today.<sup>86</sup>

This study benefits from his argument that so as to make a great impact among the African people, Christianity ought to dialogue with African cultures, including that of the Kipsigis, so that the double identity crisis among the African Christians can be solved. Magesa' reflections, however, do not purpose to show how to inculturate African customs. This is a gap the study fills by inculturating Kipsigis Worldview items so as to enhance the understanding of the RCC's doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis faithful in Kericho Sub-County.

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<sup>80</sup> L. Magesa, *What is not Sacred? African Spirituality* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013).

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.



Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation namely *Catechesis Tradendae*<sup>87</sup> motivates this study since it gives us a powerful impetus towards the opted for orientation. It is vital to note also that this is among the first Papal documents to officially use the word "inculturation." The Papal Exhortation asserts that the Gospel message is not enshrined in only one particular culture but in various cultures of diverse people.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, the document implores the catechists to study and understand various cultures in terms of their components, significance and values before evangelizing the concerned people.<sup>89</sup> The document argues further that this will ensure a more significant propagation of the Gospel message to the concerned individuals.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the Pope argues that the Biblical culture in the Scriptures ought to enter into dialogue with the African cultures, in our case the Kipsigis culture, for a mutual enrichment.<sup>91</sup>

In this Exhortation, the Pontiff is calling for a deep inculturation of the Gospel message in African cultures<sup>92</sup> – that of the Kipsigis included. In this way, he is of the opinion that, the two will edify each other: the Gospel message will Christianize and purify the cultural values while the cultural items will enable more elaborate perception, understanding and propagation of the Gospel message.<sup>93</sup> This Apostolic Exhortation then confirms the study geared towards investigating Kipsigis worldview items with a view to inculturating the positive values so as to enhance a better understanding of the RCC's doctrine of salvation. It is important to note that even though this Church document is of great help for the study, nevertheless, it has a knowledge gap to be filled. The issue here is that the Exhortation does not show us how to carry out the study. Neither does it give us the kind of salvation values that ought to be inculturated as this study does.

Another important scholar who adds value to this study is Collins in his Biblical book titled - *Introduction to the New Testament*.<sup>94</sup> The book, more so that sub-section dealing

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<sup>87</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Catechesis Tradendae: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1979).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p.24.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>94</sup> R. F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1983).

with redaction criticism under historical critical method of approaching the scriptures,<sup>95</sup> is an eye opener in rooting our work in historical critical method of NT study. It is highlighted by scholars like Käsemann, Conzelmann, Marxsen, Fuchs and Bornkamm.<sup>96</sup> It actually equips us with redaction criticism theory for a proper exegesis of relevant Biblical texts. As previously explained by Nyamiti, the Bible and Tradition are the main sources of African Christian Theology requiring a scientific sourcing in theologizing. That was why Collins' book comes in handy. Its insights give us an important tool for critically sourcing from the Biblical documents as unified literary unit. It also assisted the study, while sourcing and grounding our work on the Scriptures, to do so considering each author's peculiarities, goal, approach and editorship. In this way, the study is well disposed in handling relevant Scriptural sources both critically and genuinely-hence the invaluableity of this book.

Having pointed out the usefulness of the aforementioned book, there is a gap that requires attention. The shortcoming is that of over-emphasizing faith in Jesus Christ from historical perspective and not doing the same with regard to the experiences of the recipients of Christianity. We fill this gap by taking into consideration the experiences of the believers in their relationship with Jesus Christ who is their Saviour and Redeemer in the issue of salvation. Notwithstanding this limitation, the book, nevertheless, helps the study in doing exegesis in an objective way with regard to relevant Biblical passages that sheds light to the subject the study chose.

Another very useful work is the one authored by the two brothers Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, titled *Introducing Liberation Theology*<sup>97</sup> which enriches us with important illuminations into the nature of Liberation Theology and the methodological approach. Boffs' study, equips us also with mediation theory which is of great assistance to the study.<sup>98</sup> This methodological approach cum theory of mediation follows this sequence:<sup>99</sup> That of "insertion and social-analysis" to get first hand information on the ground – in

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., pp.196-229.

<sup>96</sup> Read more about this in- P.N. Wachege. *CRS 202: Introduction to the New Testament* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2010), pp. 170- 180.

<sup>97</sup>L. Boff and C. Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

our case that of Kipsigis worldview items on salvation in Kericho Sub-County; that of “theological reflection” in which we delve into Biblical sources to find and implement the will of God with regard to understanding and preaching the doctrine of salvation among people- in our case the Kipsigis of Kericho; that of “praxis” which aims at providing the transforming way forward, the implications and areas for further research.

Despite the above positive items, one encounters a shortcoming that has to be taken into consideration. The limitation is that the Boffs do not show how one should source from the Bible to get the will of God as redaction criticism Biblicists do. Neither do they address adherents to non-Christian believers - an area we fill up with Dupuis’ treatise on inter-religious dialogue which was handled previously.

*Evangelii Nuntiandi*<sup>100</sup> is another document that arouses the study. In the Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul VI, while speaking to a Synod held in December 1975, encourages the process of inculturation. In the document, the Church is tasked with the role of evangelizing bearing in mind the needs of the diversity of disciples belonging to different cultures and world-views.<sup>101</sup> It demands of the evangelizers to pay attention to the message, its recipients and their respective backgrounds.<sup>102</sup> The exhortation advises that, if the evangelizer does not consider the needs and mentalities of the recipients, then the message will be a salvation barrier rather than a salvation carrier.<sup>103</sup> It also implores the Church to carefully and prudently adopt sacramental rituals to the Kipsigis rituals as means towards understanding the sacraments and the mysteries of the Christianity better.<sup>104</sup> It moreover argues that, for a more fruitful evangelization to be achieved, in-depth analysis of the roots of a particular cultural context ought to be addressed and not superficial analysis.<sup>105</sup> The document further affirms the Church’s respect and esteem for non-Christian religious traditions.

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<sup>100</sup> Pope John Paul VI, *Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Nuntiandi*, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, no.19).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

The document not only encourages our effort but it also assists the study by acknowledging the Godly revelation aspects of cultural values as necessary for spiritual growth of the individual communities. However, there is a knowledge gap to be attended to. In the document, even though it strongly recommends inculturation of Christian mysteries, it does not show us how to go about it. Neither does it give revelation aspects of cultural values. Such are the gaps the study struggles with.

The other document inspiring study is the new *Constitution of Kenya*.<sup>106</sup> It enshrines the promotion and protection of diverse cultural values and indigenous languages.<sup>107</sup> The Constitution recognizes the cultural values as the foundation of the nation as well as the cumulative civilization of the Kenyan people (Kipsigis included). The Constitution endeavors to promote all forms of cultural expressions, recognizes the role of indigenous cultures in development and argues that cultural values are pillars of sustainable development.<sup>108</sup> With this predisposition in mind, the study is even legalized whereby our cultural values are respected and promoted by the Constitution. However, there is a lacuna to be filled in the sense that the Constitution does not prescribe how inculturational work can be carried, a knowledge gap which is filled by the RCC magisterial directives on inculturation.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The study is guided by four related theories namely; Congar's general revelation theory; Boffs' mediation theory, redaction criticism theory as propagated by scholars like Käsemann and Bornkamm and Nyamiti's *nexus mysteriorum* theory.

Congar's theory of general revelation indicates that God freely discloses Himself and His salvation will to all even prior to Christianity. As such, each race and ethnic group is gifted with worldview items that are blessed with Godly characteristics and means of salvation. The theory inspires the study to appreciate the endowment of the Kipsigis community with the above elements thus challenging and affirming the topic.

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<sup>106</sup> *Constitution of Kenya* (2010).

<sup>107</sup> Cap 2 (7) (3) *Constitution of Kenya* (2010).

<sup>108</sup> Cap (2) (11) *Constitution of Kenya* (2010).

Boffs' mediation theory also guides the study.<sup>109</sup> The theory presupposes that while carrying out liberation theology, there are three phases to be followed. The first phase is that of social analysis or historical- analytical aspect. Here, the researcher inserts self to the base community in order to get first hand information. Through insertion, the researcher finds out why there is oppression, what kind of oppression and the causes of oppression. After the insertion, the researcher analyses the situation based on the findings from insertion in order to understand the problem. The study adopts this phase to analyze the Kipsigis worldview items in its worldview.

The second phase is that of hermeneutical mediation based on Biblical reflections. Here, the researcher uses Scriptural texts and Tradition to discern God's will/plan on the issue under study. The researcher interprets the findings in the first stage of insertion and social analysis on the basis of the Word of God. It does so as to find out the will of God for the oppressed through the Bible and Christian Tradition. The study adopts the stage to analyze the RCC's doctrine of salvation enlightened by Biblical passages together with selected theologians' related reflections and ecclesial instructions on inculturation.

The third phase is that of practical mediation or praxis which is an important stage where the researcher comes up with practical transforming solutions as to how the oppressed can be liberated. The researcher is concerned with the way forward regarding the situation of the oppressed in the light of the will of God. At this phase, the course of action is designed. The study adopts the phase while outlining the recommendations for the study. The theory guides the study from the preliminary stage of data collection to analysis and presentation of data leading to the recommendations and the way forward.

The third theory employed by the study is redaction criticism one recorded by Collins in his book titled *Introduction to the New Testament*<sup>110</sup> by Käsemann, Fuchs, Conzelmann and Marxsen among others.<sup>111</sup> Redaction criticism theory attempts to clarify the nature and extent of an author's own composition, goal, mode contribution to the work that has

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<sup>109</sup>L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York, 1987), p. 24.

<sup>110</sup>R. F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed* (London: SCM Press, 1992), pp. 196ff.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 205.

come from his hand taking into account both form and source criticisms.<sup>112</sup> The theory further observes that, in composing their works, respective authors were proposing a particular theological point of view focusing upon the final editing in view of one's goal. Thus redaction criticism draws inferences about an author's point of view and the situation of his community from the presentation of the Gospel work taken as a whole. This theory begins with the principle that NT authors were not non-descriptive collectors of an anonymous tradition but they were men who freely - though inspired by God - collected, arranged and edited material in a particular manner with a definite objective in their minds.<sup>113</sup> The theory embraces arrangements of the various texts, their approach, their emphasis, their theological inclinations and the arrangements of the text.<sup>114</sup> It points out that Bible writers were not just compilers but also creative writers considering particular audience needs and problems in their situation in life.<sup>115</sup> The theory further argues that although the writers of the Scriptures were free, nevertheless, they were also influenced by other factors like individual giftedness and the beneficiaries of their respective documents thus they formulated the message to adapt such cultures.<sup>116</sup> The theory empowers our study to source scientifically from the Bible and Tradition with the aim of confronting the above doctrine with Kipsigis worldview items.

The fourth theory guiding the study is *nexus mysteriorum* highlighted by Nyamiti.<sup>117</sup> According to this theory, "each of the Christian mysteries is organically connected with all the others in such a way that it is possible to achieve a deeper and a more comprehensive understanding of one particular mystery by examining it from the perspective of any other mystery (ies)."<sup>118</sup> It guides the study in justifying the possibility of coming up with an African theology of each of the themes or mysteries of the Christian faith on the basis of the one we opted for i.e., that of salvation.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>114</sup> W. J. Harrington, "The Critical Study of New Testament: History and Results", in R. C. Fuller, L. Johnson and C. Kearns (Eds.). *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (Nashville, New York: Nelson and Sons, 1975), p. 805.

<sup>115</sup> J. P. Kealy, *Luke's Gospel Today* (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1979), p. 22.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 23

<sup>117</sup> C. Nyamiti. *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1- Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p. 28.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p.23.

## 1.8 Research Hypotheses

The main hypothesis of the study is that the Kipsigis worldview items when properly investigated and critically analyzed contribute to a better perception, propagation and understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation.

The following are the specific hypotheses;

1. Properly examined, employing inculturation approach, the Kipsigis worldview items would enhance a better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation.
2. There are important RCC's teachings and theologians' reflections on inculturation that can be explored to help in understanding the doctrine of salvation better.
3. The doctrine of salvation as expounded by RCC and theologians is invaluable but not sufficient for African world-view and situation in life.
4. Kipsigis worldview items *vis-a-vis* RCC's teachings and theologians' reflections are significant in understanding and explaining the doctrine of salvation.

## 1.9 Research Methodology

The section examines our research design, locale of the study, the target population, sample selection, data gathering techniques and data analysis procedures.

### 1.9.1 Research Design

The study employed a case study research design complimented with eclectic approach in enriching itself with previous studies. According to Kombo and Tromp, a case study research design is suitable for such a study since it seeks to describe a unit in detail, context and holistically.<sup>119</sup> In a case study, a great deal can be learned from a few examples of the phenomena under study. Since the work endeavours to investigate worldview items in enhancing a better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation through inculturation, a case study of one community namely; the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County is considered most suitable.

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<sup>119</sup> D. K. Kombo and L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Pauline's Africa Publication, 2006), p. 36.

### **1.9.2 Locale of the Study**

The study is carried out in Kericho Sub-County. Purposive sampling is used to select Kericho Sub-County as the study site since it is considered as the cradle land of the Kipsigis who first settled here after migrating from Mount Elgon before dispersing to other Sub-Countys of South Rift.<sup>120</sup> Kericho Sub-County also has a Kipsigis Museum and library at Kapkatet<sup>121</sup> which is very useful to the study. There are also quite a number of Kipsigis traditionalists in Kericho Sub-County who are not affiliated to any religious denominations as compared to Bureti and Bomet Sub-Counties,<sup>122</sup> thus being a major boost to the study. Furthermore, the RCC in Kericho Sub-County is evenly distributed thus making the Sub-County the best locale for the study.

### **1.9.3 Target Population**

The study targeted three groups of informants in the Sub-County so as to achieve its relevancy and for practical purposes. The first are the Kipsigis traditionalists with no religious affiliation. Secondly are the members of the RCC denomination and thirdly those affiliated to these two groups are targeted. On the basis of their remarkable wisdom, understanding and knowledge of the subject particularly with regard to Kipsigis traditions, religion, culture, and philosophy of life, Kipsigis traditionalists were contacted.

### **1.9.4 Sample Selection**

The study targeted the following categories of respondents: Informants who would provide social and historical background of the Kipsigis worldview items and Church leaders and the laity.

The study settled for fifty respondents, twenty of whom were Kipsigis traditionalists who were not affiliated to any religious denomination. The sample was identified through snow ball also known as inquiry sampling technique a

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<sup>120</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 57.

<sup>121</sup> Refer to appendix 8.

<sup>122</sup> K. N. A. *The Kipsigis of South Rift*. DC/KBU/II/II. Repository I.



method whereby, respondents with the desired characteristics are identified using purposive sampling technique and then they name others whom they know have the required information.<sup>123</sup> The other thirty were members of the Catholic Church who included; five bishops each representing five parishes, five deacons, ten nuns and ten ordinary members who were knowledgeable on the doctrines of the Church; they were identified through non-probability purposive sampling technique. The most competent informants were identified as consultants and resource persons through judgmental sampling technique for the purposes of the study. To assess this in the best way possible, the participant-observation method was utilized.

### **1.9.5 Data Gathering Techniques**

The study employed qualitative data collection methods. The author used purposive sampling method, specifically judgmental sampling to select the respondents. This was because the study was focused on specific respondents including elders, both traditional and Catholic adherents, who have a far reaching knowledge of the local history and culture in order to give information on the Kipsigis worldview items.

For the purpose of the study and in order to achieve the objectives of the study, the data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data contributed towards the formation of background information needed by both the researcher in order to build constructively the research study and the reader to comprehend more thoroughly the study outcome. Secondary data was obtained from books, academic journals, and theses in JKML, CUEA Library, Hekima Library, Tangaza Library, and little Eden Library, furthermore mission archives such as the Kericho Diocese archives, and parish archives in Kipchimchim were consulted to gather data on the development of the Catholic Community in Kericho Sub-County.

The author was the main researcher, conducting all the researches for the purpose of clarity and details, and engaged escorts for the field research when necessary. Interviews

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<sup>123</sup> O. M. Mugenda and A. G. Mugenda, *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches* (Nairobi: ACTS Press, 2003), p.51.

were conducted in the vernacular of the Kipsigis respondents. Kiswahili and English were used where appropriate especially for non-Kipsigis priests in the area.

Primary data was collected using questionnaires, In-depth interviews and focused group discussions. The three data gathering techniques were employed by the study as follows:

#### **1.9.5.1 Questionnaires**

In this study, both open-ended and close-ended questions were used where the respondents were required to choose among alternatives in some questions as well as giving their own opinion in other questions. A questionnaire targeting elite members of the RCC was administered by the researcher. This research instrument was chosen since it is suitable in gathering data over a large area and there are fewer biases in data presentation.<sup>124</sup>

#### **1.9.5.2 In-Depth Interviews**

Structured interviews were used to gather in-depth information on the topic under study. This device was employed while collecting data from the Kipsigis traditionalists who would not have been able to fill the questionnaires since a number of them could not read or write. The technique was also used while gathering data from the key informants of the RCC in order to understand better the Church's teaching on the doctrine of salvation and the extent with which the Church has embraced inculturation. In-depth interviews were useful when the researcher was intensively investigating a particular subject matter.<sup>125</sup> This device gave detailed and comprehensive understanding of the topic under study.

#### **1.9.5.3 Focus Group Discussion**

Focus groups of four to six individuals were conducted and the researcher was the moderator. This technique was useful while gathering information on beliefs, ideas,

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<sup>124</sup> C. R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (New Delhi: Eastern Limited. 1985), p. 52.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

and opinions of the community.<sup>126</sup> These groups were homogenous in terms of members sharing the same belief, teachings, and same world-view as well as having same or almost same educational level. The technique was applied while gathering information from Kipsigis traditionalists as well as the members of the RCC.

### **1.9.6 Data Analysis Technique**

Before the conclusion of the field research, the researcher compared the study objectives and the data collected to identify any gaps. Interviews recorded on a digital recorder were transcribed, those recorded in vernacular were translated to English. The data obtained from the field was amalgamated with secondary data gathered from literature review. The resultant data was collated according to themes arising from the objectives of the study. The data then was interpreted and presented, giving basis for recommendations and suggestions for further study.

Since the study majorly targeted qualitative data. Through content analysis, the data was worked out at both literal level and interpretive level. The responses to the questions in the questionnaires have thus been reported by the descriptive narrative. This sub-section cannot be ended without reiterating the employment of Charles Nyamiti's methodological approach with regard to inculturation which was tackled previously in the sub-section on literature review- to blend with the above.

### **1.10 Chapter's Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has dealt with a general overview of the study. It has explained the background to the study, statement of the problem, goal and specific objectives of the study, justification of the study, scope and limitation, literature review, theoretical framework, research hypotheses and methodology. All these provide a profound setting for the study as a kind of eye-opener. As such, one is enlightened to delve into exploring the Kipsigis worldview items in the next chapter.

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<sup>126</sup> D. K. Kombo and L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction* (Nairobi: Pauline's Africa Publication, 2006), p. 37.

## CHAPTER TWO

### KIPSIGIS WORLDVIEW ITEMS

#### 2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with a general overview of the study. It explained the background to the study, statement of the problem, goal and specific objectives of the study, justification of the study, scope and limitation, literature review, theoretical framework, research hypotheses and methodology. All these provided a profound setting for the study as a kind of eye-opener to the current chapter and the upcoming ones.

Taking the above into account, the present chapter deals with preliminary subjects that is vital for our inculturational endeavour. It describes the origin of Kipsigis and worldview items in their worldview with a view to later on draw out salvation elements that can dialogue with subsequent chapters. Boffs' mediation theory aided this section particularly by providing three basic mediations as discussed previously. The first mediation which is the socio-analytic mediation serves us well in explicating the following issues.

#### 2.1 Historical and Social Contexts of the Kipsigis Community

This section considers the origin and the social organization of the Kipsigis community.

##### 2.1.1 The Origin of the Kipsigis

It should be noted forthwith that under the umbrella of Kalenjin there are at least nine sub-groups. The 1.972 million Kipsigis people, is the largest Kalenjin ethnic group in Kenya it comprises 43 percent of the Kalenjin population.<sup>1</sup> Although some live in other parts of Kenya, they mainly occupy two main civic Counties: Kericho and Bomet. These areas lies between longitudes 35<sup>0</sup> 02<sup>1</sup> and 35<sup>0</sup> 40<sup>1</sup> East and also between the equator and latitude 1<sup>0</sup> 61<sup>1</sup> South; these areas boards Uasin Gishu to the North, Baringo to the North

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<sup>1</sup> Republic of Kenya, *2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census Report* (Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Eastern, Nandi to the North West, Transmara, Narok to South and South Eastern respectively, Kisumu to the West, South Nyanza and Kisii to the South West.<sup>2</sup>

While tracing the origin of the word “Kipsigis”, a number of traditions as we learnt from our respondents emerged. The first tradition suggested that it was a nickname which emerged when the Kipsigis settled in Tuluopsigis<sup>3</sup>, they began to grow *Wimbi*; their neighbours like Ogiek began to make containers called *Kipsigik* or *Kiisyet*, consequently the society began to nickname them Kipsigis a corruption of *Kipsigik*, since they bought this containers to keep grains because they were the pastoralist. The second tradition postulates that when the Kipsigis settled at Londiani and Mau areas, they found the Sirikwa people already settled in the area and they began to make baskets they sold to the Sirikwa people; then the latter began to nickname the former Kipsigis from *Kiisyet*; thus from the foregoing tradition, the name *Kiisyet* and consequently Kipsigis could either be of the Sirikwa origin or from the nicknamed community.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, while giving an account on the etymology of the word Kipsigis, Mwanzi gives an account of *Kapkowelek* clan of the Kipsigis regarding the connection between the *kiisyet* (basket) and the name Kipsigis.<sup>5</sup> According to the tradition, when the clan settled at Londiani area, they began to deforest the place for agricultural purposes. The forest area was being inhabited by the Ogiek particularly those of *Kipsamaek* clan, this forced them to make the basket (*kiisyet*) so as to exchange it for food with the agriculturalists. It was then the *Kipsamaek* were nicknamed Kipsigis, from the word *kiisyet* according to this tradition; this tradition seem more plausible to most historian scholars.<sup>6</sup>

In general, the Kalenjin people including the Kipsigis have a tradition that argues that they originated from ancient Egypt; they use various names to refer to it; these include *Burgei*, *Tto* and *Misri*<sup>7</sup>; when they migrated from Egypt they first settled in Mount Elgon. The Kipsigis and the Nandi were the second Kalenjin groups to migrate from Mount

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to the maps on the preliminary pages; see also W. Ng'ang'a. *Kenya Ethnic Communities: Foundation of the Nation* (Nairobi: Gatündū Publication Limited, 2006), p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to appendix 9 and 10.

<sup>4</sup> H. A. Mwanzi. *A History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Eastern African Literature Bureau, 1978), p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> K. Araap Sambu. *The Kalenjin People's Egypt Origin Legend Revisited: Was Isis Asiis?* (Nairobi: Longhorn Publishers Limited, 2007), p. 1.

Elgon to their present home land after the Pokot.<sup>8</sup> They used two major routes; one heading to the East while the other leading to the West; the group that took to the West passed through North Nyanza, Maseno hills, and ascended to Kakamega escarpment who eventually formed the Nyang'ori (Terik). The other that formed the Nandi and the Kipsigis returned to Njoinywai Plains; the ancestors of the Nandi climbed the escarpment and settled at Chemngal and Chebilat. The other contingents went south of Njoinywai plains; they later became the proto-Kipsigis (those who later became the ancestors of the Kipsigis).<sup>9</sup>

As we also learnt from our respondents, a point that Towett also confirms<sup>10</sup>, the Kipsigis community is a mixture of many people from various communities. It includes persons from other ethnic groups likes: the Terik, the Nandi, the Maasai, the Keiyo, the Dorobo, the Tugen (Kamasia) and the Kisii; this is further supported by recent studies of ancestral decent.<sup>11</sup>

As Kipsigis settled, some camped at Fort Tenan (Chilchila), Kibigiro, and Muhoroni living closer to their brothers the Nandi. The others moved as far as Tegat near the present Kericho Town; they lived here for many years and they interacted with the Ogiek who inhabited the *Tegat* (Bamboo) forest.<sup>12</sup> Intermarriages took place between the Kipsigis people and the Ogiek; therefore resulting into *Ortinwek* (Clans) like: *Kipcheromek*, *Kipsamaek*, and the *Akyek*.<sup>13</sup> The Ogiek element among the Kipsigis people is further supported by their initiation songs which make reference to Ogiek's way of life; for example the mention of: dogs, honey, beehives, bows, arrows, and hunting<sup>14</sup>, which Towett also makes the same remarks.<sup>15</sup> As their population grew and increased,

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<sup>8</sup> B. A. Ogot. *History of Southern Luo Vol. 1(Migration and Settlement 1500 – 1900)* (Nairobi: Eastern African Publishing House, 1982), p. 196.

<sup>9</sup> H. A. Mwanzi. *A History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Eastern African Literature Bureau, 1978), p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> H. A. Mwanzi. *A History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Eastern African Literature Bureau, 1978), p. 52-5.

<sup>12</sup> Refer to appendix 6.

<sup>13</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

they moved towards Kisii hills, and settled at Kabianga area, as well as Chagaik and Chemogonday areas.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, among the Kipsigis is the Abarangi element a descent of the Gusii people.<sup>17</sup> As the Gusii people settled in the Kano plains, a group of people called Abarangi moved upwards and settled in Kabianga area of Belgut; these people are now part of people in Mugirango. From Kabianga the Abarangi people spread towards Jamji and Chemosit River near Koiwa hills. As the Kipsigis people migrated to this place later, they interacted and intermarried in these areas resulting to emergence of clan called *Kiparangwulek*<sup>18</sup>; Towett also affirms the interaction of Kipsigis during the age set of *Chumo* and *Sawe* with Abagusii in Kimulot, Jamji, Chemosot, and Chemosit areas.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the foregoing argument, the Kipsigis is also believed to have the Sirikwa element in it.<sup>20</sup> Initially, the Sirikwa people occupied the Northern parts of Bureti hills, all through the Litein area to Koiwa hills where they lived side by side with the Kipsigis people of *Kaparangwek* clan.<sup>21</sup> The interaction of the Sirikwa people with the Kipsigis resulted to clans like; *Kapchebokolowek*, *Kipkendek*, and the *Kapkugoeck*. Ogot and Towett also support the foregoing argument.<sup>22</sup> Thus the pattern of settlement and intermingling of various communities in the Kipsigis land produced an amalgam of people aptly called the Kipsigis.

### **2.1.2 The Social Organization of the Kipsigis Community**

This sub-section of the thesis focus on the social organization of the Kipsigis people with particular emphasis on the family setup, clan system, the totems, and the age set groups.

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<sup>16</sup> W. Ng'ang'a. *Kenya Ethnic Communities: Foundation of the Nation* (Nairobi: Gatündü Publication, 2006), p. 319.

<sup>17</sup> H. A. Mwanzi. *A History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Eastern African Literature Bureau, 1978), p. 57-8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>19</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p.18.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> B. A. Ogot. *History of Southern Luo Vol. I(Migration and Settlement 1500 – 1900)* (Nairobi: Eastern African Publishing House, 1982), p. 199; See also, T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 19.

### 2.1.2.1 Kipsigis' Organization of a Family

It is important to make a brief survey of the organization of the Kipsigis family before paying attention to other social organizations due to the centrality of a family in Kipsigis worldview. In the following analogy and metaphor technique, Fogliacco lays down some of the guiding principles and constituents of a family: "According to our analysis, the family is a unique type of human community whose members are connected to one another by blood-ties, unlike all other societies; new members originate from within the family itself by way of procreation; and are therefore linked to one another by a constant and invariable pattern of mutual relationships."<sup>23</sup>

In effect, we can say that the key components of a family are membership, relationship and responsibility towards one another. Mbiti gives us a picture of the various members that make up an African family-Kipsigis included in this organized pattern;

For African people, the family has a much wider circle of members... In traditional society, the family includes parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who may have their own children, and other immediate relatives. In many areas these are what anthropologists call extended families... The family also includes the departed relatives, whom we have designated as the living-dead. These are, as their name implies, 'alive' in the memories of their surviving families, and are thought to be still interested in the affairs of the family to which they once belonged in their physical life... [The] African concept of the family also includes the unborn members who are still in the loins of the living. They are the buds of hope and expectation, and each family makes sure that its own existence is not extinguished.<sup>24</sup>

Characteristically, the Kipsigis family is well bonded, where every member is cherished and appreciated. This bond is so noticeable that what affects one, affects the other. In this family system, children are taught to eat together as a way of expressing the bond of unity existing among them. Consequently, when one member of the family is away, the others at home will not eat until that member comes back. Healey and Sybertz beautifully portray this close relationship among African families-Kipsigis included thus: "The African emphasis on relationship is closely connected to family values. African family

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<sup>23</sup> N. Fogliacco, *The Family: An African Metaphor for Trinity and Church*. In *Inculturating the Church in Africa*, (Nairobi: Pauline's Publications, 2001), p. 134.

<sup>24</sup> J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (London: Morrison & Gibbs Ltd, 1969), pp. 106-107.



values are inclusive. Whether people are members of the immediate family or the extended family or close friends or even visitors, everyone participates in the close family relationships and friendships.”<sup>25</sup>

This close relationship finds its fulfillment in a solidarity that is enshrined in community life. This prompts the Kipsigis people to say that a child belongs to the community. Thus, communal life is well emphasized. As Mbiti illustrates: “In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately.” Hence the saying: “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am.”<sup>26</sup> Thus every member of the family is important and valued among the Kipsigis.

### 2.1.2.2 Clan System

As the respondents to this study revealed, the Kipsigis community was and is still patriarchal in nature; the father figure is the head of the family and the children take their father’s descent. The whole ethnic community is divided into four main groups according to *Bororiosyiek* (clan; the paternal descent), which are: *Kipkaige* or *Kipkwaige*, *Kasanet*, *Kipng’etuny*, and *Kebeni*. Every man or woman in the whole Kipsigis ethnic group belongs into one of these clans. Once a woman is married, she automatically belongs to the husband’s clan; Towett also confirms it in his classical book<sup>27</sup>; it is a taboo to marry from one’s *Boryet* (clan) since marriage among the Kipsigis is exogamous.<sup>28</sup>

Due to natural reproduction, adoption and absorption, the four main clans increased in number, and since it was and is still the custom to refer to families by the head of each family, many names have come into existence; thus forming many sub-clans.<sup>29</sup> As we learnt from our informants there are now over a hundred sub-clans that resulted from the four main clans, a few that we found as the study was carried out include: *Kapcheboin*, *Kaparsingil*, *Kapbororek*, *Kapkolowek*, *Kipkendeek*, *Kapmaebei*, *Kapbomoek*,

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<sup>25</sup> J. Healey, and D. Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1996 p. 107.

<sup>26</sup> J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, (London: Morrison & Gibbs Ltd, 1969), p. 108.

<sup>27</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

*Kapbarangweek, Kobasissek, Kaptebo, Kapcherongonyek, Kapsoenik, Kapnabei, Kibokwoek, Kapmalumasian, Chebororek, and Kapsengereek.*

### **2.1.2.3 Totems**

The study found out from the key informants that each of the aforementioned Kipsigis clans has its own totems. These totems are derived from either atmospheric phenomenon or animal's life. For instance, the *Asiista* (the sun clan) takes its name from the celestial body-sun. Each sub-clan has its own different animal totem which enables them to identify themselves in the community; it gives a sense of belonging to the members of the community.<sup>30</sup>

### **2.1.2.4 Age Sets**

The Kipsigis people have *Ipinda* (age sets) which they ascribe to after the initiation period.<sup>31</sup> These age sets include: *Maina, Chumo, Sawe, Korongoro, Kaplelach, Kimnyige,* and *Nyongi.*<sup>32</sup> Among the Kipsigis, the age sets regulated the exact moment one was allowed to be a warrior and bear arms and the period one was to retire. During this period, one was allowed to go to dance, marry, go to war, and hunt; but before initiation, one did not engage in the aforementioned privileges.<sup>33</sup>

## **2.2 Socio-cultural Items of Kipsigis Community**

This section of the study analyzes the rites of passage from pregnancy to death. It also presents some items in the daily life of the Kipsigis which are helpful for our kind of study.

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<sup>30</sup> J. G. Peristiany. *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1939), p. 118.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

## 2.2.1 Rites of Passage

In the Kipsigis worldview, the rites of passage begin with pregnancy and birth, naming and related childhood ceremonies, initiation rites, marriage and death<sup>34</sup>; the study discusses them below systematically;

### 2.2.1.1 Pregnancy and Birth

Among the Kipsigis, it was a desire of every married woman to sire children. Childlessness in the Kipsigis community was and is still considered a misfortune<sup>35</sup>, this is because children were not only seen as a source of care during old age but also they were the continuity of the community.<sup>36</sup>

During pregnancy and after birth, there were rites that were performed to purify the mother and ensured that the child born is sired and brought up as per the norms of the community.<sup>37</sup> These ceremonies include: *Ngoroiik-aap kuutuswa* (the garments of the mouth)<sup>38</sup>; this ceremony was carried out during the fourth month of pregnancy. The husband's clan sacrificed a goat. The hide of the goat was treated and the hair was scrapped off, but the legs of the goat were not removed. The pregnant woman wore the hide after confinement for protection since she was carrying life.<sup>39</sup>

As the respondents informed the study, the second rite was that of *Labeet-aap Euun* (the cleaning of the hands). This rite was performed for the mothers after birth so as to come out of isolation/seclusion. She was required to wash hands, arms up to elbows. She was then fed with special food like fresh blood mixed with milk and *kimyeet* (stiff millet mush). A he-goat was slaughtered and meat was fed on her. The women who were present at the birth place were anointed with fat from the ram's tail; then it was exclaimed: "Now she is clean."<sup>40</sup> This rite was meant to cleanse pregnant women who

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<sup>34</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 20

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>36</sup> J. G. Peristiany. *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1939), p. 118.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>40</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 22.

had been secluded and after it the mother was allowed to touch things as well as walk on paddocks of cattle, sheep, goats, as well as vegetable garden which she was not allowed initially.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, multiple births among the Kipsigis were considered to be uncleanliness, the mother was not blamed for it due to sacrality of life. She would be secluded in the house for ten days and was not allowed to walk in the aforementioned areas. The mother was then cleansed by the sacrifice of the ram at *Mabwaita* (family altar).<sup>42</sup>

As seen from the above rite of passage and related rites and ceremonies, the Kipsigis took seriously issues related to vitality and sacrality of life. The various cleansing ceremonies performed during pregnancy and after birth ensured that the life of the infant is cared for as well as for the mother, since life in itself is sacred. Thus among the Kipsigis everyone is required to behave in a way to prosper life among all.

### **2.2.1.2 Naming and Childhood Ceremonies**

After birth, a vital ceremony of *kuurseet* (Naming) took place.<sup>43</sup> It was believed among the Kipsigis that some spirits of the deceased ancestor(s) would enter an infant at the time of birth. Various names of the deceased ancestors would be called by the mother of the baby's father. Both names of male and female ancestors would be called irrespective of the baby's sex, but it was believed commonly that ancestral spirits descended from the paternal line only<sup>44</sup>, this implied continuity of life.

A name would be called and the people wait up to a period of an hour if the baby does not sneeze, another name would be called until the baby sneezed. When the baby sneezed, women would clap: three claps for the baby girl and four claps for the baby boy.<sup>45</sup> The infant would then immediately be given a name that relates to a place of birth, time of the day when the child was born, outstanding events that are occurring or the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

activity during birth time while other names would be nicknames. A prefix *Kip* would denote baby boy, while *Chep* would imply a baby girl.<sup>46</sup>

After the naming ceremony, the Kipsigis had a number of ceremonies commonly referred to as *Tumwek-aap Laagok* (childhood ceremonies).<sup>47</sup> These ceremonies are classified into two: those for protection from evil eye, diseases and any other harm due to sacrality of life; these ceremonies occurred when the child was an infant and those for initiation which happened at later years.<sup>48</sup> The rites for protection include: *Abai* or *kibendi Abai* (visit to an elderly man), *Kaburbuuret* (putting the forehead of a child on entrails of a sacrificed goat), *Kaatumet-aap Lakwet* (elders putting necklaces on the child) and *Kalaaget-aap Ngoryeet* (wearing clothing believed as protective on the child).<sup>49</sup> These ceremonies were performed to protect the child's life from evil eyes and any malevolent spirits.

A part from the above cited ceremonies, there are those that inflicted suffering or pain on the child in preparation for initiation. These ceremonies took place during puberty. These ceremonial rites are: *Lootet-aap keelek* (removal of two lower teeth to establish a gap), *Kaapolobi* (making marks on the cheeks or forehead), *Peleet-aap Soreemik* (making burnt scars), *Ndipchoot* (piercing of the upper ears), and *Parpareet-aap Itik* (piercing of lower ear lobes).<sup>50</sup> These practices ensured that the child develops perseverance and tolerance of pain as they prepare for initiation rites. These ceremonies prepared one for transiting of childhood stage to adulthood.

As evident from above, communality among the Kipsigis was and is still very important; the naming after the ancestors depicts a close relationship between the living and the "living-dead." The living among the Kipsigis believe that they owe their lives to the ancestors due to the mediatory roles played by the ancestors by linking the community to *Asiis*. Togetherness as seen during performance of the aforementioned rites is brought by

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> J. G. Peristiany. *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1939), p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

the belief in common ancestor who founded the community; thus that communality is indispensable among the Kipsigis.

### 2.2.1.3 Initiation Rites

This rite of passage was and is still vital to a Kipsigis because it marks a shift from the status of childhood to that of adulthood. The main event at this period is *Keeba tuum* (initiation period).<sup>51</sup> For one to be an initiate, one has to be between the ages of twelve to eighteen years. The initiation period was between six months to two years in the Kipsigis community, but due to education system, it has been reduced to one month nowadays. Today this rite is performed during the months of November and December, the longest school breaks.

Before initiation, one was not considered a Kipsigis but only a child of a Kipsigis because initiation included not only the rite of circumcision but also the teaching of community customs, norms and ways of life. The teachings directed to the initiates at this period were called *Kaayaaet-aap taarusyek*.<sup>52</sup> Practical lessons like hunting and responsibility were offered to the initiates to equip them with skills that would help them in later life. The circumcision operation was performed at *Tulwap muren* after prayers were performed at *Mabwaita* for the initiates.<sup>53</sup>

Prior to circumcision, boys would build a *Meenyjeet* (a temporary hut) to house them in seclusion. This place ought to be a way from other houses.<sup>54</sup> In preparation for the great day, there was the ceremony of *Rootyneet-aap Laagok*.<sup>55</sup> The candidates early in the morning would go and gather branches of *Koroseek* (the “tooth brush” plant), each candidate took the branches to his home and placed them at *Mabwaita* (family place of worship); it was believed that this would result to life and health as symbolized by its greenness.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

As the study found out, at this stage the community participated in this rite. The ceremony begun in the evening and was carried out till next morning. The candidates and their friends started by visiting house to house of each of the candidates where they sang and danced around the *Mabwaita* four times then anointed with butter on the chest, legs and forehead by close relatives as a sign of blessings to them.<sup>57</sup>

The next phase of the initiation ceremony is that of *Yaatitaaet*.<sup>58</sup> After singing and dancing, the candidates assembled at *Kibooretyet's* home (home of the oldest father of one of the initiates). The initiates were then encouraged not to fear what was going to happen. The candidates would then be organized in order of their ranks; the first one would be the son of the oldest father of the initiates and was referred as *Kibooretyet* and the second one and others would follow according to age of their fathers. The second initiate was and is still referred to as *Koyumgoi* (gathered in) because he had the responsibility of assembling the other candidates. After the arrangement, in the morning, they would be led to the operation by *Motiryoot* (ceremony guardian) through an arc made by *Sieek* (nettles).<sup>59</sup> The candidates would then be led to the operation place where it was close to the *Meenyjeet* (temporary house).

After *yaatitaaet* (actual operation), they would be led to seclusion for about a month. The initiates were considered to be ritually unclean at this time. They were not allowed to touch food with their hands. Instead, the initiates used *seegetook* (small wooden spoons). At this period, only men were allowed to be around the boys. The initiates while healing were being taken care of by *Motiryoot neoo* (eldest ceremony guardian).<sup>60</sup>

While at seclusion as the study found out, *Kaameet-aap taarusyek* (mother of initiates) cooked for the boys and took it for a distance of about five hundred meters to a *Meenyjeet*. The initiates would take the food and eat it. Later on a girl or a boy aged seven would be sent to collect utensils, since they were presumed to be pure.<sup>61</sup> At

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<sup>57</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 22.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

seclusion, the initiates were not allowed to talk, they carried green sticks which they beat to communicate.

Three to four weeks after operation, a ceremony of washing of hands was done for cleansing commonly called *Labeet-aap Euun*.<sup>62</sup> This ceremony not only enabled the initiates to touch things and eat with their hands again but also gave them a bit more of freedoms like: leaving the camp. They would paint their faces with ashes so as to be disguised and take their arrows and bows to hunt birds and animals for food. This not only equipped them with skills to be accurate soldiers in the warfare<sup>63</sup> but also enabled them to take responsibility. While hunting, two initiates were left in the camp to take care of the camp. Initiates were joined by *Pooiyoot* (elderly man) while hunting so as to guide them. When they killed an animal they would skin and carry it to the camp.

Moreover, wrestling and mock battles characterized their stay in seclusion.<sup>64</sup> They would also spend time carving wooden objects, walking sticks, arrows and bows. The initiates also sang daily in a ceremony commonly referred as *Kibaees*.<sup>65</sup> Many of these songs were sang in praise of various friends and families. A month after *Labeet-aap Euun* was the rite of *tyenjiinet* (sing for them).<sup>66</sup> Those who took part in the initiation took part in the singing. At this period the initiates were taught by older men on the social, moral and religious codes of the Kipsigis. The ceremony was meant to emphasize the teaching code of the *Meenyjeet*. Goodness and kindness (*toolosyet*) was also reiterated during this period.<sup>67</sup>

The fourth ceremony as the study revealed, that was vital before coming out of seclusion was *Kaayaaet-aap Taarusyek* (preparation for coming forth or arising).<sup>68</sup> The initiates were led to a river where water had been dammed up and were required to pass through an arc called *Kimusaang'it*. This rite was meant to cast away uncleanness. The initiates were required to swim under water for a short distance and those initiates who endured

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 30.



through the process, were given the prefix *Araap* to their father's name. At this period the initiates recited traditional past history and customs by way of sacred songs.

The last stage of initiation rites was that of *Kang'eetunet-aap Lagok* (coming forth/arising).<sup>69</sup> *Ng'eetunet* (coming out) marked the end of seclusion. It was done in the evening before *tileet-aap kirokwek* (cutting of stick). Each initiate wore *naaryet* (a crown or tiara) as a sign of honour of having finished the ceremonial processes. In this final phase, the initiates performed a number of events that marked the rite of *Ng'eetunet*. These included: *yaateet-aap Ooret* (opening of the path); the initiates were led by a young girl through an arc to open the way for them. The initiates and their sponsors formed a procession. The *Motiryoot* and the initiates marched through an arc facing east; this symbolized arising from childhood to adulthood.<sup>70</sup> The initiates would then march around *Mabwaita* four times as the *Poiyoot-aap piisye* (elder of the ceremony) sprinkled traditional brew on them as a sign of blessing.

As the study found out from the informants, after the *yaateet-aap Ooret* was the ceremony of *kaiilet* (anointing with butter). Butter was put on each initiate's forehead, chest and legs four times as they marched through *Mabwaita*. This ceremony was attended by the whole community since it was a time for happiness and celebration. Following the ceremony of *kaiilet* was the activity of *tileet-aap kirokwek* (cutting of sticks). The initiates had to line up in front of elders kneeling at *Mabwaita*. Their walking sticks which had been presented to them in the coming out ceremony was cut by two elders then followed by the shaving of their hair. This signified a new beginning for the initiates. The mothers of the initiates then touched the head of their sons as a sign of releasing their sons from their care.

In the foregoing discussion on initiation rites, it is apparent that communality, vitality and sacrality of life formed the major characteristic of Kipsigis community. The occasions of coming together in various ceremonies while preparing the initiates for and after circumcision, as well as praying through ancestors in *Mabwaita* shows the importance of togetherness among the Kipsigis. The various rites performed for cleansing and

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

protection of initiates during initiation period until they heal is a proof of sacrality of life and how vitality was cherished among the Kipsigis people.

#### 2.2.1.4 Kipsigis Marriage

As this study found out, *kaatunisyeet* (marriage) is another rite of passage that is of great significance among the Kipsigis. The process that led to marriage; begun by the parents of the young man indentifying a girl who would be a suitable wife for their son. *Maiyweek* (local beer) characterized all stages of marriage since it was meant for entertainment and relaxation.<sup>71</sup>

Engagement or betrothal was the first step. This step consisted of several parts. They included: *yaateet-aap kooito* (initial pre-visit) to the girl's father's home by the young man's father. The young man's father would go and place *noogirwet* (ceremonial stick) at *Mabwaita* as a sign that marriage talks are almost beginning.<sup>72</sup> At *Mabwaita* the father would discuss and set another day of meeting. The second step was that of *keeba kooito* (presentation of cows); at this point questions were asked on clanship, kinship and other matters that may block marriage for instance: witchcraft and sorcery. If the two fathers were of the same clan, the marriage process would immediately stop, since marriage among the Kipsigis as earlier noted was and is still exogamous.

The second major visit was that of young man's father visiting girl's home to offer *teet-aap ko* (the cow of the inside house).<sup>73</sup> The girl's father at this time ought to have done investigation about the young man to know his character if suitable to marry his daughter. If not, the offer of the cow would be rejected, because it was believed that immoral behaviour of the head of a family may bring curses upon his family. If all was well, the groom and his friends visited the father of the bride. The in-laws would anoint the visitors; this was referred as *kaiilet-aap saanik* (anointing of in-laws); this was a symbol of blessings and acceptance.

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<sup>71</sup> J. G. Peristiany. *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1939), p. 63.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

A return visit by the suitor happened at the ceremony referred as *chuteet-aap njoor* (entering of the house reserved for males); they were accompanied by *Motiryoot* (best man).<sup>74</sup> They entered the house on special door called as *kurgaap saan* (door of in-laws) which was only used during weddings; they then could sit on a hide of sheep or goat.

Following the foregone procedures, was now the time to discuss on the dowry then followed by *sweet-aap Tuuga* (viewing of the animals).<sup>75</sup> The people from the two groups participated on the discussion on the number of animals until they reached a consensus. The woman who fed the girl may want an additional animal commonly referred as *Chepng'abait*.<sup>76</sup> After the agreement, the next step was that of viewing of the animals. The bride's family made a visit to the grooms home to go and view the animals meant for dowry; during this ceremony an expensive feast was made as a sign of acceptance of the in-laws and the whole community was welcomed to participate in it.

When the ceremony of *sweet-aap Tuuga* was over, the groom along with herd's boy and *cheplakwek* (nurse of a young child) went to the bride's home for *rateet* (tying).<sup>77</sup> They took *Sereetyoot* (green Kikuyu grass) to go and tie the bride at *Mabwaita*. From its greenness, *Sereetyoot* signified abundance of life. Betrothal was confirmed when the groom and the bride tied each other's wrist using *Seguutyet* (a grass only used during marriage).<sup>78</sup>

After the ceremony of *rateet* was now time for *keseet* (actual marriage). The bride arrived at groom's home when the moon was overhead.<sup>79</sup> When the bride appeared, she and the groom went to *Mabwaita*. The bride held the waist of the groom as they matched through *Mabwaita* twice. They then entered the house to be sprayed with beer for blessing. The bride and the groom were then required to use same *rogoreet* (beer tube)<sup>80</sup>, to drink beer, drink *murziik* from the same *soteet* (calabash), as well as eat food from the same *kiisyyet* (small basket for food) this signified oneness. A wedding was a symbol of new things,

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 65.

<sup>79</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 22.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

celebration of life and a time for joy.<sup>81</sup> Marriage was climaxed by the burning of *koroseek* (ceremonial twigs) it was then, the two were considered married.

Basing ourselves on the discussion above, it is clear that communality, sacrality of life and vitality characterizes Kipsigis community. Communality is evident particularly in the various ceremonies carried out while the whole community, come to participate in the same marriage ceremony as described above; this aspect is also depicted in the way prayers are made through the ancestors to bless the couple. On the other hand, sacrality of life and vitality is seen by the use of green ceremonial plants and grass during the wedding ceremony; greenness to the Kipsigis was and is still a symbol of health, life and longevity.

#### **2.2.1.5 Death**

The final ceremony one had to undergo after the aforementioned rites was that of *meet* (death) and *tupsyeet* (burial).<sup>82</sup> A father's *kerarget* (last words before death) were taken seriously and they had to be adhered to. *Kerarget* was not only an oral will on the sharing of a father's possession but would also extend to naming those who owed him animals or even land as well as confessing anything he owed others.<sup>83</sup> Death among the Kipsigis was met with sadness and somehow happiness; sadness because of separation with the terrestrial kin and happiness because it was viewed as a gateway for joining ancestors.

Burials took place at a dung heap west of the house. This ceremony brought together the whole community and the work had to stop temporarily till the person was buried<sup>84</sup>; after the burial, people would chant "*weegen wee*" which means "come home soon"<sup>85</sup>; this was an invitation of the spirits of the person to return soon and enter the life of a new

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

born; to the Kipsigis life after death was real to them hence they thought of the spirits as the living dead.<sup>86</sup>

Furthermore, after the burial there were various rites performed to cleanse all that was left behind by the deceased. These rites included: *iseet-aap koot*; this rite involved a special ceremony of cleansing the house of the deceased to enable the other members of the family to live in it again. The respondents informed the study that the ceremony involved sacrificing of the ram or goat and using the blood there of in cleansing the entire house by sprankling with blood. *Kibuchgee* was another rite performed after the death in a family; all of the members left alive in the family were required not to speak to anyone as they stopped working; they were also required to shave their heads. This practice was done to appease the spirits of the dead person. In another cleansing rite called *ng'isiriisyet*, the widow of the deceased removed some things from the house and took them to the river to be washed as well as the widow and the children were to bath as a way of washing uncleanliness from dead. The final rite was that of *kiil kaarik* where the cleansing of the weapons of the dead man was done. All his spears, sword, bows and arrows were cleansed by the eldest son so as to be used again; this was done to preserve the life of the living members of the family.

From the foregoing, it is important to note that among the Kipsigis, death was a communal affair and it was viewed as a bridge to the yonder life of living-dead. The various cleansing rites performed after death was meant to protect life of those remaining from evil spirits, since life to the Kipsigis was and is still a sacred phenomenon. This then justify us to characterize the Kipsigis community as communalistic, sacred in view of life and vitalistic in nature.

### **2.2.2 Items Related to day to day Life**

This sub-section gives an overview of some items of Kipsigis community which had some religious references. These items as we noted from our informants are: blood and water, direction (East and West), music or songs, oath and curses, and taboos.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

### 2.2.2.1 Blood and Water

The Kipsigis used *korotiik* (blood) from various animals for two main purposes: as food and also for cleansing reasons. It was believed among the Kipsigis that life was in blood.<sup>88</sup> The use of blood as food among Kipsigis was not a custom but begun during a time of great famine which led to scarcity of other source of food<sup>89</sup>; at this period, blood was also used for cleansing purposes. An animal was killed while the face was directed to the Eastern direction; then the blood was drawn from the animal then mixed with *murziik* (clabbered milk) then fed to initiates or a new mother.<sup>90</sup> While carrying out cleansing rites, an animal was killed while the face was facing the East then the blood drawn was kept in a gourd; new born mothers from confinement, unwed mothers, murderers, breakers of taboos and people suffering from severe illnesses were cleansed with blood.<sup>91</sup> At the occasion the lamb was taken to *Kapkoros* (the clan alter) then slain there as a ceremony for cleansing took place there.

On the other hand, *beek* (water) among the Kipsigis was and is still an important part of their living<sup>92</sup>; water was used to quench the thirst of human beings and animals as well as needed for raising crops. Moreover, water was used as a cleansing means in various Kipsigis ceremonies. Some of the ceremonies performed with the use of water as a cleansing symbol included: *labeet-aap euun*; which involved the use of water in ceremonial washing of the initiates so as to allow them touch food and other things again.<sup>93</sup> *Kaayaaet* was another ceremony that involved the use of water to cleanse. This ceremony involved washing at the river at the end of the initiation period which symbolized casting away of uncleanness and thus signifying new life.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> J. G. Peristiany. *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1939), p. 66.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

From the foregoing analysis, the idea of sacrality, preservation and prosperity of life among the Kipsigis is evident more particularly from the use of blood and water for cleansing purposes and their symbolic function of signifying life.

#### **2.2.2.2 Directions (East and West)**

The Kipsigis people were conscious of four main directions: East, West, South and North but the Eastern and Western directions had more significance in the rites of the Kipsigis.<sup>95</sup> The East played vital part in all Kipsigis rites since it was associated with *Asiis* (God) and the spirit world.<sup>96</sup> The Eastern direction was revered since it was believed to bring blessing, health, life and prosperity; conversely the Western direction was viewed as direction of darkness, death, decline and cursing.

Some of the rites performed while facing the Eastern direction included: offering of prayers at *Kapkoros* where people sat while facing the Eastern direction as they waited blessings from *Asiis* (God), the family altar (*Mabwaita*) was built towards the Eastern direction, family members prayed at *Mabwaita* while facing the East, milk teeth were pulled and thrown towards the Eastern direction.<sup>97</sup> On the other hand, few practices were performed while facing Western direction. These practices included burying of the corpse to the West of the homestead. It is also significant to note that burials also took place at the sunset.

In the foregoing discussion, it is explicit that the Eastern direction meant life, prosperity and health while the West implied death, darkness, decline and demise; this then qualifies the Kipsigis to be people who were not only conscious of sacredness of life but also the importance of vitality from both biological perspective as well as ontologically.

#### **2.2.2.3 Music/ Songs**

*Tienwoogik* (songs) are of enormous value in the Kipsigis worldview worldview; songs were sung in groups and they not only encouraged those who sang it but also made work

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

lighter when sung them in the fields while working.<sup>98</sup> Body movements accompanied singing as an outward expression of rhythm as well showing the emotions being felt by the singers.

Kipsigis songs had a message to pass; the message could be a vision of future, an idea to remember or something already done.<sup>99</sup> Songs too made it simpler to remember historical events which took place long time ago; for example the song called *kechame chek tulwenyon* (we love our mount) which points that the Kipsigis originated from *Burgeti*<sup>100</sup>, the current Egypt in North Africa. The songs also reminded people of their cultural practices and the need to act according to them as they ought to; for instance the songs called *kibendi mutyo* (we tread softly). Other songs were for rejoicing, others for various stages of initiation as well as those sang when people gathered in *Kapkoros* (clan altar) as part of worshipping *Asiis*, for example *Abutebwa*. Children too had their own songs which enabled them grow.<sup>101</sup>

As explained above, communal dimension among the Kipsigis is elaborate during the participation of all community in singing whether during initiation or worship ceremonies at *Mabwaita*. So as to make a profound impact among the Kipsigis, the RCC can utilize this important dimension of Kipsigis community to make the doctrine of salvation to truly feel at home at the hearts of the Kipsigis.

#### **2.2.2.4 Oath and Curses**

In the Kipsigis worldview, *mumiat* (oaths) were administered to elicit admission for a sin or evil committed like: adultery, theft, lies, or witchcraft. Oaths were taken before the elders and on the name of *Asiis* (God)<sup>102</sup>; if anyone refused to take an oath, one was to be judged. It was believed that when one lied and takes an oath, a severe disaster would ensue. There are different forms of oath depending on the dispute to be solved among the Kipsigis; these include: *mumiatab kagarwet*; it was performed by the defendant by throwing spear on the *kagarwet* tree, there was also *mumiatab mat*; the defendant jumped

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<sup>98</sup>T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 29.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.



over a lit fire. Another oath performed was that of *mumiatab soiyot*; the defendant took an oath by drinking *soiyot* (herbal plant) water. The aforementioned oaths were meant to resolve disputes over stolen cattle.<sup>103</sup>

The oaths administered to resolve cases of theft in the Kipsigis include: *mumiatab koita*; the defendant threw stone up on a tree swearing in the name of *Asiis* (God) that he did not do the act as purported, *mumiatab sogot* was another oath taken, a leaf was stuck on a stick.<sup>104</sup> Oaths administered in cases of suspected witchcraft include: *mumiatab kuresiet*; a branch of *kuresiet* (*sp. Euphorlia candelabrium*) was put on the roof of suspects house if one did not concede to performing sorcery or witchcraft, it was believed that bad omen would happen on the family of the suspect, *mumiatab mugungetab moset* was another oath administered in this ceremony, the baboons paw was put on the roof of a suspects house if one did not concede to the act. Another oath common when one was suspected as a witch was that of *mumiatab artet*; a goat was taken to the suspects home and killed by a blow on the goats back while the defendant denies the crime. All the aforementioned oaths required the suspect to deny the alleged act then it was administered while invoking the name of *Asiis* (God), it was then believed that the oaths administered would invoke calamity upon the one who committed the crime and had not admitted it.<sup>105</sup>

Conversely, there was also an oath for *kalyet* (peace)<sup>106</sup> in the Kipsigis community; it was administered to establish a truce between long time warring groups, clans, tribes. A supernatural sanction made these oaths to be binding and anyone who would go against would face dire consequences.

#### **2.2.2.5 Taboos**

In the Kipsigis worldview, there were *yeetanik* (taboos). These taboos were expressed as do's and do not's. Among the Kipsigis, these taboos were referred to using various terms such as: *kiit ne itabaanaat* (a thing set aside), *kiit ne yeetan* (a thing forbidden), or *yeetan*

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

(taboo).<sup>107</sup> These values were taught to children to demonstrate exemplary values of; good behaviour and kindness as well as hospitality.

There were various taboos among the Kipsigis. These taboos ranged from: those regarding food, for example; it was a taboo to eat meat and drink milk in the same meal, the term *pitoreet* (not our culture thus evil) was used in this regard to demonstrate a deviation from the norm, it was also a taboo to eat meat of some birds like owl, it was a taboo for children to use same utensils with their parents. Among the Kipsigis, eating while standing was also perceived as a taboo in the Kipsigis wisdom, eating meat of an animal that died on its own was also a taboo. Meat from rabbit and pigs was also discouraged and its eating was termed as a taboo to every Kipsigis.<sup>108</sup>

Moreover, there were also those taboos that related to initiation, for instance, women were not allowed to go to *meenyjeet* (temporary initiation house) where the initiates were secluded, girls were not allowed to cook for the initiates, in addition it was a taboo for an initiate to wet the bed, pregnancy before marriage was termed as a taboo among the Kipsigis. Furthermore, the initiates were not allowed to call anyone by name during the seclusion period<sup>109</sup>, it was a taboo. All this guided mannerism and code of conduct among the initiates, thus instilling values of obedience and respect of the community traditions.

In addition to the above, the Kipsigis also had taboos regarding to the sleeping arrangements. For example: it was a taboo for a man to sleep in the house of a member of the previous or subsequent age group to his own. A man was not also allowed to sleep in the house of his own relatives, it was deemed as a taboo since it would bring bad omen. It was also a taboo for a man to sleep with his wife while pregnant and sexual intercourse during pregnancy period was also forbidden. Besides this, it was a taboo for a man to sleep in the same house with his mature daughter, on the same magnitude homosexuality, incest, and bestiality was and is still a taboo among the Kipsigis.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

Besides the above mentioned taboos, among the Kipsigis were also the taboos regarding marriage and kinship relations. In Kipsigis sage, it was a taboo to marry from the same clan one came from; in cases of polygamy it was a taboo for one to marry second time from the same clan. It was also a taboo for the son in-law to visit his mother in-law frequently, adultery was a taboo for women. A son or a daughter was not allowed to marry someone of the same age set as his/ her father. It is also not proper for a Kipsigis young man or woman to marry anyone who may be by any means related to that person whether close or distant.<sup>111</sup>

The aforementioned taboos ensured that harmony, peace, coexistence, respect, obedience; hospitality is upheld between the living and the supernatural world for the general good of the community and individual.

### **2.3 Religious Aspects of Kipsigis Community**

This section of this study brings into account the religious issues in the Kipsigis community. It elucidates the worship of *Asiis* (God), the place of worship, the conception of sin, cleansing and forgiveness among the Kipsigis. Eventually, miscellaneous religious ceremonies are dealt with;

#### **2.3.1 The Worship of *Asiis***

The deity of the Kipsigis community was and is still referred as *Asiis*. Twelve names were used by the Kipsigis to refer to their God. These various names were used to indicate *salanik* (attributes) and did not demonstrate any sign of polytheism.<sup>112</sup> The activities and functions of the Supreme Being were included by the Kipsigis in their naming of *Asiis*. Two major names were used by the Kipsigis to refer to their Supreme Being. These were: *Asiis* and *Cheptaleel*. The use of the prefix *Chep* which commonly implies the feminine gender<sup>113</sup>, however, does not imply it as we learnt from our informants. The Kipsigis had associated the feminine gender with creation and prosperity

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>112</sup>B. C. Fish and G. W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage: Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kericho, Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986), p. 122.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

of life and masculinity to destruction.<sup>114</sup> The prefix *Chep* also denoted purity of *Asiis* as normally used to name feminine gender to denote virginity of girls<sup>115</sup>; hence they opted to use the feminine gender to refer to their God in the feminine form. To the Kipsigis mind of long ago, *Asiis* could not be confined to any form or gender<sup>116</sup>, it is therefore vital to note that the use of the pronoun ‘He’ in this thesis is more of the Christian reference than the Kipsigis worldview.

### 2.3.1.1 *Asiis*

Among the Kipsigis, *Asiis* was the name most commonly used by the Kipsigis for their deity. The name *Asiista* (sun) was also used to indicate God; according to the Kipsigis wisdom, this was not an indication that the sun was the object of their worship<sup>117</sup> but the use of the object *Asiista* gave the implication of the Spirits or some kind of personality behind the material sun seen in the firmament. As we learnt from our informants, *Asiista* was a symbol of the personality which is supernatural that existed beyond it. Hence, the object *Asiista* was a reminder of *Asiis* to the Kipsigis<sup>118</sup>, and that the physical sun was near where *Asiis* resided.

The Kipsigis understood *Asiis* to be *Kamuktaindet* (more powerful and in control of everything).<sup>119</sup> He was believed to be able to see and hear everyone where one was; the powers of *Asiis* as explicated by the Kipsigis were unlimited. The Kipsigis understood *Asiis* as kind; he is understood to provide food, rain, health and all good things. The Kipsigis people looked upon the *Asiis* for the providence of needs. Forgiveness had to be pleaded for before requesting blessings from *Asiis*. Kipsigis thought God was that being who was universal and could communicate through signs, thus *Asiis* was regarded to be one who caused life and started life of infants.<sup>120</sup> If a woman bore twins, they were called *laagok-aap Asiis* (children of *Asiis*)<sup>121</sup> this indicates *Asiis* as the originator of life. Among

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

the Kipsigis *Asiis* was never construed as the originator of evil, nevertheless, it was believed that He would punish people who wrong Him, and *Asiis* wanted people to do good.<sup>122</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the Kipsigis knew *Asiis* in a number of names as presented here: the attribute *Cheptaleel* was also ascribed to *Asiis*. This name is derived from the root words *Cheptaliil* and *lilindo* which denotes brightness or some sought of glory.<sup>123</sup> This name not only attributes glory to *Asiis* but also gives an imagination of Supreme Being who has a personal nature<sup>124</sup>, as well as the ability to control all things. This name is more of an attribute than a name *per se*.

Additionally, *Chepopkooiyo* was another name that was used to characterize *Asiis*. Etymologically, this name is derived from the Kipsigis term *koiyo* meaning “halo.” This word was used in reference to sun as it implied the halo effect of the sun that surrounded it. This not only qualified the victory *Asiis* bestowed to the soldiers when they had gone to raid, but also demonstrated Him as God of plenty.<sup>125</sup> In relation to the halo effect, this name referred to the act of protection and encirclement *Asiis* provided as a means of keeping the soldiers in particular and the whole community in general, safe.

Besides the above names, the Kipsigis also referred *Asiis* as *Chepomiricho*; this names relates to the military operations of the community; it implies God of wars.<sup>126</sup> This name indicated some special interest in relation to the soldiers and that he helps the soldiers emerge successful in raids. The Kipsigis also used name *Chepkeelyen soogol*.<sup>127</sup> This name is derived from Kipsigis root words *keelyen* denoting plural of foot (*keeldo*) and *soogol* meaning nine, among the Kipsigis nine is a divine number associated with infinite.<sup>128</sup> Thus the Kipsigis used the terms cited above to connote “one with many hands and feet to rule everywhere.”<sup>129</sup> The Kipsigis community also used the name

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

*Chemalus*<sup>130</sup>; the name denotes one who knows all or one with invincible knowledge or wisdom. The Kipsigis in their sage wisdom understood *Asiis* as being all-knowing; one who knew human thoughts, actions and intentions.

Other than the above mentioned attributes of the Kipsigis God, the Kipsigis also attributed *Asiis* as *Chepokimabai*.<sup>131</sup> This attribution is derived from Kipsigis word *maa* meaning to put on sun to dry and *pai* meaning millet. The name points to *Asiis* as the source of harvest or food for the Kipsigis people. *Asiis* gives blessing to the community in terms of supply of food. The Kipsigis also characterized their God as *weerit neoo* meaning “eldest son or first born”<sup>132</sup>, the first born among the Kipsigis enjoyed same privileges as the father or even as family leader<sup>133</sup>; this explains why among the Kipsigis when the father dies the eldest son takes over the weapons as well as the roles played by the father. Other names ascribed to *Asiis* were: *Lilat* referring to anointed one, *Tororot* which connotes highest or the most highest and finally *Chepkochor* which refers to the rising one as with the rising of the sun in the morning. As we learnt from our respondents, the rising one is symbolic of the glory and beauty of *Asiis*.<sup>134</sup>

### **2.3.1.2 Places of Worship**

The Kipsigis had three main places of worship or where religious rites were performed. These included: the family altar (*Mabwaita*), the crossroads (*Sach Ooran*), and the clan altar (*Kapkoros*).<sup>135</sup> These areas are discussed below;

#### **2.3.1.2.1 Family Place of Worship**

The family altars among the Kipsigis were places where family religious observances were centered on; this place was called *Mabwaita*.<sup>136</sup> The family altar was positioned to the east of the house as a duplicate of *Kapkoros* (the communal place of worship).<sup>137</sup> The

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>135</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 33.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

ceremonies that took place at *Mabwaita* were those connected to home and family. In construction, vines and branches of ceremonial trees as those of *Kapkoros* are used. The reason why *Mabwaita* was constructed facing east was that its participants could face the rising sun in their worship. The fathers could pray for the family after pouring milk on the base of *Mabwaita* while facing the sun. The branches of *Tebeswet*, *Emityoot*, and *Choorweet* were used to erect *Mabwaita*.<sup>138</sup>

The father as head of the family officiated ceremonies at *Mabwaita*. Some of the family ceremonies included: hair cutting, anointing, ear piercing, and pulling teeth.<sup>139</sup> Communal rites performed at family altar were: initiation, and marriage; the priests officiated these ceremonies at *Mabwaita*. The family concerned would offer a lamb or goat to the priest as thanks for offering the service. The ceremonies that took place at *Mabwaita* as we were informed by the respondents were; those that related to birth, for example the mother that gave birth to twins was cleansed at *Mabwaita* by sacrificing the lamb. The mother's hair was shaved at *Mabwaita* one year after the birth of a child.<sup>140</sup> The ceremonies related to childhood also took place at *Mabwaita*; they included: *lootet-aap keelek* (extraction of two lower teeth), *ruteet-aap ittiik* (piercing of earlobes) and *katumeet-aap lakwet* (sacrificing to cleanse a sick child).<sup>141</sup> In addition to above mentioned rites, there were also rites performed that related to initiation; they were performed at the family altar, there were: *ng'etunateet* (the coming out ceremony), and the *tileet-aap kirokwek*.<sup>142</sup> The engagement, marriage, and elopement rites also occurred at *Mabwaita*. Notwithstanding above, rites related to death and thanks giving ceremonies moreover took place at family altar.

#### **2.3.1.2.2 The Crossroads**

The *Sach Ooran* (Crossroads) is a term that is used to imply intersection of paths or roads; thus it means a place where the paths or roads branch to form a “Y” figure.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>143</sup> B. C. Fish and G. W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage: Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kericho, Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986), p. 136.

Among the Kipsigis, the crossroad was being used to perform some religious rites. In most cases, it was being viewed as a shrine<sup>144</sup>; the Kipsigis children were not allowed to go near a shrine at an intersection.<sup>145</sup> As a form of offering prayers, the Kipsigis would for example cast a leaf at *sach ooran* so as to drive away disease. At the crossroads, there was no altar built, instead there were piles of leaves which took the place of *Mabwaita*. Those who passed near it added leaves to it until it became a heap.<sup>146</sup>

The Kipsigis performed important rites at *sach ooran*. At each instance of the ceremonies, something was dropped at the crossroads.<sup>147</sup> Some of the ceremonies done at this place included: *Kisanei* (desist from), this name is derived from the Kipsigis word *keesaan* meaning to stop or cease from; one was not suppose to pass across crossroads without getting involved in the various ceremonies done there. One was obliged to participate by dropping a leaf at the crossroads as a form of prayer to drive away disease for instance *Burasta* (anthrax).<sup>148</sup> After isolation of the patients suffering from the epidemic, a cleansing ceremony was done at the crossroads. The patient was washed with salty water brought from *keregut* (a small clay pot) and all the hair on the body was shaved; the shaved hair would then be placed in *rokyeet* (broken pot) then the leaves from *moronget* or *tebeng'weet* (herbal plants) would be smeared on the patient. The hair were then buried in a hole dug and people exclaimed "sickness go away." Any person who passed by and saw the pile of the leaves on the dug hole was committed to break off a fresh leaf and drop it there.<sup>149</sup> Every time a person passed there, one was required to drop a fresh leaf no matter the number of times one crossed the crossed roads. This ceremony was termed as *keewiirta sogoot* (throwing of a leaf); it symbolized throwing a way or getting rid of something and particularly diseases.

Another ceremony performed at *sach ooran* was that of *tegeryoot* (a child born to a family after the death of all other children in the family).<sup>150</sup> This ceremony was carried

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 136.



out at the crossroads as a measure to save the life of the newly born is such home; this rite was meant to guard life.<sup>151</sup> Sometimes after the birth of the baby, its hair would be shaved and a tuft would be left on the top of the head. A woman who is not the mother of the child would carry the infant to the crossroads and the mother would hide in the nearby bushes; anyone passing nearby would pluck green leaf or grass and place it on the head of the child.<sup>152</sup> Moreover, the woman and the mother of the child would offer prayers to *Asiis* asking for the welfare of the child so as to keep evil spirits and death away.<sup>153</sup> The *tegyoot* also wore *sirimdo* (metal bracelet) for the rest of his/her life; this was understood as a measure to keep off evil eyes and bad omen.

Among the Kipsigis, the other practice in connection to *sach ooran* as we learnt from our informants was *masagisyeeet*.<sup>154</sup> This Kipsigis word is formed from two root words *Sa* meaning pray or beg and *Kiisyet* which is a small Kipsigis basket for food. The prefix *Ma* infers to a want or to desire.<sup>155</sup> Therefore *masagisyeeet* was a practice of begging done by a child from humble background and who had been neglected or had no relatives. The child would go to the cross roads with *Kiisyet* to beg food. The child would gather a handful of *Sereetyoot* (Kikuyu grass; Sp; *Pennisetum clandestinum*) and placed it at the edge of the garment s/he had removed and placed at the crossroads; the greenness of grass symbolized life. The child would then hide to avoid embarrassment.<sup>156</sup> Anyone passing with food was obliged to drop food on the basket, when the food was sufficient, the child would come pick the clothes and take the *Kiisyet* back home full of food. No one with food would dare pass the begging basket in a sacred place because it was believed that *Asiis* would not bless one who does not give or something bad would happen to the family of the person who pass by the basket without donating food.<sup>157</sup>

Furthermore, the Kipsigis community used the crossroads for purposes of *Kaagasik*.<sup>158</sup> When the Kipsigis men had gone hunting and others lagged and failed to get direction of

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

the lead hunter, the leader would go back to the crossroads and make marks by dropping branches and leaves along the path they have taken at the crossroads. The followers who have missed the path would locate the way to the crossroads and follow the direction of the dropped leaves leading to the direction where the others took. Those who lead were committed to give the right directions to others to follow.<sup>159</sup> As evident above, the Kipsigis culture used *sach ooran* to point to the correct path and that one who led had the responsibility to give correct directions to be followed.

Notwithstanding the above mentioned ceremonies at *sach ooran*, *Kamung'et*<sup>160</sup> was another purpose of the crossroads. *Kamung'et* denotes a rest or a resting place. The elders would go and rest at the crossroads and call out greetings to anyone who was passing<sup>161</sup>, this meant that one was to give news on what has happened on the other side of the community. The priority was given to the visitors and one was required to share good news then they can share bad ones. *Sach ooran* was then one of the key means of relaying messages in any direction since most used foot as a means of transport.<sup>162</sup> Anyone who had gotten the news from crossroads was required to share it with anyone they met on the way as well as those they found working in their gardens. Words on council of elders' meetings and other gatherings were passed in this manner.

### **2.3.1.2.3 The Clan Altar**

Among the Kipsigis community, annual worship also took place at *Kaapkoros* (clan's altar).<sup>163</sup> Worship at *Kaapkoros* involved the whole group or tribe. The word *Kaapkoros* is derived from two Kipsigis words: *Kaap* which denote "the place of" and *Koros* implying a gift or a sacrifice. As for the location of *Kaapkoros*, our informants brought us to knowledge that hilltops were preferred to be the altar places.<sup>164</sup> Near Londiani junction is a flat hill top referred as *Tulwetap Kipsigis* or *Chebewot* which according to our informants was the first *Kaapkoros* to the Kipsigis community. Other clan altars

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p. 138

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 138

<sup>163</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 40.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

mentioned by our respondents include: Chemororroch near Boita, Mangoit, Chepkutuny, Cheptorriet in Belgut and Kiptewit. These hilltops were set aside as *Kaapkoros* by the Kipsigis since they were believed to be sacred. It was not to be cultivated, built or allow animals to graze there; things pertaining to *masambwaanik* (evil spirit) were not to be brought there.<sup>165</sup>

People assembled at *Kaapkoros* to speak to *Asiis* for *nyoeet-aap kaat* (forgiveness) and *kaatiliilet* (cleansing) for the whole community.<sup>166</sup> The Kipsigis community believed that prayers brought blessing, cleansing, and forgiveness. The Kipsigis would also pray for abundance of rain, sufficient food, healthy livestock and many children.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, the Kipsigis asked *Asiis* to take epidemics away as well as giving praises to Him. *Tiisik* (priests) were in charge of the ceremonies at *Kaapkoros* and they were chosen by the community; one to serve as a priest was chosen from people with reputation and had lived exemplary lives; thus they were commonly referred as *chiito ne likwoop* (one with no blemish).<sup>168</sup> He was not only supposed to be a family man and owned property in terms of land and livestock but also was required not to be in debt. Moreover, a priest was only chosen from certain clans such as: *Kipasieek*, *Kipaek*, and the *Kapkugoeek*.<sup>169</sup> Two priests were chosen and both participated in the rites and rituals at *Kaapkoros*, one would lead in chanting for a while and the other would take over from him; two priests were elected so that the other could remind another of what he ought to do if he forgets.

While carrying out a ceremony, a priest would dress in a special gear made of skin of *tisook* (black Columbus monkey).<sup>170</sup> This gear was only meant for worship at *Kaapkoros* and not any other ceremony; the priest also wore *naaryet* (a tiara) a special headdress.<sup>171</sup> In some instance, the first wife of a priest, young people and children who were selected from the community would help the priests in the ceremony. Children chosen were required to have been the first born in their respective families in which death has never

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

happened in initial years. If one's child was participating in *Kaapkoros*, the parents were required to be there.<sup>172</sup>

For people to assemble at *Kaapkoros*, a horn was blown in the morning to remind people to go and gather at hilltop.<sup>173</sup> This attracted people from all directions, children and women gathered to the left of *Mabwaita* while men assembled to the right of it. While they waited for worship, they would sing the song *Abutebwa*; they worshipped as well as offer gifts to *Asiis*. As a means of giving thanks to *Asiis*, a *kwesta* (pure white male goat) was offered at *Kaapkoros*. The goat was then placed facing the eastern direction then it was slaughtered; the priests then offered prayers for the forgiveness of sins. The blood from the goat was sprinkled on the *Mabwaita* and on the people. The blood signified the cleansing of sins and even from diseases<sup>174</sup>. An animal to be sacrificed had to be pure white male goat; since it was required to be innocent and without blemish.<sup>175</sup>

The Kipsigis performed some rites at *Kaapkoros*. Before any ceremony occurred at the communal altar, prayers were being offered<sup>176</sup>, the people sat while prayers were being presented. The women sat while facing the east at the left side of *Mabwaita* while men also sat at the right side, all of them faced the eastern direction. The east was attributed to health, life, and prosperity as cited in the previous section.<sup>177</sup> The priest first offered prayers for themselves before offering supplications for the whole community. This was then followed by the prayers for the assistants who stood facing the east while the priests knelt towards the eastern direction.

Having prayed for themselves, the priests and their assistants led the whole community present at *Kaapkoros* in offering prayers for *kaatiliilet* (cleansing and forgivingness).<sup>178</sup> After asking for forgiveness, the congregation was led in asking for blessings from *Asiis*; the priest chanted and called out for blessing, then the people would respond in affirmation of the priest. As we learnt from our respondents, the priests would chant:

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

*berureech*, *Asiis* (bless us *Asiis*); then the congregation would respond by saying; *berureech* (bless us), *isten mionwagik* (protect us from diseases) the people would then respond *isten* (remove/protect us).<sup>179</sup> Besides asking for blessing, praise would also be included in prayers, it was believed that it was not good to ask and forget to praise as well as give thanks.<sup>180</sup> As prayers were being pronounced, the people would march around *Mabwaita* in *Kaapkoros*; men only were allowed to chant blessing and not women, anything that pleased *Asiis* was uttered.

While prayers were being offered, the people knelt at some stage. Kneeling was being seen as a preparation to meet *Asiis* as well as signifying unity. Coming next after the prayers mentioned above was the act of the assistant young men taking the goat and leading the worshippers in going around *Mabwaita* four times from right to left.<sup>181</sup> The sick persons and pregnant women were not allowed to participate in marching. The priests stood on a stool and sprinkled salty water or brew or blood on the worshippers four times each for every round they make using *korosyoot* or *saruuryet* (tail of a cow) this symbolized blessing and cleansing.<sup>182</sup> Following the sprinkling, the worshippers proceeded to the eastern direction; men sitting at the right hand side while women on the left. The elders would then admonish parents on how to bring up children as well as reminding all the communal obligations; the admonitions would also involve asking people to return anything stolen.<sup>183</sup>

Sequential to the above mentioned procedures, the priests would ask if anyone had something to pass across; if there was none, the worshippers would sing a song called *Tablule* then the horn was blown which indicated dispersal.<sup>184</sup> Some respondents noted that women would be required to bring vegetables and water from their families to be blessed by *Asiis* then they would return them home again after the ceremony.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

Besides the annual day of communal worship, *Kaapkoros* was also used in another occasion when warriors were going to battle or cattle raid.<sup>185</sup> Even if the soldiers were present at the annual communal gathering and then set a battle or raid soon, they were required of to make this special observance as they sought favour, protection, and blessing from *Asiis* before going for the activities cited above.

### 2.3.2 Sin, Cleansing and Forgiveness

In religious realms, the Kipsigis community was aware of sin or rather a wrong doing. This concept of sin was explicated in three major terms with each indicating the intensity of the mistake committed. The first term is *tengekto* (singular) and *tengekwoogik* (plural); this word was and is still used to denote deliberate wrong doing of any kind. It is a very serious term connoting wickedness and guilt normally as a result of unconfessed sins. The Kipsigis also used the term *yaiityo* (singular) and *yaiitwoogik* (plural) to infer sin; this term refers to evil or general badness. It is a slighter and softer term to connote sin. *chaalwokto* (singular) and *chaalwoogik* (plural) is a term word used to explain a wrong doing<sup>186</sup>; it denotes unconfessed sins, failure or a mistake.

As an indication of sin committed and unrepented, the sinner was expected to show some signs; for example a sinner was expected to rub fingers, make unusual sounds like those of a cow, sheep or goat, or frequent deaths in a family was an indication of unconfessed sins.<sup>187</sup> The family affected would ask themselves “what have we done?” Acts that translated to sin in the Kipsigis community included: murder, theft, breach of oaths and other offences like adultery and fornication.<sup>188</sup> So as to mitigate the serious consequences of sin, one had to confess it then the sacrificing of a goat or sheep took place and the blood was sprinkled on the sinner to cleanse him and thus forgiven of the transgress. It is also worth noting that, when one acted wrongly out of ignorance, it was termed as *lelet*<sup>189</sup>; meaning that one did not intend to commit the sin and that circumstances beyond

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>186</sup> B. C. Fish and G. W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage: Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kericho, Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986), p. 144.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., p.144.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p.144.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p.144.

the persons control forced the person to do it; the sinner was not punished for such acts<sup>190</sup> among the Kipsigis people.

Even though the Kipsigis had strict rules of behaviour, they were also a forgiving community. They considered *nyoeet-aap kaat* (forgiveness)<sup>191</sup> as a very important part of their living. The word is derived from two basic terms *nyo* meaning forgive and *kaat* denoting the human neck; literally interpreted as sparing or forgiving the neck.<sup>192</sup> If one confessed of a sin before found guilty, forgiveness had to be granted and forgotten; when the offended refused to grant forgiveness, it was believed that he would bear the evil and the society in general would censure and punish him.<sup>193</sup> Mistakes related to *chorseet* (stealing), rudeness, elopement, and even murder were forgiven when one confessed and accepted the responsibility. As a means of asking for forgiveness, the offender would send an elder with *soongoolyet* (Ostrich's feather) to the offended<sup>194</sup>; the feather symbolized remorse and peace. When the offended saw the feather, he would know someone was asking for forgiveness.

### **2.3.3 Beliefs Regarding Spirits**

The Kipsigis community believed that death was not the end of life<sup>195</sup>, in their wisdom; the body was understood as the temporary abode of the *tamirmiriet* (spirit).<sup>196</sup> Among the Kipsigis, it was believed that when one dies and had lived an exemplary life, his spirit will be good; conversely if one lived a life of reproach, the spirits that will emanate from the same when he dies will be evil.<sup>197</sup> Depending on how one lived in terrestrial life, the spirits that would come originate from their dead bodies and would be either good or bad. The spirits among the Kipsigis were dichotomized into two groups: the first group is *Oiik* (good spirits); these kinds of spirits emerged from people who died and had demonstrated praiseworthy conduct while alive. The other group of spirits was *Masambwaanik* (evil

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p.145.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p.145.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p.145.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p.145.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p.145.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., p.146.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p.146.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p.146.

spirits); these spirits proceeded from persons who had lived lives of reproof.<sup>198</sup> It is vital to realize from the foregoing discussion, that *Oiik* would be reincarnated through *Kuurseet* (naming).<sup>199</sup>

According to the Kipsigis, the spirits were not only believed to be abiding in various places, but also they were known to be existing in various forms. The spirits were believed to live in the air, the earth, and the underworld particularly in the ant hills<sup>200</sup>; the Kipsigis appeased these spirits so as not to cause any illness among the living. In addition to these, spirits of the dead were believed to return to the natural worlds in various forms; for example snakes, rats, moles or lizards or even directly as a spirits.<sup>201</sup> The spirits were known to punish the living if they failed to acknowledge or if they were insulted or neglected. The *Oiik* were believed to cause crop failure, famine, disease, or even the loss of human life. Apart from punishment, the spirits were also known to visit the living persons and through dreams and visions; they could also show the living what is going wrong and what ought to be done to make things right<sup>202</sup>; it is significant to note that the *Oiik* would help the community to present their supplications to *Asiis*.

In addition to the above mentioned attribution of the spirits, the Kipsigis community in their sage wisdom was that women were also believed to have *Oiik* (plural) and that the *Oindet* (singular) of a woman could be passed equally into the grand children.<sup>203</sup> As cited earlier in naming, the attending woman after childbirth would call on the departed spirits of either ancestor or ancestress until the child sneezed; which was an indication that the spirit of the mentioned ancestor or ancestress had entered the child.<sup>204</sup> As we learnt from our informants, when a woman has had a difficulty during birth, it was believed the *Oiik* of the husband's family were outrageous, thus milk was poured on her head to quiet them. Moreover, the Kipsigis also believed that *Oiik* could enter some animals like

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p.147.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., p.147.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p.147.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., p.147.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., p.147.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p.147.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p.147.



hyenas, mice, and leopards and particularly those that ate corpses; however they believed that the spirits never entered domesticated animals.

The other kind of spirits that existed in Kipsigis worldview as we learnt from our informants, are the ancestral spirits, they were known to have a higher status and more sacrality than people still living on earth. By virtues of entering into the spiritual realm, the ancestral spirits were believed to be nearer to God, and hence are more sacred and most powerful. This explains why they command respect; expect propitiation and ritual offerings such as the pouring of libation to them. The Kipsigis ancestral veneration affects deeply the attitude of the Kipsigis; on account of their proximity to God, the Kipsigis consider them stronger and more sacred than anybody else; thus they cannot be ignored.<sup>205</sup>

Among the Kipsigis, ancestral veneration is intimately linked with the worldview. In this worldview, life understood as sacred power/vital force is central element. The ideal of the Kipsigis culture is coexistence and strengthening of the vital force in the community and in the world at large; this ideal is one of the motivations for the veneration of ancestors. This justifies why among the Kipsigis, ancestral status is closely linked with procreation; it is important to note that among the Kipsigis, a person without offspring could not be an ancestor.

Moreover, in the Kipsigis worldview, there is a belief that naming of the descendants by name of his/her ancestor or ancestress makes it possible for the ancestor to continue living in the life of the descendant. The belief is that the ancestor will continue to survive as ancestors only on condition that he is not forgotten. Thus demanding constant communication with him through prayers and ritual offering; hence, a Kipsigis desires to have many children who will remember him and ritually communicate with him. On the other hand, ancestor is expected to be benevolent to his kin through health, material wealth, long life, and begetting of children as a reward of their veneration to him. Let it suffice to note also that Kipsigis ancestral relationship includes the idea of kinship

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p.147.

relation as an indispensable factor. In Kipsigis traditional wisdom as we learnt<sup>206</sup>, no one can be an ancestor of an individual who is not kinly related to him. It is for this reason that rituals for the dead without any particular reference to kinship are generally considered as not belonging to the ancestral veneration. In this sense, consanguinity is an important element in Kipsigis conception of ancestral kinship.

It became evident that through death, an ancestor is believed to enjoy a sacred superhuman status with special magical and religious powers that can be beneficial or even malevolent to his earthly kin; such superhuman condition is expressed in various ways; both bodily and spiritual qualities are ascribed to them; invisible or visible in human but unusual form, capacity to enter and possess human beings, brute animals, capacity to consume foods or drinks, special nearness to supreme being, ability to exist elsewhere-although they are believed to have localities of preferences for instance; shrines, particular trees or bushes and grave yards. Let it be noted also that among the Kipsigis, the ancestral spirits could be presented with ambivalent features; they can be good to their terrestrial kin, but they are also feared. When they are forgotten or neglected by their kin, they are known to manifest their anger by sending to their kin, physical or spiritual calamities. Thus to mitigate this anger, Kipsigis usually appease them through prayer, and ritual oblation. This is a justification of the belief that ancestors are entitled to regular sacred communication with their earthly relatives.<sup>207</sup>

It is vital to note that although Kipsigis manifest some fear towards the ancestors, the living kin are naturally attracted to the ritual of oblation with their deceased kin. Such an attraction roots from natural love, piety, gratitude and respect towards their sacred relatives in the other world, as well as belief in the beneficial sacred vital force the ancestors are supposed to possess due to their nearness to the sacred being. The living on earth therefore expects some benefits from their ancestors for example; protection from sickness, death or other misfortunes and the acquisition of various benefits such as long life and wealth or many children. Thus an ancestor is expected to be faithful to his terrestrial kin; who expect from him a favourable response or reward for their prayers and

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., p.148.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., p.148.

ritual oblation. It was interesting to note that, when the ancestor fail to provide, the living normally turn to the Supreme Being as a last resort.<sup>208</sup> The ancestor on their part, are said to desire frequent/regular contact with the earthly relatives, they are believed to visit them through mediums like; snakes, hyenas, and caterpillars or to have direct union with them through possession; the living and their ancestors form a totality in which solidarity is lived and expressed through prayers and rituals, where human and cosmic solidarity is engaged.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the Kipsigis demonstrate some sort of dialectical tension in their attitude towards the ancestors, namely; fear as well as attraction towards them. As can be gathered from the above explication, there are a given reasons for this kind of ambivalent behaviour. Among such reasons, are the sense of sacredness of the ancestors should also be included; thus the sacred is being approached as both tremendous as well as fascinating phenomena, hence belief in such experience account for Kipsigis ambivalent behaviour characterized by fear and attraction towards their ancestors. Due to their superhuman nature, the Kipsigis sometimes considers the ancestors as mediators between the Supreme Being and their earthly relatives. It is important also to note that although mediation is ascribed to death among the Kipsigis, it is not an indispensable factor of ancestral status. To Kipsigis unlike the Supreme Being, human ancestors are not adored among them; no one can attain ancestral status without having led a morally good life according to Kipsigis moral standards; for an ancestor is regarded as a model or an exemplar in conduct in the community, as well as a source of tribal tradition and its stability. Notwithstanding the above conditions, it is also interesting to note that proper burial with appropriate funeral rite is another condition for ancestral mode of existence among the Kipsigis.<sup>209</sup>

It was also striking to note that Kipsigis ancestral veneration exists as part of a larger religious system; as it is limited to the Kipsigis community, there is no attempt among the Kipsigis to proselytize to the outsiders. A critical analysis revealed that the veneration of ancestors is basically anthropocentric; it is centered on human person, and it is intended

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., p.148.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., p.148.

to procure human welfare in this world and in the yonder life.<sup>210</sup> As Nyamiti rightly observes, the chief items of African category of ‘ancestor’<sup>211</sup> which are also very conspicuous in the Kipsigis worldview are summarized as: Kinship between the ancestor or ancestress and his/her earthly kin. In most cases the ancestor is also the source of life of his earthly relatives. Superhuman sacred status of the ancestor; which is acquired usually but not invariably through death, such status includes superhuman vital force and other qualities obtained through special nearness to the Supreme Being.

The ancestor enjoys title to regular sacred communication with his earthly relatives through prayers and ritual oblation. This communication is a sign of love, thanksgiving, confidence, and homage to the ancestor from his earthly relatives. On the other hand, the ancestor is expected to respond to such prayers and rituals by bestowing physical and spiritual goods to his relatives as a sign of love, gratitude, faithfulness and respect towards them. Let it be thoroughly understood that among the Kipsigis, the ancestral relationship is not a mere product of human conventions, but is founded on human spiritual, bodily and societal structures.

As seen from the foregone discussion, it is quite evident that the greater part of the daily life, and in fact most of the Kipsigis’ community activities were dictated to some extent by ancestors. It is also noteworthy they had great influence on the behaviour of the living; the living lived in a manner to please and appease the ancestors so as not offend the spirits since the ancestors were believed to cause both the good or bad to the community depending on the behaviour of the community members towards them.

#### **2.3.4 Other Religious Rites**

This sub-section shades light on other rites in the Kipsigis worldview which have religious significance in the community. These rites are explicated below:

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p.148.

<sup>211</sup> C. Nyamiti, *Jesus Christ the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation, vol. 1, Studies in African Christian Theology*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2005, p. 64-66.

### 2.3.4.1 Anointing

In the observance of their traditional rites, the Kipsigis could *kaiil* (anoint)<sup>212</sup>, some individuals before undergoing or doing some duties bestowed upon them. For example, before one served as a priest, one had to be anointed. The fat, oil or butter used during this rite signified both blessing and purification.<sup>213</sup> The Kipsigis drew the above mentioned items of purification from three main sources namely; *mwaitaap imanek* (oil from wild castor beans), *mwaitaap meengit* (fat from ram's tail); this fat was mixed with ashes and barks of certain medicinal plants and then used as an ointment. Finally, there was *mwaitaap cheego* (butter from cow's milk); butter from cow's milk was held in high regard.<sup>214</sup> This was the most important kind of fat, and was used in certain special ceremonies.

After marching around *Mabwaita* four times during marriage ceremony, anointing of the groom and the bride was done, and then prayers were then offered at *Mabwaita* for God to grant the couple children and good health.<sup>215</sup> Their big toes were anointed and then tied together; this symbolized the finalizing of the traditional wedding ceremony. Anointing of the bride and groom by the in-laws depicted final acceptance of the engagement. The ram's fat was used at *Kaapkoros*, it produced pleasant smell in form of smoke<sup>216</sup>, and it was believed that *Asiis* was pleased by the aroma.

During initiation ceremonies, particularly at a stage before actual operation, each initiate after circling *Mabwaita* four times, was anointed with the butter on the head, chest, and legs.<sup>217</sup> Moreover at the final stage of the initiation period, as the initiates prepare for *kang'eetunet* (coming out) anointing took place; it was interpreted as blessing and cleansing act for the initiates.<sup>218</sup> The Kipsigis also used butter to anoint during divorce;

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<sup>212</sup> B. C. Fish and G. W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage: Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kericho, Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986), p. 171.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p.171.

each party anointed the other on three main places: the forehead, and each leg.<sup>219</sup> This then could allow each to address the other using their childhood names. In addition to the aforementioned, a murderer was also anointed so as to purify and cleanse him.<sup>220</sup>

#### **2.3.4.2 Rites to Elderhood**

Before delving into the elderhood ceremony, it would be prudent for this study to focus on how one in the Kipsigis community became an elder, their roles as well as their powers. In relation to the Kipsigis social structure, becoming an elder among the Kipsigis, one had to have fulfilled all the required rites and rituals from birth to marriage. The process of elderhood began at birth; it started with the naming ritual which the child was given a name with the father's consent, a father also whose status in the society rose to fatherhood. His dignity, respect, as well as social recognition in the community improved. With the assumption of the title of the fatherhood, the Kipsigis wisdom demands more maturity and humanity on part of the concerned father; following birth, was the ceremony in which the family members and the baby feasted together in celebrating the new life. The importance of these rituals is that no one can become an elder unless he had undergone the aforementioned indispensable conditions.<sup>221</sup>

Among the Kipsigis, circumcision as a rite is vital preparation for elderhood. It not only determines elderhood, but it is also determined by elderhood. When the circumcision candidates that is; the future elders, reach puberty, it is those who are already elders who meet and decide the matter and select special homes for the initiation candidates. They would later on perform rituals which signify gradual incorporation into the community of adults; all these demonstrate circumcision as pre-condition for elderhood.<sup>222</sup>

Moreover, it is vital to note that, the age-sets are meaningful in the Kipsigis society in regard to the process of elderhood. It is powerful tool for social control and accountability. It endeavours to deep healthy interpersonal relationships and serves as an item of counting years; it enhances elderhood by guaranteeing the necessary

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p.171 .

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p.171.

incorporation into elderhood and communal relationship involved. It does this through initiatory practices, ceremonies, initiatory requirements, dynamism and the relevant rites and duties. The other important item in Kipsigis worldview is marriage. As already seen, the Kipsigis social structure is particularly linked with matrimonial life. It is marriage that the vitalistic, relational and communal elements of Kipsigis life emerge strongly. It is in this marriage that one's fecundity is improved. Thus marriage too is a necessary factor for elderhood; since to Kipsigis an elder is primarily a promoter of life, interpersonal relationships and life in community. Hence, no one can become an elder among the Kipsigis without being married.<sup>223</sup>

Closely tied to the above issue, is the view that Kipsigis nuclear family which consists of husband, wife (or wives) and children also conditions the elderhood status, in the sense that no one can become an elder without having a family. Since it is within this context that the elder demonstrates his ability to promote life; an important issue in Kipsigis Cosmo-theadric worldview, this vitalism is an important factor and is highly regarded as determining elderly qualities. Let it also suffice to note that, there is an intimate nexus between elderhood and Kipsigis extended family. The extended family embraces group of related families, homesteads, kinship, clans and community. These issues widen respectively the control of an elder and strengthen the community of the elders from his nuclear family as an elder of homesteads, kinship, and clans; resulting from this is thus the deeper communality since one encounters and becomes united with the other elders in their kin relations. As a result the group of elders forms a powerful unity which strongly affirms the Kipsigis personalistic communal element.<sup>224</sup>

In addition to the above, just as elderhood is integrated in birth (starting of terrestrial life of an individual), a Kipsigis elder understand death as in inevitable event marking entrance into the realm of ancestors. Thus the calm manifested by dying elder and the deep religiosity and solemnity in the farewell rituals when he calls his people, blesses them, divides his property for inheritance, exposes his hidden property for their inheritance and pronounce his last will and wish. It can be legitimately inferred that death

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p.171.

within the Kipsigis social order empowers, in some sense, the Kipsigis elders to be more alive in their memory. By dying, they join the company of ancestors whose life are fuller; hence as evident from above, one becomes an elder in Kipsigis community when he has undergone successfully, all the Kipsigis rites of passage evident in the previous subsections.

The Kipsigis elders played the following roles in the Kipsigis community; they were servants, guardian of Kipsigis religion, reconcilers, leaders, family stabilizers and promoters of healthy relationship in the community. As servants, they could be sent or even summoned everywhere; they protected the society and rectified anything that went wrong; they also educated and enlightened people to avoid deviation from the Kipsigis way of life. The elders also delivered messages sent with authenticity and fidelity; as peace lovers, the elders reconciled people in their differences and disputes; the bringing of peace and calmness as well as harmony was the main role in their community; they led in the searching of truth after they established justice.<sup>225</sup>

As Mbiti also notes, African elders-Kipsigis included were guardians of the religious teachings.<sup>226</sup> The Kipsigis depended very much on the services and wisdom of their elders; it is in these elders who led the community in making prayers, offerings and sacrifices; the Kipsigis elders also sacrificed and prayed for rain, take charge of planting ceremony, purify the crops and perform other ceremonies. They also officiated in the rites of making libation and other means of contact with the living-dead; they would call for the confessing if one stole something, bless or even lead people in the ritual of cursing unrepented sin. In addition to the foregoing, the elders among the Kipsigis are leaders as well as judges in their own homes; they represent people in meetings as well as ensured the livestock are safe and nourished. As leaders in their own homes, they make categorical and unquestionable decisions and assign diverse duties to their people; thus they were cautioned not to do anything that could embarrass them. Kipsigis elders too acted as family stabilizers, they had the ability to build up families, care for them and guarantee them communitarian-vitalistic prosperity; let it suffice to mention that having a

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<sup>225</sup>Ibid., p.171.

<sup>226</sup>J. S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, (Nairobi: EAEP, 1979), p. 229.



family with children was a condition for one to be an elder; thus apart from establishing families, they supervised them, took care of them thereby promoting peace in the family and among the families, they therefore planned and assigned duties to their family members.

In addition to the foregoing roles and responsibilities of the Kipsigis elders, they were also charged with the following powers; they ruled, reconciled, united, judged and taught their people. As rulers, they had the power to rule over their households as they shepherded them, their managerial skills in their leadership and ruling was demonstrated here. Kipsigis elders were also charged with the powers of reconciling and uniting people either in cases of fights, disagreements, war, and conflicts; they furthermore, offered appeasing sacrifices to God in reconciling the God with the community. As groups of competent people, Kipsigis elders also had powers of attending disciplinary meetings, hear cases and passed judgments; such kinds of judicial powers gave them a kind of authority over life and death. Furthermore, the Kipsigis elders were primarily the custodians of Kipsigis way of life and thus they had the powers of teaching this way of life and passing it from one generation to the other. They enlightened, encouraged, corrected and instructed their people to lead good lives; the elders also had the powers to be remembered and to live after death; death did not mark cessation of their lives.<sup>227</sup>

The Kipsigis community performed *kuleet-aap eitaap muget* (elderhood ceremony) to indicate the promotion of man's standing in his community.<sup>228</sup> These rites demonstrated honour and respect to the one being performed<sup>229</sup>; this rite gave one the responsibility of leading in many communal ceremonies. Since this ceremony was bestowing joy and blessing, all in the community including the children were welcome.

During the ceremony, a cow or a bull would be killed by suffocating the animal by holding the mouth and the nose. The animal entrails were studied to predict the omen; if the omens were good, the man and wife would put their head on the intestines.<sup>230</sup> This

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., p.171.

<sup>228</sup> B. C. Fish and G. W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage: Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kericho, Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986), p. 172.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p.172.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p.172.

signified humility on the part of person being honoured; a ring from the animals hide was worn on the ring finger as well as the bracelet by both the wife and the husband, they then would discard it after about one week. Conversely, if the omens of the animal were bad, the husband and the wife were not allowed to wear bracelets, and an animal would be killed later and then ceremony would be completed.<sup>231</sup>

### **2.3.4.3 *Rooteet***

As we learnt from our informants, the Kipsigis community also practiced a ceremony referred as *rooteet* (moving steadily in a line without confusion)<sup>232</sup>; this word is derived from the root word *root* which denotes following one another in one line, just like the return of cows in the evening. This ceremony was done in order to obtain blessings from *Asiis* as the warriors were preparing for cattle raid; it was characterized by making of an *oormariichet* (archway) through which the warriors passed. They were being sprinkled with *suguteek* (salty water) by elders; those who went through the arc way were required to take a handful of *labotoonik* (Sodom apples) as they follow each other in a single line, the apples represented the cattle that would be raided from the targeted community. As a means to crown the ceremony, praises were chanted to *Asiis* believing that He had granted them victory before going for the raid; as each warrior return his home that evening, he would burn *koroseek* (ceremonial plants) which produced a sweet-scent and the smoke would go upwards to *Asiis*. This ceremony appeased the ancestors and God to bless the warriors before going to the raid.<sup>233</sup>

## **2.4 Chapter's Concluding Remarks**

On the basis of the background elaborated in the previous chapter, the second chapter has analyzed and explained the Kipsigis worldview items; through the historical and social contexts of the Kipsigis community- comprising the origin of the Kipsigis, and the social organization of the Kipsigis, the aforementioned items have been profoundly examined.

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p.172.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid., p.172.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p.172.

The section has also shown that the various worldview items which included: rites of passage, some day to day activities in the Kipsigis worldviews, as well as religious aspects like worship of *Asiis*, and belief regarding ancestors are gifted with communal, anthropocentric, sacrality of life and vitalistic qualities of an African worldview.

It has also been noted that the Kipsigis worldview items are integrated in the Kipsigis religion. In this connection, the conception of *Asiis*, and the notion of the ancestral spirits were presented as inductive. In this section, the analysis made the study conclude that so as to have proper and deep understanding of the Kipsigis worldview; one has to take into consideration the intimate nexus it bears to the social and religious way of life. As such, the Kipsigis worldview items are not only deeply integrated in these factors, but serves also somehow for their existence thereby ensuring solidarity among the Kipsigis, union with the ancestors and harmony with God.

Having examined the above, we are now better placed to move to the theological section. This chapter, which was mainly anthropological, explored Kipsigis worldview characteristics. The main reason for the endeavor was to draw out salvation elements that can be exploited in the effort of understanding the doctrine of salvation by way of inculturation explaining and transmitting it in such a way that it makes more sense to the Kipsigis and others who have related values. It is with such a background that we move to the theological section with in the context of the study's subject.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S TEACHING AND THEOLOGIANS' REFLECTIONS ON INCULTURATION

#### 3.0 Introduction

The last chapter, which was mainly anthropological, explored Kipsigis worldview characteristics. The main reason for the endeavor was to draw out salvation elements that can be exploited in the effort of understanding the doctrine of salvation by way of inculturation explaining and transmitting it in such a way that it makes more sense to the Kipsigis and others who have related values. With this in mind, the current chapter now shifts to Christian aspect of the study.

The main issue in this chapter, therefore, is that of explaining inculturation approach. It commences with handling the nature of inculturation. It will also show that the issue of inculturation has been generating important ideas and instructions throughout Church history. On the basis of this observation, the chapter will not only elaborate the concept “inculturation” in relation to other related terms. It will also explore RCC’s teachings on the issue as it tackles theologians’ reflections on the same subject. The bottom-line is that we will not be breaking new ground on inculturation but we will be building on ongoing Church instructions and insights from other scholars who have continuously and ably participated in theologizing from this approach. On this Wachege comes in handy as he affirms: “inculturation is not particular to us: It has existed through the Church history.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the study intends to give its contribution by concretizing the Christian doctrine of salvation and among a specific African ethnic group i.e., the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County.

#### 3.1 Nature and Reflections on Inculturation

The question of inculturation has received much attention in the RCC to the extent that it has even been given special consideration by some of the Popes, especially Pope John

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<sup>1</sup> P. N. Wachege. *Jesus Christ our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of an Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publisher, 1992), p. 147.

Paul II. In his preface to *Inculturation: Its meaning and urgency*, McGarry remarks that “so central does Pope John Paul II consider the question of inculturation for the mission of the Church at the present time, that in 1982 he established at the Vatican a Pontifical Council for culture.”<sup>2</sup> In order to demonstrate how inculturation has been popularized in our present time, Shorter remarks: “The last ten years have seen a growing number of articles, working papers and even official statements on aspects of inculturation, after the stimulus of the 1974 Synod of Bishops and the Synodal document... .”<sup>3</sup>

When we talk of inculturation, we are also talking about culture, which is central to the Christian faith. Pope John Paul II maintains that, “faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not fully lived out.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, there is a close link between faith and culture. Hence, the need for inculturation of the Gospel has to be emphasized. This is especially so in RCC in Kericho Sub-County, where the doctrine of salvation needs to be deeply rooted in Kipsigis culture. The need for inculturation of the Christian faith is summed up by Schineller in these words: “Wherever the Gospel is lived, wherever it is preached, we are obliged to search for ways in which the Good-News can be more deeply lived, celebrated and shared. This process is inculturation.”<sup>5</sup> This assertion is in line with the study’s primary aim which is to investigate Kipsigis worldview items for better understanding and propagation of the RCC doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County. In this chapter, therefore, the study intends to examine the meaning of inculturation by looking at the various terminologies associated with it. It is necessary to adopt some working definitions of the subject, to review its scope, examine its agents, explore ways of inculturating the Christian faith (the doctrine under study)—with particular reference to RCC in Kericho Sub-County—and later to come up with useful recommendations. With the aforementioned in mind, the subsection not only highlights the meaning of inculturation, but it also analyses magisterial directives on inculturation and eventually presents further reflections by some theologians.

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<sup>2</sup>E. McGarry, Preface to *Inculturation: Its meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1986), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), p. xi.

<sup>4</sup>M. Waliggo *et al*, *Inculturation: its meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1986), p. 7.

<sup>5</sup>P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 15.

### 3.1.1 The Meaning of Inculturation

The first step towards exploring the meaning of inculturation is to examine what some authors and researchers have said about it. Authors like Waliggo *et al*<sup>6</sup>, Schineller<sup>7</sup> and Shorter<sup>8</sup> agree that “inculturation” as a term is relatively recent. For Waliggo, however, “the reality it signifies has been present in various degrees in the Church since its foundation.”<sup>9</sup> Because of this relative newness of the term, the study intends to explore its meaning and that of the concept inculturation gradually. The aim here is to understand its meaning well so that its discussion may become clear as the study progresses. In emphasizing the importance of understanding this term, Shorter explains: “The purpose is simply to establish meanings and ensure that we know what we are talking about.”<sup>10</sup> It is hoped that the meaning of the word will unfold as we review the various terminologies associated with it. Waliggo observes that “there has been a noticeable development in our understanding of the inculturation movement and this can clearly be shown by the passage from one terminology to another.”<sup>11</sup> Wachege notes that there are several terminologies implemented by theologians which are interrelated like “adaptation”, “contextualization”, “indigenization”, “enculturation”, “acculturation”, “incarnation”, and “inculturation.”<sup>12</sup> These terminologies are close to the concept “inculturation” are examined below in order to see not only how they relate to inculturation, but also how they can help us to understand it more profoundly in the light of the topic at hand.

### 3.1.2 Adaptation

Another word used by scholars instead of the term inculturation is “adaptation.” Schineller tells us that “to adapt is to make fit.”<sup>13</sup> Waliggo explains what this “make fit”

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<sup>6</sup> M. Waliggo *et al*, *Inculturation: its meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1986), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), p. xi.

<sup>9</sup> M. Waliggo *et al*, *Inculturation: its meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1986), p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), p. xi.

<sup>11</sup> M. Waliggo *et al*, *Inculturation: its meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1986), p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> P.N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation: A Man's Perspective* (Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works, 1992), pp.26-28.

<sup>13</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 16.

implies in this instance: “It implies a selection of certain rites and customs, purifying them and inserting them with Christian rituals where there was an apparent similarity.”<sup>14</sup>

Authors, like Pinto, Schineller and Waliggo, agree that the term “adaptation” was widely used in the past. The word also appeared in three articles of the “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) of the documents of Vatican II. It has been observed that, among the three articles (38, 39 and 40); adaptation appeared more prominently in article 40. This article states: “In some places and circumstances—an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed...”<sup>15</sup> Pope John Paul II added his voice on the utility of the term in this way: “An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favoured by the Church.”<sup>16</sup> The implication here is that the Pope affirmed the authenticity of employing the concept. To some Africans, however, the term has vivid shortcomings. The limitation is well articulated by Sipuka in these words: “It selects only those customs that can make sense to the Roman liturgical rite without changing its structure and content.”<sup>17</sup> Pinto holds that “it expresses the external aspect of the encounter between Christian faith and the different cultures.”<sup>18</sup>

### 3.1.3 Contextualization

The next interrelated term is “contextualization.” Pinto brings to awareness that “context is the sum-total of the significant circumstances.”<sup>19</sup> As such it does not necessarily involve culture. In this regard, Schineller is of the opinion that: “Instead of speaking of a particular culture, whether traditional or modern, it speaks of contexts or situations into which the Gospel must be inculturated.”<sup>20</sup> He, therefore, cautions against “over

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<sup>14</sup> M. Waliggo *et al*, *Inculturation: its meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1986), p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 1966, No. 40.

<sup>16</sup> See, P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> W. Sipuka, *Toward an Inculturated Eucharist among Xhosa* (New York: Paulist Publications, 2000), p. 240.

<sup>18</sup> J. P. Pinto, *Inculturation through Basic Communities* (Bangalore: Pais Asia Trading Company, 1985), p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>20</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 19.

emphasizing the present context to the detriment of continuity with the past.”<sup>21</sup>

Though contextualization does not address culture directly, and consequently is not a proper synonym for inculturation, it created some form of awareness. It reminds us that situations are not necessarily the same in terms of the preaching of the Gospel. Thus, every particular context calls for creative theological reflection. What works in Europe for example may not work in Africa. Even in Africa, what works in Egypt may not work in Kenya-particularly Kipsigis context. For this reason, Schineller advises: “One must again and again study the situation and contextualize the Gospel for that situation as it changes.”<sup>22</sup> The present Kipsigis context needs theological inculturation in this way in order to make the Catholic doctrine of salvation to be better understood and owned by the Kipsigis.

#### **3.1.4 Indigenization**

The third terminology leading to the understanding of inculturation is the word “indigenization.” Here Schineller creates awareness that: “The indigenization of theology means that the local community, with its own indigenous leadership, has the primary responsibility and task of developing the teaching, the liturgy and the practice of that local Church.”<sup>23</sup> In his own contribution toward this end, Chupungco urges that “in imitation of Christ, who by virtue of the incarnation made himself one with the Jewish nation, the local Church should strive to identify itself with the people among whom it dwells.”<sup>24</sup> This, of course is open to the inclination of the indigenous theologians to be parochial minded by enclosing themselves in their respective cultures while doing theology. Schineller also observes that “it might result in too static a view of culture.”<sup>25</sup> Chupungco too expresses his sentiments as follows: “Another difficulty presented by the term ‘indigenization’ is the question of determining which elements constitute indigenous culture. How many nations in the world today can claim to be in possession of a culture

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.18.

<sup>24</sup> A. J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechism* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 18.



that has no admixture of other cultures?”<sup>26</sup> Since culture is dynamic and changes constantly, indigenization should not exclude other cultures completely because there is need for the local culture to grow through interaction with other cultures. With the aforementioned objections, this led theologians to look for a better term that does not exclude contribution of other cultures in dialogue.

### **3.1.5 Enculturation**

Another term that has significance in our subject is “enculturation.” Pinto and Schineller refer to “enculturation” as an anthropological term, while Shorter says it is a sociological concept. Pinto suggests that as an anthropological concept, enculturation was probably introduced by the anthropologist Herskovits. Confirming Herskovits’s definition, Pinto notes: “Learning experience, which marks humans off from other creatures and by means of which initially and in later life, they achieve competence in their culture, may be called enculturation.”<sup>27</sup> This means that enculturation is a process through which a person is introduced to the culture of his/her society. Readiness to appreciate other peoples’ cultures must be emphasized because it helps to promote inculturation and that is why our work is a case study.

### **3.1.6 Acculturation**

“Acculturation” is yet another term which scholars like Pinto and Dhavahomey are of the opinion that it is synonymous with “culture-contact.” Dhavahomey further explains that “culture-contact is the phrase preferred by the British anthropologists to the American acculturation.”<sup>28</sup>

Shorter is of the opinion that this term is so close to that of inculturation that the two may be used interchangeably.<sup>29</sup> The definition found in Dhavahomey emphasizes such change in these words: ‘Acculturation comprehends those phenomena, which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact,

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<sup>26</sup> A. J. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation: Sacramentals, Religiosity, and Catechism* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 16.

<sup>27</sup> J. P. Pinto, *Inculturation Through Basic Communities* (Bangalore: Pais Asia Trading Company, 1985), p. 11.

<sup>28</sup> M. Dhavahomey, *Christian Theology of Inculturation* (Rome: Pontifical University Press, 1997), p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

with subsequent, changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. Under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture-change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation...’’<sup>30</sup> Such an understanding will help us to take a bold step in working toward the inculturation of the RCC doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County.

### **3.1.7 Incarnation**

Another related term is “incarnation.” This is a concept influenced by the salvation event of Jesus entering into our human existence as a human being like us (Jn.1:11-14). Schineller refers to “incarnation” as “the most directly theological word to express the meaning of inculturation.”<sup>31</sup> While Dhavahomey calls it “the archetype of inculturation of the Gospel.”<sup>32</sup> Shorter is quite elaborate in describing this salvation event. He says of Jesus of Nazareth: “He accepts human cultures and expresses himself through them. He lives their way of life.”<sup>33</sup> This understanding is indispensable since “there could have been no earthly ministry for Jesus if he had not adopted the cultural concepts, symbols and behaviour of his hearers.”<sup>34</sup>

The incarnation-model is thus important in this study because it gives a vital basic principle for us to follow. That is, as Jesus incarnated Himself firmly in the Jewish culture, in the same way the Church, which is the body of Christ, must incarnate the Gospel of Christ, for our case the doctrine of salvation, in all the cultures of the people (Kipsigis included) to whom it is preached. This principle of incarnating the Gospel into the culture of the people is also critical to the universal Church, especially in Africa, and Kericho Sub-County in particular, because it is through this process that the Gospel will be rooted in the life of the people.

### **3.1.8 Inculturation**

A close scrutiny of the above concepts i.e adaptation, contextualization, indigenization,

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<sup>30</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 22.

<sup>31</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> M. Dhavahomey, *Christian Theology of Inculturation* (Rome: Pontifical University Press, 1997), p. 95.

<sup>33</sup> A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), p. 80.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

enculturation, acculturation and incarnation manifests their relatedness that sheds light to a deeper understanding of inculturation. Despite their shortcoming here and there, each one of them has the positive elements that were pointed out. These have enriched the perception and implementation of inculturation- the orientation this study follows. With this in mind, the study is well grounded in giving the actual nature of “inculturation.” It is now appropriate for the study to consider some of the definitions of inculturation. It is not study’s intention, however, to examine all the definitions that have been given by scholars so far. Instead, for practical purposes, the study will discuss only a few of these for reference purposes in the course of this study.

Crollius describes inculturation as: “The integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.”<sup>35</sup>

In this statement, Crollius refers to some a salient point on which inculturation is based. In the first place, “the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people” is important because inculturation must affect the whole life of the people at the local Church. This Christian experience of the people can be summed up as their life experience, which includes the way they worship, marry, interact with one another, their general occupation, the way they rejoice when they have good fortunes such as a new birth and how they mourn when they have misfortunes such as bereavement in the family.

Another definition of inculturation comes from Arrupe, a former Superior General of the Jesuits. This is how he puts it: “inculturation is an incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as

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<sup>35</sup> R. Crollinus, “*Inculturation Newness and Ongoing Process*”, in *Inculturation its Meaning And Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline African Publication, 1986), p. 43.

to bring about “a new creation.”<sup>36</sup> To his credit, his definition points to the incarnation of Jesus Christ recorded in John’s Gospel as, “the word became flesh and dwelt among us.”<sup>37</sup>

The Christian message referred to by Arrupe and Crollius means that the complete revelation of God to his people culminates in the person of Jesus Christ. According to Pinto, revelation means “the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man (and woman), which is made clear to us in Christ...”<sup>38</sup> There is need, therefore, to incarnate or insert this Christian message (the doctrine under study) or experience into Kipsigis culture, for example, in Kericho Sub-County. This is the dynamism of inculturation. As Pinto rightly persuasively points out, “inculturation is the dynamic relation between the Christian message and diverse cultures, an insertion of the Christian life into a culture...”<sup>39</sup>

Waliggo explains inculturation as follows: “it is the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought patterns of each people. It is the conviction that Christ and his Good News are even dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people. It is the continuous endeavour to make Christianity truly “feel at home” in the culture of each people.”<sup>40</sup> This definition provides the idea of inculturation as “reformulating the Christian life and doctrine into the very thought-patterns of each people” conscientizing us to focus on the Kipsigis worldview in this regard.

More and more perceptions of “inculturation” can be provided since it has proved to be of great interest to a huge number of theologians. What has been explicated already,

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<sup>36</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook on Inculturation* (New York: Paulist Publications, 1990), p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> 1 Jn 1:4.

<sup>38</sup> J. P. Pinto, *Inculturation Through Basic Communities* (Bangalore: Pais Asia Trading Company, 1985), p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> M. Waliggo *et al*, *Inculturation: its meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1986), p. 12.

however, is adequate for our kind of study. It has to be reiterated, nevertheless, that the other terms that were earlier examined namely, adaptation, contextualization, indigenization, enculturation, acculturation and incarnation shed light to a more profound understanding of inculturation. As Wachege indicates, “without ignoring these concepts, since each of them has its own contribution and limitations, we give preference to the term “inculturation.” We appreciate it as the one conveying the task and effects of presenting, interpreting and putting the Christian message in such a way that it germinates, thereby maturing and flourishing in our African people’s culture.”<sup>41</sup> He goes on to assert, and from the above analysis the study fully concur with him, “the term ‘inculturation’ contains and expresses best and most coherently our contemporary trend of understanding, presenting and concretely interpreting Christianity in accordance with our African people’s aspirations, needs, thought-forms and mentality. It is more explicit in our approach and effort of confronting the Gospel message with our African culture(s).”<sup>42</sup>

The definitions given above are intended to throw some light on our understanding of inculturation. The study will try to apply the insight gained from them practically in this study in the hope that Kipsigis culture in Kericho Sub-County will, for example, be able to become a Christianized culture along the lines described by Okure in the words, “the Yoruba, the Kikuyu, the Zulu or any other Christianized culture...”<sup>43</sup> In the same way we may add: “the Kipsigis of Kericho Christianized culture.”

### **3.2 Church Instructions on Inculturation**

There are several Church teachings on inculturation that are relevant to our work. The study limits itself only to some that are directly related to our subject. These teachings are examined in three main sub-sections, they include; Apostolic exhortations on inculturation, Popes’ addresses on inculturation and Church’s decrees on inculturation. The conviction is that these are adequate for the opted for topic.

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<sup>41</sup> P. N. Wachege, *African Women Liberation*, (Nairobi: Phoenix Publisher Ltd, 1992), p. 28.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>43</sup> T. Okure, “*Inculturation: Biblical Bases*”, in *32 Articles Evaluating Inculturation of Christianity in Africa* (Nairobi: Gaba Publications, 1990), p. 59.

Before the study embarks on the above indicated Church pedagogical aspects, the study is quick to acknowledge its indebtedness to Wachege with regard to identifying and elaboration of most of the aforementioned ecclesial documents on inculturation.<sup>44</sup> Admittedly, some of the ideas concerning the document's teachings at hand are so important that the study readily borrows them in some cases word by word or in a paraphrased form.

### **3.2.1 Apostolic Exhortations on Inculturation**

For practical purposes, the study analyses the following Apostolic Exhortations in this sub-section; *Africae Terrarum* (The Land of Africa), *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World), *Catechesis Tradendae* (Catechesis Today), *Redemptoris Missio* (The Mission of the Church), *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) and *Africae Munus* (Africa's commitment).

The encyclical *Africae Terrarum*<sup>45</sup> is the first document that this study considers. It was Pope's message to Africa that marked the tenth anniversary of *Fidei donum*; it was intended to be a sequel to that Encyclical letter. This ecclesial document is also relevant to our inculturation. It contains messages of Pope Paul VI to the sacred hierarchy and all the people of Africa given on 29th October 1957.<sup>46</sup> In the document the Pope urge the Church to accommodate African values (Kipsigis worldview values included) with the Christian Gospel and not merely perceiving them as animistic religions. He comments; "more recent ethnic history of the people of Africa, though lacking in written documents, is seen to be complex yet rich in individuality, spiritual and social experience research. Many customs and rites once considered to be strange are seen today, in light of ethnological science, as integral parts of various social systems, worthy of study and commanding respect."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> P. N. Wachege. *Jesus Christ our Mūthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study on the Agikūyū Understanding of an Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publisher, 1992), p. 147-162.

<sup>45</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Africae Terrarum (The Land of Africa)* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1967).

<sup>46</sup> R. Hickey, *Modern Missionary Documents in Africa* (Dublin: Dominican Publication, 1982), p. 176ff.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

In this document, the Pope highlights important African values which can be Inculturated namely; the concept of God, the spiritual concept of life, the respect of dignity of people as seen in traditional social life as well as in initiation rites, the sense of family as well as the bond to ancestors; which implies authority, demand respect as well as also accompanied priestly function. The concept of community life which one is incorporated into fully is also cherished. The Pope in the document perceives these values as enriching and can be used to enhance the Gospel message into particular Christian communities. Hence, he confirms that the African moral and religious values (Kipsigis included) deserve ecclesiastical respect and mutual understanding.<sup>48</sup>

This Apostolic Exhortation is an important document to the Church in Africa-and Kericho Sub-County in particular. It looks to the future with quite confidence that the Christian doctrines can dialogue with African culture-Kipsigis culture included with a view of enriching one another. The Roman Pontiff notes; “we have hope and confidence of a well ordered Africa provided it can be faithful to its ancient traditions and at the same time renew itself by its contact with Christianity.”<sup>49</sup>

As such then, the Pope endorsed the main goal of this endeavour; that is an investigation of Kipsigis worldview items for better understanding and propagation of the Catholic doctrine of salvation using inculturation approach in Kericho Sub-County. By implication, he is following the teachings already prescribed in Vatican II council.

EN<sup>50</sup> is yet another document that is of relevance to this study. This document is an outcome of the Synod in Rome held in 1974. In this Apostolic Exhortation of the Pope John Paul VI in December 1975, the Synod produced interim statements that encouraged and motivated the process of inculturation. In this document, the Church is tasked with the role of evangelizing bearing in mind the needs of multi-cultural Church in which the evangelizer has to consider the message and the person to whom it is intended. The

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 179-82.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 179-82.

<sup>50</sup> John Paul VI, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1975).

document cautions that if the evangelizer loses the sight of the two indispensable parties, then the message will be a salvation barrier rather than being fruitful.<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, this document implores the Church to adopt sacramental rituals to the traditional rituals (for our case the Kipsigis rituals), since sacraments are the means of salvation. It further urges that for a more fruitful evangelization to be achieved, in-depth/deep roots of a particular culture ought to be addressed and not the outward analysis so as to avoid the double identity crisis. The document also affirms the Church's respect and esteem of non-Christian religions (Kipsigis religion included). In propagation of the Gospel, the document acknowledges the revelatory aspects of cultural values as necessary for spiritual growth.<sup>52</sup> Thus individual Churches (RCC in Kericho included) are then charged with the task of inculturating the Gospel without altering its truth. Hence the Gospel message encounters culture, transforming it by challenging its values and expressions of the Gospel message.

This document further affirms the effort of the study that of inculturating Kipsigis worldview items with the Catholic doctrine of salvation. This dialogue ensures that the Gospel message transforms repulsive cultural values while the Gospel becomes enriched in its various ways particularly in the presentation and elaboration by the culture. This document thus motivated the study in its analysis of the doctrine of salvation.

Another document that demands our attention is *Catechesis Tradendae*.<sup>53</sup> This Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II in October 1979 is of relevance to this study, since it motivates it to inculturate. It is the first Papal document to use the word "inculturation" officially. The document argues that the Gospel message is not embodied in the particular culture but in various cultures (Kipsigis included).<sup>54</sup> Pontiff further urges the catechists to study and understand various cultures in particular; components, significance, and values before evangelizing to them, so as to preach a meaningful and fruitful message to the evangelized, moreover, Pope observes that for a more enriching endeavour, biblical

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 247-51.

<sup>53</sup> John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Catechesis Tradendae* (Catechesis Today) (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1979), no. 53.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 53.



cultures ought to enter into dialogue with the African cultures for our case a dialogue between Kipsigis worldview items with RCC doctrine of salvation.<sup>55</sup>

In this exhortation, the Pope calls for deep inculturation of Gospel message in African culture (Kipsigis culture included as the study endeavour). In this way, he argues that there will be a meaningful and fruitful mutual benefit; the Gospel message will Christianize and purify the cultural values while on the other hand, the culture will allow more elaborate understanding and propagation of the Gospel message. This Exhortation thus not only endorsed the study but it also supported it with an aim to make the RCC doctrine of salvation to be understood among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County.

In the encyclical letter; RM<sup>56</sup>, Pope John Paul II expounds on the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate. The encyclical invites the Church to renew her missionary commitment<sup>57</sup>; the Church is presented as a sign and instrument of salvation, thus it is mandated to intervene between cultural values and the Gospel message among the various cultural contexts. This document interprets salvation as offered to all; it must be made concretely available to all.<sup>58</sup>

Pope furthermore, echoes the message of AG art.22<sup>59</sup>; where dialogues with other religious traditions are emphasized for mutual enrichment. The Roman Pontiff argues that: "in the light of the economy of salvation, the Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue."<sup>60</sup> With this foregoing discussion in mind, this study was motivated to carry out this kind of inculturational work with view of making the Catholic doctrine of salvation truly "feel at home" in Kipsigis cultural context by enhancing a sincere and authentic dialogue between Kipsigis cultural values-worldview items and the RCC doctrine under study.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>56</sup>John Paul II, *Encyclical letter: Redemptoris Missio* (The Mission of the Church), (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2003), p. 8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

In addition to above mentioned encyclicals, the study also considers Apostolic Exhortation, namely; *Africae Munus*.<sup>61</sup> In this document, Pope Benedict XVI examines the paths towards reconciliation, justice, and peace to all, the Pontiff accentuates living in harmony with the family, elderly, men, women, young people and children.<sup>62</sup> In his message, he officially calls for new evangelization mode in a quickly changing dynamic world; this new approach to him is that of inculturating the Gospel and evangelization of the culture<sup>63</sup>; he says this will lead to a mutual benefit between the two entities, thus solving the double identity crisis among the faithful.<sup>64</sup> The Roman Pontiff further urges that the African cultural context is rich with positive elements which if inculturated would deepen the faith in African soil (Kipsigis land included); the Pontiff gives example of such positive elements that is; the African vision of life where he notes that Africans advocate for protection of life, respect of creation and ecosystem.<sup>65</sup> Thus, he implored the bishops of Africa and scholars in general to carry out a genuine dialogue between African cultural values-Kipsigis' included and the Christian teachings for mutual enrichment.

Moreover, the Pontiff guides that the Holy Spirit is the live agent of inculturation as it enables the Gospel to permeate all cultures<sup>66</sup>; by so doing, the positive values of a particular cultural context will be appreciated. He further calls for an in-depth scrutiny of African cultures so as to discern the positive elements from the negative ones. The foregoing thus encouraged the study by showing that genuine inculturation is supported by the Church authority. So as to answer to this demanding duty, this study endeavoured to inculturate Kipsigis worldview items with the Catholic doctrine of salvation for mutual benefit.

Furthermore, the other encyclical letter that is of relevance to the study is *Evangelii Gaudium*.<sup>67</sup> In this exhortation, Pope Benedict XVI re-examines the proclamation of the Gospel in the world today; because of the crises in the contemporary world, he exhorts on

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<sup>61</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Exhortation: Africae Munus* (Africa's Commitment), (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2011).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-33.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Post-Synodal Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2013), p. 17.

transformational Church missionary activity which responds to the very needs and challenges of the dynamic world.<sup>68</sup> The Pope further argues that social dialogue on ecumenism will contribute to peace in the world today. In this message, the Pope goes on to give the very challenges in today's world that demand to be addressed through pastoral care and evangelization, he enumerates them as; economy of exclusion, oppressive financial system, inequality, violence and cultural challenges<sup>69</sup>; he thus call for the need to address these challenges so as to meet the needs and experiences of our people. As such then, the Pope endorsed this study; that of investigating Kipsigis worldview items with the Catholic doctrine of salvation using inculturation approach. Thus the study is not only legitimized but it is supported by the Church authority.

### **3.2.2 Popes' Addresses on Inculturation**

Having considered apostolic exhortation on inculturations in the foregone sub-section, the study in this sub-section examines Popes' addresses on inculturations with the view of drawing out the Church's teachings in relation to the study's subject matter. As such, due to the limitations imposed to this study, the study analyses the following addresses because they relate directly to the subject matter under investigation; Kampala address, message to Africa, address to the Zairean bishops, address at the opening of CHIEA (Today's CUEA) and address to the Synod of bishops from Africa.

In his Kampala address on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1969 at the closing session of the symposium of African bishops, Pope Paul VI accentuated the reality of an African Christianity.<sup>70</sup> This was followed by the ceremony of the memorial altar of the twenty two canonized Ugandan martyrs. This address marked the climax moment on the plea to inculturate socio-cultural values. In the address, he emphasized that from then henceforth, Africans were missionaries to themselves and that "the Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil."<sup>71</sup> He mentioned that even though the assistance of missionaries was necessary, Africans were challenged to build up the Church in Africa. The Pontiff spoke of "immense task" this is the task of inculturating the Gospel which confronts the bishops

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>70</sup>R. Hickey, *Modern Missionary Documents in Africa* (Dublin: Dominican Publication, 1982), pp. 200-5

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 200-5.

of Africa, aided by the Holy Spirit.<sup>72</sup> In this work the training of the leaders is of primary importance. The Pope called bishops in particular and African scholars in general to adapt the Christian message to Africa, with two important prerequisites namely; making the Church truly Christian and genuinely African.<sup>73</sup>

The second focal statement of this address touched on the concern of adapting the Church into African culture. In his words, the Pontiff exclaimed; “must the Church be European, Latin, Oriental...or must she be African?” the Pope answers that the Church first must be Catholic as well as need to incubate the Christian mystery in the genius of its people<sup>74</sup> thus legitimizing the process of inculturating the Christian message and doctrines in the culture of the various people to which the message has been spread to.<sup>75</sup>

The above Exhortation then supported and guided the study. Nonetheless, the Pope notes that the process of inculturation is hard to undertake, it requires the adaptation of Gospel in the African context while remaining faithful to the Church documents, thus the need of doing it from “within.”<sup>76</sup>

In addition to above address, Pope Paul VI while addressing the bishops of Africa and Madagascar on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1977<sup>77</sup> on the twentieth anniversary of *Fidei donum* as well as Synod on catechesis; re-emphasized the above Kampala address. He urged the bishops and scholars to make Christianity truly feel at home in their own socio-cultural contexts as he cautioned them to do this “from within” to avoid syncretism and false particularism.<sup>78</sup> He exclaimed; “it is a fact that you, the African bishops, are now in charge, in the front line, of the Christian destiny of the whole Africa. And the help of the Holy Spirit is with you. You are faced with the task of establishing or making deeper a new civilization, a civilization that is both African and Christian.”<sup>79</sup> The above thus legitimized an endeavour to make the Gospel respond to the needs of the Kipsigis by

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-5.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-5.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-5.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 200-5.

<sup>77</sup> R. Hickey, *Modern Missionary Documents in Africa* (Dublin: Dominican Publication, 1982), pp. 240ff.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 247-51.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 247-51.

inculturating Kipsigis worldview items for better understanding and propagation of the doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County.

Moreover, Pope John Paul II in his address to the bishops of Zaire in 3rd May 1980 reaffirmed the need to inculturate African values.<sup>80</sup> The Pope recommended the theology of inculturation while being faithful to the fundamental Church documents as well as pursuing a sincere theological investigation.<sup>81</sup> He highlighted the need to purify our African tradition from errors and superstitions. He further reminded of the obligation to Christianize and transform the African culture like his predecessor.<sup>82</sup> He declared; “one of the aspects of this evangelization is the inculturation of the Gospel, the Africanization of the Church ... that is the part of the indispensable efforts to incarnate the message of Christ. The Gospel certainly, is not indentified with the cultures and transcends them all. But the kingdom that the Gospel proclaims is lived by men deeply tied to a culture.”<sup>83</sup>

The Pope accentuated that while carrying out such homework, “it is important to carry out a thorough investigation of the cultural traditions of the various populations, and of the philosophical ideas that underlie them in order to detect elements that are not in contradiction with the Christian religion and the elements that can enrich theological reflection.”<sup>84</sup>

This address to the bishops of Zaire is essential for the Church in Africa as it aims to inculturate the various African cultural values<sup>85</sup> (Kipsigis socio-cultural values included). The themes developed by the Pope are of relevance to all Africa which included; evangelization, inculturation, catechetical and dialogue between the Gospel message and the various African cultural values.<sup>86</sup> The foregoing then gives additional guidance and support to the study; the Pope conscientizes on the necessity of critical approach to African religions and cultures in light of Christian revelation which have to be purified and transformed for inculturational process.

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<sup>80</sup>R. Hickey, *Modern Missionary Documents in Africa* (Dublin: Dominican Publication, 1982), pp. 254ff.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

While addressing the Zairean bishops for the second time in 1<sup>st</sup> May 1983 at their *Ad Limina*, Pope John Paul II used the term “African Theology.”<sup>87</sup> In the message, he officially acknowledge the legitimacy of the term “African Theology” as well as giving guidance on how such theology can be created.

In the methodology of creation of such theology, the Pope noted two areas of analysis which are construed from what has been said as well as written on the subject matter. These areas are: the problem of African identity; these problems are in the realm of being, personality, freedom and worldview.<sup>88</sup> The Pope noted that while inculturating such African concepts, the dangers of false particularism as well as constructing a philosophy and theology of “Africanness” that is purely indigenous and do not have any deep nexus with Christ ought to be guarded from.<sup>89</sup>

The Pope urges that to evade the danger, the theologian has to take into account the common patrimony of faith and basis of human thought for mutual understanding.<sup>90</sup> He also noted that a critical attitude is not only necessary but sufficient for such an endeavour, since not all philosophies are compatible to the Christian faith.<sup>91</sup>

The second problem Pope identifies in the endeavour is the problem of inculturating the Christian revelation; the Pope notes that such a theological handiwork is recommendable “provided it is based on the Bible, the counsels, and the documents of the magisterium understood properly and integrally.”<sup>92</sup>

In concluding the address, the Pontiff notes inculturation is not confined to the expression or presentation of Christian mysteries in African thought forms but ought to include the test of providing specific solutions to the problems in society in the light of the Gospel.<sup>93</sup> Such issues to be focused on, to him include the family, justice, development, and

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<sup>87</sup> P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ our Mūthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study on the Agikūyū Understanding of an Elder*, (Nairobi: Phoenix Publisher, 1992), p. 157.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

economic progress.<sup>94</sup> The above then legitimizes the study by showing us that the process of inculturation is officially approved by the Church. He also provides fundamental guidance and support while constructing such a theology, which helped the study.

While echoing the message from above examined addresses, in August 1985 at the opening of CHIEA (today's CUEA) occasioned by the conclusion of the 43<sup>rd</sup> International Eucharist Congress in Nairobi, the Pope stressed on the urgency and necessity to inculturation.<sup>95</sup> He outlined that the fundamental objective of the CHIEA is to make inculturation a reality.<sup>96</sup> The address touched on four main areas; first, pastoral aspect of theology; the Pope noted that in the unfolding of the mystery of salvation for the local Churches to be actively present in the cultural life of the society by offering a properly developed theological presentation of the Gospel message and of the human problems for which people are seeking an explanation.<sup>97</sup> As such and within the context, the Pope legitimizes the process of inculturation as well as demonstrating that the process is an obligation to both theologians and scholars in their respective local countries.<sup>98</sup>

The second area is that of fidelity to Biblical and Church teaching (tradition); in the speech, the Roman Pontiff noted that such an endeavour for it to be truly Christian must be guided by the word of God and by the teachings of the Church.<sup>99</sup> He accentuated that the specific point of departure of such a theology is the word of God transmitted in tradition and in the scripture and Pope noted that this will guard the theological endeavour from syncretism and dangers of false particularism.<sup>100</sup>

The third area he addressed in his speech is the necessity of inculturation; on this topic, the Pope noted that the process of inculturation, which he refers to the apostolic dialogue, has been there throughout the course of the Church history.<sup>101</sup> He emphasized that for the Gospel to transform, and regenerate human life in all the cultures, an active dialogue

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>95</sup> J. M. Walliggo, *et al. Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency*, (Nairobi: St. Paul Publications Africa, 1986), pp. 6-10.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-10.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-10.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-10.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-10.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-10.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-10.

between faith and culture is not only necessary but also sufficient on all levels of Christian message: in evangelization, in catechesis, and in theological reflection.<sup>102</sup> Thus he called upon all the local Churches to carry out this enormous role with a bid to make Christ present in various socio-cultural contexts.

The Pope was emphatic that in order to be successful while planting the Church in African soil, incarnation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into African cultures is vital.<sup>103</sup> The Pontiff also notes that a serious reflection on the values which are present in each community and which can be usefully introduced into the life of the Church is important.<sup>104</sup> The foregoing then obliges us to carry out our inculturational study by digging deep into the Kipsigis worldview items with an end of finding out salvation items to be inculturated so as to enhance a better understanding, articulation and propagation of the doctrine under study.

Finally in concluding his speech, he pointed out the need for a truly scientific African theology; in this speech, the Pope noted that in the endeavour to inculturate, there is need to apply a “scientific” method to the theological reflection by the theologian.<sup>105</sup> He elaborated that employing a critical approach will clarify the structure of intellectually, discovers coherence of the Christian message as well as the relationship of the unchangeable content of the tenet of faith to the varied and changeable cultural contexts in which the Gospel of Christ is proclaimed and preached.<sup>106</sup>

As seen from above, the Pope arouses both the scholar and the theologian to create a theology that is faithful to the Church’s teaching while employing a “scientific”- critical approach. The Roman Pontiff then not only legitimized but also endorsed this study to inculturate Kipsigis culture.

In his other Exhortation message to the Synod of bishops for Africa held in 1994 whose theme was; “The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission Towards the year 2000:

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-10.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 11.



You shall be my witness Act 1:8” also motivated this endeavor.<sup>107</sup> Pope John Paul II considers the current situation of the Church in Africa while recalling the different phases of the missionary effort.<sup>108</sup> He then examines the various aspects of evangelization mission which the Church must take into account at the present time; evangelization, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace and means of social communication.<sup>109</sup> The Pontiff further gives the positive values of African culture<sup>110</sup> which need to be inculturated so as to make the Christian faith deep in the African soil.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, the exhortation message calls for urgent need to inculturate as well as drawing examples of areas to inculturate.<sup>112</sup>

It is important to note that the Synod defines inculturation as interaction of Gospel with people’s cultures and that the Gospel aspires to change, purify and enrich cultures; the culture on the other hand, should enrich the expression of the Gospel so that the evangelized can own and live the Gospel.<sup>113</sup> Inculturation then is explained as Gospel “taking flesh” in culture.<sup>114</sup> The Synod legitimized this study by arguing that inculturation is an urgent task and that through it the Gospel will be firmly planted in African cultures-Kipsigis culture included.<sup>115</sup> The Synod further guides that this critical process ought to extend to liturgy, customs, doctrines, structures and theology; the bishops of Africa in the Synod committed to propagating inculturated evangelization so as to touch personal, cultural, social, economic and political life.<sup>116</sup> Thus this study aimed at inculturating the Kipsigis worldview items so as to Christianize, purify and cleanse repulsive cultural values of Kipsigis as well as enhance better understanding and propagation of the Catholic doctrine of salvation.

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<sup>107</sup>John Paul II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Ecclesia in Africa* (Church in Africa) (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), pp. 42-43.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 76-78.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-67.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-67.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-67.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-67.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-67.

### 3.2.3 Church's Decree on Inculturation

Having examined the Apostolic Exhortations and Popes' addresses on inculturation, the study endeavours in this sub-section to analyze the various teachings of the Church decrees on inculturation. The study thus examines; Vatican I understanding of theology, AG, art. 22, *Optatam Totius*, art. 16 and CCC.

The understanding of "theology" as provided by Vatican I is significant for the subject under scrutiny i.e., inculturational study.<sup>117</sup> For this inculturational study, the most important teaching is that; "reason, enlightened by faith, when it seeks sedulously, piously and soberly, obtains, with God's help a certain understanding of mysteries, which is extremely fruitful, both from the analogy of things he (the theologian) knows naturally and from the connection of the mysteries with one another and with man's ultimate end."<sup>118</sup>

The above excerpt has vital issues that are worth analyzing. The council mentions "reason" to mean that reason is an important prerequisite in Christian theological work. "Enlightened by faith" is used to show that reason ought to open itself to faith for dialogue and to be enlightened; the aforementioned citation elaborates the role of reason in speculative theology. "When it seeks sedulously" implies the diligence in meditating on the Word of God. "Piously" depicts a religious disposition towards the sacred hence taking on a respectful, prayerful, and trusting love. "Soberly" creates awareness to a theologian to guard oneself from the tendency of going beyond specific limits of human reason when analyzing a mystery. "With God's help" shows the indispensability of God's assistance while carrying out an inculturational work like this. It pinpoints the need to open up to God's inspiration while undertaking a theological task. "A certain understanding of the mystery... both from the analogy of things he knows naturally" indicates that theology implies noetic aspects of theology.<sup>119</sup>

It is also worth noting that the instructions we have just analyzed are relevant to African theologian and their theologies since the council was speaking about the general

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<sup>117</sup>Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

conditions for any kind of serious Christian theology. What the study would like to emphasize in this document as particularly essential for the study are: “the use of reason”; meaning the appreciation of the idea of social anthropology on the Kipsigis community; the subordination of such anthropological data to the Christian faith (Catholic doctrine); the use of analogy when ascribing Kipsigis categories and other cultural items to Christian mysteries; the employment of the theory of interconnection of Christian mysteries, and the relevance of the study for human welfare and Good News’ ministering.

AG art. 22 is another Vatican II magisterial document that contain Church’s decrees on inculturation; it teaches about the diverse situations of life among the many ethnic groups and the immense importance in making a theology of inculturation a reality in various socio-cultural contexts.<sup>120</sup> In explaining the value of inculturation for growth of the Church, the article states: “they (young Churches) borrow from customs, traditions, wisdoms, teachings, arts and sciences of their people everything which could be used to praise the glory of the Creator, manifest the grace of the Saviour, or constitutes to the right ordering of Christian life.”<sup>121</sup> It points at the need to inculturate the Gospel message in accordance with particular people’s needs, ways of understanding and mentality considering the “great socio-cultural regions” and avoiding syncretism and false exclusivism or particularism.<sup>122</sup> This text then becomes a trigger in justifying our endeavour of utilizing Kipsigis worldview items in elaborating the Catholic doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County.

The Article reveals that in particular traditions, wisdoms, customs, teachings, arts and sciences of a particular anthropological community (Kipsigis included), are favorable items that may be used in glorifying God.<sup>123</sup> It empowers us to scrutinize among the Kipsigis salvation elements which can be used to hasten the understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation. With this predisposition, it can be rightly deduced that respective cultures are graced with the seeds of Godliness that can be used in

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<sup>120</sup> A. Flannery. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. (Dublin: Costello, 1975), p. 839.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 839.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 839-40.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 839-40.

evangelizing. On this Bretcher comments: “the particular Churches can enjoy their own discipline, their own liturgical usage, and their own theological and spiritual heritage,”<sup>124</sup> Bretcher thus foresees a scenario where the various ethnic communities-Kipsigis included, can inculturate positive cultural values so as to attend to their needs and life concerns. This then is the reason for why the Article not only asks the theologians and scholars to utilize their cultural values for ecclesial purposes but also maintains that the task of inculturation is a duty that must be fulfilled while being conscious of syncretism and particularism.

Another document that examines Church’s decree on inculturation is *Optatam Totius*, art. 16.<sup>125</sup> This conciliar document provides important teaching on inculturation and training of the priests.<sup>126</sup> On the issue of teaching theology in seminaries factors like methodology, content, and pastoral applications are highlighted thereby preparing future shepherds to be inculturators.<sup>127</sup> It first describes the aim of theological course and then develops its realization in most important subjects.<sup>128</sup> This enables us to make an effort in developing a theology which responds to the wants of the theological formation of the future priests in our region.<sup>129</sup> This implies that the theology taught to the seminarians is not intended for them alone but for the good of all the people of God.<sup>130</sup> As such, Alszeghy and Flick argue that the scientific aspect of theology as propagated by Vatican II is inescapable premise of its operational choices for instance in the context of the freedom of theological research and in the teaching of dogma in the seminaries.<sup>131</sup> This aspect of inculturation is also explicit in the New Code of the canon law; the text on the teaching of theology in the seminaries is adopted literally in Canon 252 as Coriden *et al*<sup>132</sup> observes. While commenting on the essence of this mode of theologizing and while studying the scripture as prescribed by the council, Neuner states that: “in this speculative

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<sup>124</sup> A G. art. 23.

<sup>125</sup> A. Flannery. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. (Dublin: Costello, 1975)

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 719-21.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 719-21.

<sup>128</sup> J. Neuner, “*Decrees on Priestly Formation*.” In H. Vorgzimler, ed. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol.4, (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), p. 39.7

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 400.

<sup>131</sup> Z. Alszeghy and M. Flick, *Introductory Theology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1982), p. 23.

<sup>132</sup> J. A. Coriden, *et al* (eds), *The Code of Canon Law: Its Texts and Commentary*. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), p. 186.

work, Aquinas is recommended as a teacher. He is not only the master who formulated in his time the contents of revelation in the intellectual and linguistic forms of Aristotelianism (which was then modern) and hence became a model for the adaptation of theological research and language to contemporary life and culture- this was conceded by all and many requested that the council should limit itself to recommending his method- but he is also a teacher in as much as he arrived at permanent insights which have to be taught in theological institutions.”<sup>133</sup>

As evident above, the council discussed the scripture as the soul of theology the council emphasized the scripture as the source and inspiration of any theology. Neuner further notes that the document shades light on inculturation.<sup>134</sup> It provokes us to face and dialogue with contemporary problems and issues in the light and inspiration of the mystery of Christ.<sup>135</sup>

The other points that the document emphasizes that ought to be noted are the submission of the magisterium, the centrality of the scripture and vitality of the Church’s tradition.<sup>136</sup> As such, the document also repeats the teaching of AG as previously analyzed. In relation to non-Christian religions-Kipsigis religion included, the same can be ascribed. This enables the Church to see how much good and truth they possess and how to refute their errors. Eventually, by also alluding to the interconnection of Christian mysteries and the relevance of Christian message in bettering human life through solving problems of humanity, this document also supports, Vatican I teachings.

In addition to the above mentioned Church decrees on inculturation is the catechism of the RCC (henceforth referred as CCC), the document examines the context and need for inculturation emphasizing contemporary theology and liturgical discourse on the relationship between faith, liturgy and culture. The need for the Church to engage in variety of human cultures (Kipsigis included) inspires the CCC; in no. 814, the document affirms the diversity of the Church and multiplicity of people’s cultures, thus it argues the

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<sup>133</sup> J. Neuner, “*Decrees on Priestly Formation*”, In H. Vorgzimler ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol.4, (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), p. 398ff.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 397ff.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 399.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 399.

need to meet the needs of these diverse people with the aim of making Gospel more meaningful to them. In no. 1075, the document elaborates on the mandate of the Church that is it serves the whole Church in diversity of Her rites and cultures<sup>137</sup> of our case diversity in terms of worldview items; thus the need to address them among the Kipsigis for a fruitful catechesis among the Kipsigis people of Kericho Sub-County.

This document further brought to our awareness that sacramental signs and symbols are rooted on creation and human cultures- Kipsigis included; thus the need to be inculturated so as to be more understood.<sup>138</sup> The document thus called the Church to integrate all authentic rites of the cultures. Let it be noted that, CCC is sensitive to diversity, thus it proposes that; “each Church proposes...according to its historic, social, cultural context, a language of prayer: words, melodies, gestures and iconography.”<sup>139</sup>

With the foregoing, the CCC supported and legitimized our endeavour to inculturate Kipsigis worldview items for better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation in Kericho Sub-County with an end to respond to the needs and aspirations of the Kipsigis people.

### **3.3 Theologians’ Reflections on Inculturation**

African Christian Theology is characterized by two main approaches namely: inculturation and liberation which are closely interrelated though distinct. The study’s opted approach to our subject however, is inculturation approach. It is thus necessary to examine some of the theologians’ reflections and emphasis concerning this perspective for a better understanding of the study outcome. To handle the above, focus on the following inculturators is adequate for the study namely: Alyward Shorter, Laurenti Magesa, Bénézet Bujo, Julian Saldanha, Charles Kaswiza and Charles Nyamiti.

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<sup>137</sup> R. E. McCarron, “*Inculturation: Liturgical*”, in B. L. Marthaler *et al* (Eds), *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Vol. 7(New York: Gale, 2003), pp. 385-386.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 385-386.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 385-386.

### 3.3.1 Shorter

Shorter is one of the scholars who have written diverse monographs and articles on the theology of inculturation. Being an anthropologist and a theologian, he provides the study with the basic principles for inculturation as well as disputing the use of other synonyms to imply inculturation. In one of his earliest monographs titled: *African Culture and the Christian Church: An Introduction to Social and Pastoral Anthropology*,<sup>140</sup> Shorter explores the basic principles for inculturation. He describes adaptation as “a misnomer because it suggests that Christianity somehow adapts itself.”<sup>141</sup> According to him, the term adaptation is derived from the preconciliar theology where “Christianity was seen as a cultural tradition.”<sup>142</sup> Inculturation however, is the process in which Christianity encounters a culture challenging and transforming it. He implies that inculturation goes beyond mere adaptation thus legitimizing the study’s opted approach. He observes two processes involved in inculturation: “the ‘undressing’ of Christianity from the foreign culture and the ‘dressing’ of Christianity in the indigenous culture.”<sup>143</sup> These processes are simultaneous because as Shorter rightly places a “culturally naked Christianity” is not possible.

Of further relevance to the study, Shorter emphasizes two basic principles with which inculturation should be done. One should begin first by understanding the respective culture by inserting oneself to discover the authentic human values in it and how these values are Christian or how they can be developed as “seeds of the Gospel” into Christian values.<sup>144</sup> To understand the people’s language is thus not enough. The study has employed this principle by first examining the Kipsigis socio-religio cultural values as discussed in chapter two of this work. Secondly, one should have a clear and total understanding of the Christian message in order to be able to discover the “seeds of the Gospel”<sup>145</sup> that would then be incorporated with the authentic human values drawn from the culture. It should not be a mere comparison of the Christian message and a given

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<sup>140</sup> A. Shorter, *African Culture and the Christian Church: An Introduction to Social and Pastoral Anthropology* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1973), pp.69-70.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p.69.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

culture's values but a creative and integrated approach to the Gospel.<sup>146</sup> The author emphasizes that one should not begin from below, that is, from the Christian doctrine but by first doing a serious anthropological research. In this, Shorter affirms Nyamiti's approach to African Theology as well as mediation theory, explicated earlier on and utilized in the study. He examines African ritual, marriage, family and communality and how they can be Christianized for a more meaningful Christianity.<sup>147</sup> This study is thus one of such kind propagated and exemplified by Shorter at that early stage of development of African theology.

In his other profound work titled: *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*<sup>148</sup> Shorter enriches us with crucial concepts necessary for our understanding of inculturation. He distinguishes the term from other sociological terms that have intrigued into theology. Enculturation is one of these terms which he defines as "the cultural learning process of the individual, the process by which a person is inserted into his or her culture."<sup>149</sup> In other words, it refers to cultural education of an individual by the society. This term does not carry the same meaning as the concept of inculturation. Acculturation is another term which Shorter describes as "the encounter between one culture and another, or the encounter between cultures."<sup>150</sup> It does not however, imply inculturation though it is a necessary condition of inculturation.

Shorter further expresses the dissatisfaction with which these and related terms, closely related to inculturation, have lost usage due to their shortcomings in the following sense, "One still hears the obsolescent 'indigenization,' and the term 'contextualization' favored by organs of the World Council of Churches which has, perhaps, a more extended and less precise meaning."<sup>151</sup> On the other hand, the terms "accommodation" and "adaptation" which were popular before Vatican II "... refer to a conception which is now considered inadequate, but which was ... an important stage in the Church's

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., pp.122ff.

<sup>148</sup> A. Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988).

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p.5.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p.11.



thinking.”<sup>152</sup> Inculturation is thus the commonly used term in theological cycles to refer to “the on-going dialogue between faith and culture or cultures... the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures.”<sup>153</sup> The author thus legitimizes the study’s opted approach for an enhanced understanding of the doctrine of salvation.

Shorter further discusses three important emphases about inculturation which have guided the study. First is that inculturation as a process is not just the insertion of Christian message into a culture or cultures but the continuous dialogue between faith and culture.<sup>154</sup> It is a process that never comes to an end. Secondly is that inculturation is “a dialogue between a culture and the faith in a cultural form.”<sup>155</sup> In this case the Christian message seeks expression through elements proper to a given culture or cultures. Thirdly, inculturation goes beyond acculturation since it seeks to reform or re-interpret a culture. It is a process in which “a human culture is enlivened by the Gospel from within...”<sup>156</sup>

The author has also explored the doctrine of salvation especially in relation to baptism thus profiting the study. He draws insights from such scholars as Fulgentius of Ruspe, Francis Xavier and Karl Rahner<sup>157</sup> which shed light to the study in its explication of the very doctrine of salvation. The author argues that there is need to strive to understand God’s salvation plan and Will for His people by understanding the people’s cultural systems in order to be able to explicate the doctrine of salvation in a more meaningful manner.<sup>158</sup> This in essence calls for inculturation; an effort the study by first investigating Kipsigis socio-religio cultural items which can then be integrated with related RCC teaching for an enhanced understanding of the doctrine of salvation.

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., pp.11-12.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., pp.89-93.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., pp.89-102.

Shorter also traces inculturation in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible to show how God's plan of salvation was accomplished through interaction of cultures.<sup>159</sup> The most significant person in the fulfillment of the salvation mission is Jesus Christ who presents a perfect model for inculturation as the inculturator *par excellence* beginning with His incarnation event as Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>160</sup> The author thus provides the study with crucial Biblical bases of inculturation which have been beneficial to the study that is both theological and anthropological. The study has however, used redaction criticism method of Biblical study to ensure scholarly and scientific sourcing from the Christian sources.

### 3.3.2 Magesa

Magesa is an African theologian who has also written a number of serious works on inculturation as well as liberation. For our subject matter, his monograph titled *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa*<sup>161</sup> is of relevance. The author examines how inculturation is in vogue in Africa particularly in the three East African countries namely Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.<sup>162</sup> He criticizes previous studies for being too theoretical depending largely on what they think and imagine inculturation should be. According to Magesa, inculturation should be based on empirical research informed by the situation on the ground.<sup>163</sup> This is why he examines how Christianity has been received not only theoretically but how the Christian message has been appropriated and practiced in these regions. The study has benefited from these crucial sentiments as can be seen in its opted approach in which the study has been carried out, a study on a particular community- the Kipsigis community. In addition, Magesa affirms the study's chosen approach of inculturation by arguing that, terms such as "... Africanization, Christianization, contextualization or inter-culturation...has failed to gain widespread acceptance and currency that, for better or worse, the term inculturation has."<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., pp.102ff.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., pp.119-132.

<sup>161</sup> L. Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2004).

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., pp.22ff.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p.17.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p.20.

Magesa further observes that inculturation is said to have taken place in Africa when “African Christians do not feel guilty about expressing the truth about the God of Jesus Christ using symbols and images immediately available to their heart, intellect and understanding... they do not feel internally alienated when they use Christian symbols previously unknown to them to express newly appreciated truths, because these have now become part of their spiritual sensitivities.”<sup>165</sup> It means that African Christians are able to understand and live the Christian faith according to their Worldview values embedded deeply in their spirituality. To place more emphasis on this, Magesa argues that the same powerful and glorious God of the Jews as seen from the scriptures is the very same God preserved and propagated in the diverse African communities’ moral traditions and customs.<sup>166</sup> This is on the basis of general revelation. It follows therefore that there are God-given elements in the Kipsigis worldview organization which can be incorporated well within Christianity for a better understanding of the doctrine of salvation. In fact, “both the Bible and African religious oral, ritual, and moral traditions are more or less imperfect...a “true” or even “authentic” expressions of the unfathomable mystery of God...each in its own way and on its own degree.”<sup>167</sup>

Among the areas with which inculturation is needed especially in the Kenyan case are liturgy, Church structure and government, ancestors and spirit possession among others. Magesa further points out ritual words and actions, sacred images and ritualistic celebrations among the Africans as potent areas for inculturation.<sup>168</sup> We could argue that inculturation of Kipsigis worldview items for enhanced understanding of the doctrine of salvation is also possible. The above areas in essence constitute African spirituality geared towards an ideal called salvation.

In his other recent work titled *What is Not Sacred? African Spirituality*,<sup>169</sup> Magesa examines how African spirituality is deeply rooted in African life which is the very core of African worldview. As such, this spirituality has not been eroded by Christian and

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p.162.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p.163.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. p. 163.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp.212-253.

<sup>169</sup> L. Magesa, *What is Not Sacred? African Spirituality* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013).

other models of spirituality.<sup>170</sup> He posits that “belief in the essence of what the primal African worldview stood for still lives on... African spirituality is not something of the past; it is current and real.”<sup>171</sup> Consequently, African spirituality has much to offer and teach other cultures, both Christian and non-Christian. An investigation of Kipsigis worldview items is thus necessary and important for a better propagation and understanding of the RCC’s doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis and even other African communities.

Regarding inculturation, Magesa asks important questions that are worthy of reflection to this and other studies. He asks, “Where is inculturation going in Africa?”<sup>172</sup> He further questions the process with which inculturation should be done if the Church in Africa is to become “fully Christian and fully African” and “go beyond mere appearances in self-governance, self-propagation, and self-reliance.”<sup>173</sup> He challenges that deep inculturation must seek to revisit and reinterpret Christian dogmas and doctrines such as that of salvation as this study has done according to divine revelation existing in the various African communities among them, the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County. It must go beyond the gestures, drums and dances, vestments, art and other physical expressions. It should extend to the day-to-day living unearthing the inner spirituality in the respective cultures. The question should be: “What are the external expressions of inner spirituality?”<sup>174</sup> As Magesa posits “inculturation must become a culture and culture is lived.”<sup>175</sup>

Magesa as well expresses his dissatisfaction with the term adaptation which he argues that it “ignores the rootedness of every person in his or her context and becomes alienating.”<sup>176</sup> It has the connotation that western Christian concepts should be used as determinants upon which African social, religious and cultural perspectives must conform. In this case, it hinders genuine dialogue between Christianity and respective cultures. Magesa observes western approaches as “disabled from the start from learning

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p.ix.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p.15.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p.187

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. , p.187

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p.188

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. , p.188

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p.192.

from African spiritual perceptions, on the one hand; and, on the other, African approaches are denied free self-expression.”<sup>177</sup> The author further justifies the study in that it sought to fill a knowledge gap particularly with regard to the doctrine of salvation which has been given more Western than African articulation especially in seeking to relate it with respective people’s worldview items. The author adds that adaptation as an approach to African theology has been considered by majority of African theologians as “dysfunctional and innately incapable of helping African Christian communities to become truly African and truly Christian.”<sup>178</sup> Inculturation, which is the study’s opted approach, is thus the term widely used and recognized in theological cycles as embracing the other terms as discussed previously.

### 3.3.3 Bujo

Bujo is one of the vibrant pioneers of African Theology who uses both inculturation and liberation approaches to examine some of the main elements in African worldview such as vitality and communality in his critique of Western ethics as he explicates how African ethic is envisaged within the African philosophy of life. He examines these in his work titled; *Foundations of An African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*.<sup>179</sup> Bujo refutes the use of Western philosophy to dictate African ethic which he argues is independent and autonomous. It follows therefore that each community is unique in its own way of life and has something to offer to other cultures including Christianity. He emphasizes communality and remembrance among the Africans to show how Africans related within the community of both the living and those in yonder life. As he rightly places, the individual however, is not confined to his or her own clan but to the community of beings; human and inanimate. In explicating this, Bujo draws examples from African beliefs and practices depicted for instance during the veneration of ancestors and at rituals such as naming ceremonies.<sup>180</sup> The author guides the study in its investigation of Kipsigis worldview items which draws from the basic five elements of

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p.193.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>179</sup> B. Bujo, *Foundations of An African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2003).

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., pp.113ff.

African worldview as discussed vividly by Nyamiti and his fellow African Theologian, Bujo.

Bujo further discusses world ethos and ethos of salvation among the Africans as closely linked though distinct. This, he draws from the point of view that African ethic is neither secular nor religious since “it is impossible to define the human person in purely secular or purely religious terms, since he is both at once.”<sup>181</sup> The secular and religious among the Africans are not torn apart since a human person, in the African sense, has “only one vocation ... a vocation with God as its goal.”<sup>182</sup> It therefore follows, according to Bujo’s argument, that “African anthropology, which envisages the earthly (secular) and the religious (sacred) together, does not require a distinction between world ethos and ethos of salvation leading to the mutual autonomy of the two.”<sup>183</sup> The author seeks to imply that the sacred or profane and the secular are closely intertwined within African philosophy of life. It means therefore that there are salvation elements within African communities’ worldview values that can be well retrieved for authentic African Christian living as the study shows particularly among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County.

Bujo examines how African culture especially with regard to the emphasis it places on the concept of community can be developed within Christianity. He challenges the Roman Catholic Church’s Magisterium to seek continuous dialogue with African tradition. He does not underscore the fact that there are non-developmental and inhuman elements in some of the African traditions and customs such as polygamy<sup>184</sup>, but he calls for considerations on how the ideal behind such practices could be preserved and promoted within Christianity to uphold human dignity as well as encouraging authentic Christian living among the Africans. In so doing, Bujo shows how African ethics both challenges the Church and contributes to its richness, calling for inculturation of the best features in African culture such as communality embedded within African philosophy of life. This study is thus justified and provided with impetus to undertake the very task of

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid., p.123.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. p.131.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., pp.162ff.

investigating Kipsigis worldview items that can be integrated with related Roman Catholic teachings for a better understanding of the doctrine of salvation

### 3.3.4 Saldanha

Saldanha is yet another scholar who provides basic understanding of inculturation theology in his work titled; *Inculturation*.<sup>185</sup> The author traces the origin of the term inculturation before and after Vatican II. He shares the same conviction with Magesa and Shorter regarding the shortcomings of terms such as adaptation and accommodation in expressing inculturation as a process. According to Saldanha, such expressions tend to denote the process by which a “fully formed Christianity is being transplanted in all its details to another environment, while admitting only of peripheral or minor modifications... there is no question of the Church being enriched but... a one-way traffic in which the Church is the giver.”<sup>186</sup> The author highlights the need for mutual enrichment in which a given culture such as that of the Kipsigis community enriches the Gospel and vice versa. The resulting effect therefore is a Christian faith that is lived and a culture recognized and given place in Christian practices and beliefs.

This author examines the theological bases of inculturation in the Old and New Testaments tracing it to the incarnation event of Jesus Christ. He states that in Jesus Christ, being born as Jesus of Nazareth, “we see the fascinating process of critical assimilation reaching a decisive stage where He becomes God’s Word and man’s response... both deeply embedded in a particular culture and religion.”<sup>187</sup> Saldanha sees Jesus as the primal model of inculturation, an inculturator *par excellence* as depicted by Magesa and Shorter as well. The study utilizes these theological bases backing it up with redaction criticism method of Biblical study for effective scientific and scholarly sourcing from the Christian sources. Drawing from this perfect model, the author shows what inculturation has meant for India in the post-Vatican II era. He examines inculturation with reference to liturgy, sacraments, feasts and votive masses, art,

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<sup>185</sup> J. Saldanha, *Inculturation* (Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1987).

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21.

theology, ecclesiastical studies and social belonging in India.<sup>188</sup> The author motivates and legitimizes the study in its endeavor to examine inculturation from the Kipsigis point of view though particular reference is made towards the understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation.

### 3.3.5 Kaswiza

Kaswiza, a graduate of Louvain University, implements the notion of inculturation in a very practical way. He pragmatically reveals what inculturation is by confronting the Nyamwezi and Maasai traditional solidarity world-view with the Christian teaching on solidarity.<sup>189</sup> He begins his inculturational treatise by pointing out the nature of solidarity. He defines it as follows: “Etymologically the term is a decay of the Latin ‘*solidum*’ and it is derived from Roman juridical circles where it meant that ‘each of the person in a group is responsible not only in part but for the whole’...It has come to signify ‘various ways of mutual dependence or belonging together.’”<sup>190</sup> He goes on to explain that “in current sociological usage, the term ‘solidarity’ is often interchangeably used with such terms as ‘cohesion,’ ‘unity,’ ‘integration,’ ‘balance’ and ‘harmony’ though, evidently, each of these terms signifies a particular dimension or aspect of the way people are held together in social units and mutually interact.”<sup>191</sup>

Two striking elements stand out here namely “order and structure, action and function.”<sup>192</sup> Kaswiza further asserts that “mere factual togetherness is meaningless unless it is complemented with some form of common activity...it is functional or dynamic togetherness that meaningfully defines social solidarity.”<sup>193</sup>

Regarding the traits of “solidarity,” Kaswiza points to a double-pronged factor namely “essential” and “auxiliary.”<sup>194</sup> Essential factors include: “the consensus and conscience of

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., pp.47-91.

<sup>189</sup> C. Kaswiza, *Traditional Solidarity Among the Nyamwezi and Maasai in the Light of Christian Solidarity: An Anthropological and Theological Approach* (Louvain: Universite Catholique De Louvain, 1971).

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 12.



the group unity and cohesion based on a shared set of ideas, symbols, values (material and spiritual), norms and even ignorance; the participation in common functions, e.g. cooperation in communal labor for the chief, or shouldering such payments as bridewealth, fines, or blood-price when the interests of the group so demands; reciprocity, *viz.* the mutual interaction of the members of a social unit founded on a give-and-take basis, helps to maintain the solidarity of its members.”<sup>195</sup> He crowns these by explaining related terms like kinship, nucleus family, age-grades and tribe<sup>196</sup> as provided in our section on key concepts.

Another thing of interest in his profound anthropological section is his justification in choosing just two ethnic communities i.e., Nyamwezi and Maasai for inculturational purposes. He puts it this way: “nobody will fail to see that today some sort of selection has become imperative in any meaningful scientific study;...any attempt to describe each and every one of hundreds of tribes is bound to be superficial and sterile, let alone the impossibility of realizing such a project.”<sup>197</sup>

Among the highlights in his theological section is that Christian notion of solidarity is *koinonia* which he explains as communion of people with God in Christ as the people of God.<sup>198</sup> It is an issue strongly rooted on Biblical foundation and Christian tradition imbued with convincing texts which Kaswiza profoundly discusses further in reference to the family, clan, tribe and nation.<sup>199</sup> It is also examined from the point of view of the chosen race Israel through the lenses of the election and covenant with Yahweh.<sup>200</sup> He crowns the above with the New Testament perception. Here Kaswiza explicates the notion of *koinonia* as rooted in both Christian vertical dimension of community<sup>201</sup> consisting of the incarnation of the Son and the role of the Paraclete<sup>202</sup> but also from the horizontal perspective<sup>203</sup> and the ethical consequences thereby.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-14.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., pp.19, 22, 61.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., p.7.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., pp. 329ff.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., pp. 340ff.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., pp. 343ff.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., pp. 352ff.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., pp. 352ff.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., pp. 357.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., pp. 359-360.

Magisterial documents like *Africae Terrarum* and relevant Synodal instructions come in handy in his inculturation effort.

As for his methodology, Kaswiza first of all identifies the Christian mystery to be inculturated i.e. Christian solidarity. He explores this theme of solidarity from the Nyamwezi philosophy of life and Maasai worldview. He then does the same from theological perspective drawing from Biblical sources as well as Christian tradition and traditions and diverse theologians' reflections. He then compares and contrasts the Nyamwezi and Maasai perception on one hand with the Christian understanding. This he does drawing out parallels and differences. He finally gives the implications of his inculturation effort which are mainly catechetical, pastoral and spiritual consequences of his study. In this way, he enriches this study by not just providing reflections on and about inculturation but by actually inculturating. His inculturational undertaking is complemented by an even more profound one, from ancestral approach, by another exemplary inculturator namely Nyamiti.

### **3.3.6 Nyamiti**

Nyamiti, one of the pioneers of African Christian theology and among the founders of Catholic University of Eastern Africa which, is globally reputed for profound inculturational works.<sup>205</sup> He not only explains what inculturation is but also provides requirements and methodological mode of inculturating and why it is superior to that of liberation while remaining faithful to the Christian doctrines. He is, furthermore, praised for his rigorous inculturational publications particularly from the point of view of African ancestors. For him, inculturation is “the insertion of the Gospel message into a particular culture.”<sup>206</sup> He exemplifies this in his deep ancestral perspective while handling Christian doctrines thereby setting a good example for others in such thematic systematic approach like in our aforementioned case study.

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<sup>205</sup> More biographical material may be sourced from - P.N. Wachege, “*Charles Nyamiti: Vibrant Pioneer of Inculturated African Theology*,” in B. Bujo and J.I. Muya (eds.), *African Theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Vol. 2: *Contribution of the Pioneers* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006), pp. 149-162.

<sup>206</sup> C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1, Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundations* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p. 176.

Nyamiti inculcates the doctrine of Christology, through systematic approach into ancestorship as understood by the Africans to come up with the title “Our Ancestor” attributed to Christ.<sup>207</sup> He not only bases his inculturation work on the five cultural items in African world-view that qualify one as ancestor while inculturating- namely, kin relationship, supernatural sacred status, mediation, exemplarity and title to regular sacred communication.<sup>208</sup> He also connects his work to the Trinity.<sup>209</sup>

The justification he provides for the Trinitarian foundation is that “an adequate and proper presentation of the mystery of Christ is impossible without relating that mystery to the Trinity; for Christ is, by definition, the Eternal Son of the Father who became man and redeemed the world in the power of the divine Spirit.”<sup>210</sup> Another main reason is the demand of “interconnection of Christian mysteries” which he explains as “the teaching that Christian mysteries are organically linked together in such a way that it is possible to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of any mystery by examining its link with any other mystery or mysteries.”<sup>211</sup> It is also referred to as *nexus mysteriorum*.

Nyamiti’s African theological investigations titled; *Studies in African Christian Theology* are exemplary in the realization of an inculturated African Christian theology. These great inculturated works assist this study with critical insights in encountering the Christian doctrine of salvation with the Kipsigis world-view. He helps us also with how to go about our inculturation task in a genuine manner thereby equipping us too with the main items in African philosophy of life. These reflections go a long way in exemplifying inculturation approach- the orientation the study chose in the endeavor to inculturate salvation for a better perception, understanding, propagating and living the Good News of salvation towards the realization of the Kingdom of God.

The author further creates awareness that the gist of Christianity is the same all over and our contribution will be in the way we explain the same doctrine the study opted for according to the needs and worldview of the Africans- in our case the Kipsigis of

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<sup>207</sup> C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1*, pp. 3ff.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-71.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., pp. 73ff.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p. viii.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p. 177.

Kenya.<sup>212</sup> In this way, Nyamiti assists the study with clarity on the demands of a systematic African Christian Theology and also to distinguish it from sociology, science of religion, philosophy of religion and social (cultural) anthropology- as he lays emphasis on reason enlightened by faith as profoundly explained in Pope John Paul II's Encyclical titled; *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason).<sup>213</sup> He also points out that "it essentially involves the effort to purify, rectify and transform or Christianize African traditional religious and cultural values."<sup>214</sup> He crowns it more by conscientizing us to appreciate that the main sources of this way of doing theology are the Christian sources (i.e., the Bible and Tradition) and the African socio-cultural situation seen in relation to its past, present and future.<sup>215</sup>

Nyamiti is, moreover, keen on the issue of methodological approach which is well documented in his book<sup>216</sup> - which guides this study a great deal. Wachege summarizes Nyamiti's methodology well<sup>217</sup> itemizing it thus: the use of reason, implying the use of the idea of social anthropology and other useful sciences like philosophy, sociology, linguistics and history; the subordination of such anthropological data to Christian faith; the use of analogy when ascribing African categories and other cultured items to Christian mysteries; the employment of the principle of interconnection of Christian mysteries; and the relevance of the specific theology for human welfare/ultimate end thus implying drawing out the consequential pastoral implications.

In relation to the above, Nyamiti enriches this study by presenting the five main items in the African world-view as understood by the Africans<sup>218</sup> that are very useful in doing a serious systematic African Christian theology namely: life/vitality, dynamism/power, sacredness, communality and anthropocentrism. Furthermore, Nyamiti assists with

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<sup>212</sup> C. Nyamiti. *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1- Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p. 3

<sup>213</sup> John Paul II. *Faith and Reason (Fides et Ratio)* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1998).

<sup>214</sup> C. Nyamiti. *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1*, (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), p.6.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-61.

<sup>217</sup> P. N. Wachege. "Charles Nyamiti: Vibrant Pioneer of Inculturated African Theology," in B. Bujo and J. I. Muya (Eds.) *African Theology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Contribution of the Pioneers Vol.2* (Nairobi: Paulines Africa, 2006), p. 154.

<sup>218</sup> A concise explanation is given in - P. N. Wachege, *CRS 560: African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012), pp. 14-22.

regard to the nature of ancestors from an African point of view and the main characteristics of an African ancestor –which were useful in the study- namely: consanguineous kinship between the ancestor or ancestress with his/her earthly kin, super-human sacred status - usually acquired through death, exemplarity of conduct in human community, mediation...playing a mediatory role between his earthly kin members and the Creator, right (or title) to regular sacred communication with his earthly kin through frequent prayers and ritual donations.<sup>219</sup>

It is, furthermore, quite informative how Nyamiti pinpoints the superiority of inculturation approach to that of liberation although, as he explains, the two have a close affinity since each implies the other and so it is a question of emphasis. He asserts that inculturation aspect “corresponds better and more adequately to the prescriptions of Vatican II and other official Church doctrines on theological insertion of the Christian message into various cultural contexts.”<sup>220</sup> Another advantage is that “inculturation is more apt – than the one of liberation – to achieve some kind of continuity between the Catholic way of doing theology as has been done throughout history both in the Western and Eastern Churches.”<sup>221</sup> The other justification Nyamiti gives is that “on account of its inherent capacity to employ an almost indefinite number of cultural themes as theological points of departure, inculturation approach appears to be in a better position to avoid the danger of reductionism, and of impoverishing the Gospel message by approaching it from the perspective of only one category, as is the case with liberation theology trend.”<sup>222</sup> Such important reflections not only enrich by explaining what inculturation is, how to go about it and how to practically inculturate but they, above all, confirm the importance and justification of us choosing inculturation approach for the study.

### **3.4 Importance of Inculturation Approach**

At this stage one wonders: Why handle inculturation while people in Africa are dying of

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<sup>219</sup>C. Nyamiti. *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.2 Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: An Essay on African Christology*. (Nairobi: CUEA, 2006), pp.3-12; ... *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.4. Christ's Ancestral Mediation through the Church Understood as God's Family: An Essay on African Ecclesiology* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2010), pp. 2ff.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

negative ethnicity, terrorist havok, AIDS disaster and its related diseases, and destruction of the ecosystem among others? Shouldn't the priority be given to these most disturbing aspects? Shouldn't the focus be more on them with the ideal of providing appropriate solutions instead of talking about inculturation the doctrines like that of salvation?

While the above concerns are valid, nevertheless, it has to be appreciated that it is not the aim of this thesis to pass any judgment on which of these types of issues is more important or more urgent. Instead, the study aims to try to see how the inculturation of the Kipsigis Worldview items, can lead to better understanding and propagation the RCC doctrine of salvation . As we have already seen, African Synod of bishops in 1994 not only declared inculturation a necessity but also a priority in relation to the Christian faith. An examination of why they reached this conclusion was provided which threw some light on its importance, especially as it relates to Kipsigis people in Kericho Sub-County and their more significant Christian way of life. The mind of the Synod comes out more clearly in the passage that reads: "It follows that inculturation does not only consist in transforming the mentality of human beings or groups of people, but also implies approaching cultures in such ways that they are enabled, from within themselves, to be fertile. Christianity becomes itself enriched when through inculturation it enters into dialogue with peoples and with their cultures. An inculturated evangelization will help people give flesh to evangelical values in their language and symbols, their history, politics, business life and own ways of developing."<sup>223</sup>

Indeed, it is at this present time that the inculturation of the Gospel is most needed in the African continent among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County in particular. This is because of the need for the transformation of the Kipsigis mentality so that the Kipsigis can own and witness authentically a better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation. This is where inculturation is expected to come in to change peoples' outlook in the light of the Gospel and in solidarity with other communities. In order to achieve the objectives of this study there is need to be persuaded that inculturation is invaluable and consequently no effort should be spared to make it be realized in diverse ethnic groups that of the Kipsigis included. This is where the study considers Uzukwu suggestion very

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<sup>223</sup>*Instrumentum Laboris*, p. 43.

appropriate when he says: “The Church, aided by the reflection of her theologians, will become a more credible agent of change when Christian life emerges from the realities of the African context and Christian theology responds to questions posed by the African context and is nourished by local resources.”<sup>224</sup>

Inculturation will be useful in this circumstance because it will not only act as an agent of integrated transforming change, but it will also be an instrument for identifying local resources proper to, for instance, Kipsigis culture. Okure, therefore, makes sense when she asserts: “inculturation of faith in the Gospel by Christians of different cultures will mean for the Church a new discovery of the Gospel, proclaimed authoritatively to all people and, therefore, <sup>225</sup>enrichment for the life of the Church.”<sup>226</sup> In the case of Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County, for example, the inculturation of the Kipsigis worldview aspects is expected to be an enrichment that is expected to bring a better understanding and propagation of the aforementioned doctrine thereby making the recipients own and live according to its standards. By so doing, inculturation of the Kipsigis worldview items in Kericho Sub-County will make Kipsigis Christians genuine members of the Church and true followers of Christ who are amicably open to others in a Godly solidarity of the “Family of God.”

Moreover, a proper inculturation of the Gospel will assist the universal Church in general and Kipsigis Catholics in Kericho in particular, to be able to encounter and identify Christ in their lives thereby bringing a new understanding and propagation of the doctrine under study. In this way Christ, who will, through inculturation of the doctrine will gradually be at home among the Kipsigis as He becomes a sign of unity. Inculturation will also increase the active participation of the people of God in the Church. Inculturation of the aforementioned doctrine will help people to be “self ministering,” and “self-reliant”. This means that the Kipsigis people of Kericho Sub-County, in particular, will minimize dependence on foreign interpretations of the doctrine under study, and use their own experiences in explaining the doctrine. Reflecting along these

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<sup>224</sup> E. E. Uzukwu, *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches* (Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd, 1996), p. 3.

<sup>225</sup> T. Okure, “*Inculturation: Biblical Bases*”, in *32 Articles Evaluating Inculturation of Christianity in Africa* (Nairobi: Gaba Publications, 1990), p. 103.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

lines, *Instrumentum Laboris* explains: “Inculturation will show much more clearly that, in the biblical perspective, everybody is given to Christ as his inheritance, and that by the inculturation process, peoples can offer to Christ what they received from Him.”<sup>227</sup>

Inculturation of the Gospel will also help Kipsigis Catholics to value and appreciate their culture, which in the past was alienated and despised by Western colonizers. One major problem facing RCC Christians in Kericho Sub-County is what McGarry calls the conflict of “two worlds, namely, the world of (Western) Christian beliefs and values and the world of African traditions.”<sup>228</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris* has further underlined the indispensability of inculturation in these words: "inculturation will help the African Christian resolve the tension between the two ways of living, and to accept what it costs to abandon beliefs and practices that are incompatible with the Gospel. Without inculturation, the faith of the African will remain fragile and superficial, lacking depth and personal commitment.”<sup>229</sup> In order to be firm and committed Christians, therefore, it is important to inculturate the doctrine under study in Kericho Sub-County.

Underlying these important explanations of inculturation is a systematic and authentic encounter of respective socio-religio- cultural characteristics – in our case those of the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County – with the Christian doctrines, in our case that of salvation. On such basis, the study is enabled to progress to comparing and contrasting salvation items drawn from Kipsigis worldview world-view and the RCC’s teachings together with theologians’ reflections on salvation.

### **3.5 Chapter’s Concluding Remarks**

The main issue in this chapter was that of explaining inculturation approach employed in the study. It commenced with handling the nature of inculturation. It then showed that the issue of inculturation has been generating important ideas and instructions in Church history. On the basis of this observation, the chapter elaborated on the concept “inculturation” in relation to other related terms. It also explored RCC’s teachings on the

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<sup>227</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris*, p. 44

<sup>228</sup> E. Mc Garry, Preface to *Inculturation: Its meaning and Urgency* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1986), p. 55

<sup>229</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris*, p. 45



issue as it tackled theologians' reflections on the subject. The bottom-line was that the study will not be breaking new ground on inculturation but will be building on ongoing Church instructions and insights from other scholars who have continuously and ably participated in theologizing from this approach. On this Wachege assertion to the effect that "inculturation is not particular to us: It has existed through the Church history" was a reminder of an ongoing process of inculturation trend in Church history. With this in mind, it was indicated that the study's is an effort in giving own contribution in this regard by concretizing the Christian doctrine of salvation and among a specific African ethnic group i.e., the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County. As such, it is indispensable that the study examine RCC's teaching and theologians' reflections on salvation in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RCC TEACHINGS AND CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGIANS' REFLECTIONS ON SALVATION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

Having explored the RCC teachings and theologians' reflection on inculturation with reference to our subject in the previous chapter, the present chapter handles RCC teachings and theologians' reflections on the Catholic doctrine of salvation. To accomplish this task, the RCC's teachings on salvation will be examined. This will be done by focusing on the Church's pedagogy concerning salvation. The other major theme in the chapter is that of theologians' reflections on salvation. The theologians that will be taken to account are; Karl Rahner, Jacques Dupuis, Gustavo Gutierrez, Patrick Wachege, Hans Küng, Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, and Raymond Panikkar. Then we will have the chapter's concluding remarks.

#### **4.1 RCC Teachings on Salvation**

The Church is explicit on the issue of salvation. The rationale is that the doctrine may be said to be the kernel of Christianity. Also, through it and employing the principle of interconnection of Christian mysteries taught by the Church, which was previously explained, one is able to essentially relate it to other Christian doctrines like the Trinity, Christology, Pneumatology, Theodicy, Incarnation, Ecclesiology, Sacraments, Mariology, Parousia and Heaven. That is why a foundation of ecclesial instructions on salvation is indispensable. This will be done by sourcing from Pedagogy from the Catechism of the Catholic Church (henceforth CCC).

##### **4.1.1 Pedagogy from the CCC on Salvation**

The document enlightens by teaching that salvation presupposes faith which implies belief not only in the Redeemer and Savior but also on God. It says that "believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent Him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation (Mk 16:16; Jn 3:36; 6:40). Since 'without faith it is impossible to please God'

and to attain to the fellowship of His sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life ‘but he who endures to the end’ (DS 3012; Mt 10:22; 24:13; Heb 11:6; Council of Trent: DS 1532).”<sup>1</sup> The basic salvation belief for the Christians is summarized in the Nicean (325 AD) and Constantinopolitan (381 AD) creeds which express the core belief salvation requires.

Awareness is created that God is first and foremost the sole source of salvation that uses the Church, analogically viewed as our mother, as the servant and main ministering agent of salvation. This is how the CCC puts it: “Salvation comes from God alone; but because we receive the life of faith through the Church, she is our mother: ‘We believe the Church as the mother of our new birth, and not in the Church as if she were the author of our salvation.’ (Faustus of Riez, *De Spiritu Sancto* 1, 2: PL 62, 11). Because she is our mother, she is also our teacher in the faith.”<sup>2</sup>

Since the Old Testament and the New Testament shed light to each other, the Church teaches Old Testament perception of salvation and that of the New Testament with the latter being the actualization of the former. The articulation is as follows:

Indeed, ‘the economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, the Redeemer of all’ (DV 15). ‘Even though they contain matters imperfect and provisional,’ (DV 15) the books of the Old Testament bear witness to the whole divine pedagogy of God’s saving love: these writings ‘are a storehouse of sublime teaching on God and of sound wisdom on human life, as well as a wonderful treasury of prayers; in them, too, the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way.’ (DV15).

In relation to this, Haring gives more insights. He says that “out of a sinful world, God calls Noah to fidelity and trust in Him. Indeed, God calls all people to repentance and thus to salvation. The story of Noah symbolizes God’s abiding concern for the salvation of humankind: salvation through an exodus of repentance and trust.”<sup>3</sup> He goes on to explain that:

In all these perspectives of the Old Testament, there is no place for a mere code of morality or an allowance to confine oneself to static norms. It is always the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994), Nu. 161, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 169, pp. 68-69.

<sup>3</sup> B. Haring, *Free and Faithful in Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity, Vol 1* (London: St Paul Publications, 1978), pp. 8-9.

dynamics of salvation truth, of fidelity to the ‘Good News’ that bears in itself joy and peace, and manifests the gifts of God and thus directs our life.<sup>4</sup>

Through general revelation which is basically theocentric, God discloses Himself and His plan for salvation to all. The Church teaches that:

God, who creates and conserves all things by His Word, provides people with constant evidence of Himself in created realities. And furthermore, wishing to open up the way to heavenly salvation, He manifests Himself to our first parents from the very beginning’ (DV 3; Jn 1:3; Rom 1:19-20). He invites them to intimate communion with Himself and clothed them with resplendent grace and justice.<sup>5</sup>

The Church goes on to explain that:

This revelation was not broken off by our first parents’ sin. After the fall, God buoyed them up with the hope of salvation, by promising redemption; and He has never ceased to show His solicitude for the human race. He wishes to give eternal life to all those who seek salvation by patience in well-doing (DV3; Gen 3:15; Rom 2:6-7).<sup>6</sup>

The above may be related to what Haring calls “the rules of dialogue” as he asserts that: “the rules for dialogue will always give first place to persons in communities and communities of persons, in view of redeeming relationships. We will ponder God’s grace which calls us, and the mission He bestows on us.”<sup>7</sup>

He emphasizes that:

Our leitmotif also clearly indicates a common commitment to salvation truth. It therefore never allows knowledge of dominion or abstract philosophy to take first place over and against truth. Those who have chosen this leitmotif find it intolerable to look for ‘certainties’ when they should look, courageously and patiently, for truth...our leitmotif obliges us to become responsible, creative persons and to help our fellowmen towards the same goal.<sup>8</sup>

The above Church teaching on salvation through general revelation which is mainly anthropological and as such theocentric is of immense importance in handling salvation

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nu.54, p. 45.

<sup>6</sup> B. Haring, *Free and Faithful in Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity*, Vol 1, (London: St Paul Publications, 1978), p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., No.55, p. 45.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

from Kipsigis point of reference. The Church is, nevertheless, quick to bring to awareness the centrality, and indeed the superiority, of special revelation whose specificity is Jesus Christ making it Christocentric. In Christ, the fullness of revelation and salvation has been accomplished since He reveals who God is, what salvation is and provides the best means towards being saved as the Redeemer and Savior.<sup>9</sup> He is the Servant of God propagating and manifesting salvation in the best way humanly possible as witnessed by Peter, Moses and Elijah, among others, thus accomplishing His Father's redemptive and salvation will in collaboration with the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> That is why Haring teaches that:

The basis of a distinctive Christian anthropology is Christology. In Christology, we surely cannot separate what Christ is from what He has done, but the primary concern is always who He is: that he is man for others. As free gift of the Father, His own freedom is always directed towards our freedom.<sup>11</sup>

## **4.2 Theologians' Reflections on Salvation**

With the above setting, this sub-section tackles theologians' reflections on the doctrine of salvation. Since so many scholars have handled the topic on salvation from numerous perspectives throughout history owing to the complexity of the subject, the study is compelled to be selective. The conviction is that the following contemporaries will be adequate for our kind of work namely: Karl Rahner, Jacques Dupuis, Gustavo Gutierrez, Patrick Wachege, Hans Küng, Pope Paul VI, Pope Paul II and Raymond Panniker. Let it also be appreciated that even for these selected ones, and for practical purposes imposed on the study, focus will be in areas that are in line with the study and not the whole treaties from these scholars. The study is also quick to inform that the investigation will not follow a historical chronological procedure but a thematic perspective so as not to divert from the core of the study.

### **4.2.1 Rahner's Reflections on Salvation**

Among the theologians who have come up with striking reflections on the RCC's doctrine of salvation is Karl Rahner. Actually, "more than any other theologian of our

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<sup>9</sup> *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nus.65, 66, p. 47.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Nos. 554, 555, p. 156.

<sup>11</sup> B. Haring, *Free and Faithful in Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity, Vol 1*, (London: St Paul Publications, 1978), pp.120-121.

time Karl Rahner has struggled with the question whether God's salvation is available only through explicit faith in Jesus Christ or whether it is possible to all men and women."<sup>12</sup>

Within an anthropological rooting, Rahner "sees the human person as someone who lives in a world of incomprehensible mystery."<sup>13</sup> On the basis of this, he affirms that "we know specific objects against a horizon of infinite mystery. When we know anything there is already a question about infinite arising, perhaps only implicitly, at the edge of our consciousness."<sup>14</sup> As human beings then, we are endowed with openness to a transcendental being we cannot grasp fully.

On revelatory grounds, awareness is created that the Creator discloses Himself to the creatures even through creation. In a theocentric manner, God freely and in a loving way empowers all through the Holy Spirit to have intimacy with Him.<sup>15</sup> The insight here is that for numerous numbers of people with no faith affiliation in Jesus Christ and do not manifest "explicit faith" in Him may after all be saved. By free grace imbued with salvation love, He enables all to convert and be fulfilled in Him as His children. Such a God initiated free encounter gives identity to man or woman as "the event of a free, unmerited and forgiving, and absolute self-communication of God."<sup>16</sup> Within such a foundation, Rahner explains grace as indiscriminately present to all and irrevocable. There is a kind of unmerited merger between "grace" and "nature". The concept Rahner coins for this state is "supernatural existential."<sup>17</sup>

In this mode of understanding "the history of salvation is coexistent with the whole history of the human race."<sup>18</sup> He explains further that "there is no revelation which could take place in any other way except in the faith of the person hearing the revelation. To this extent it is clear that the history of salvation and revelation is always the already existing synthesis of God's historical activity and man's at the same time, because the

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<sup>12</sup> D. Edwards, *What Are They saying About Salvation?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), p. 116.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>17</sup> This is broadly explained in- K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations, Vol I* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), pp. 297ff.

<sup>18</sup> K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), p. 142.

divine and the human history of salvation cannot be understood as joining together in a kind of synergistic cooperation.”<sup>19</sup> Rahner then asserts that “anyone who does not close himself to God in an ultimate act of his life and his freedom through free and personal sin for which he is really and subjectively guilty and for which he cannot shirk responsibility, this person finds his salvation.”<sup>20</sup> The consequence of the above is a pointer to salvation not being a confine of Christianity.

Rahner, moreover, indicates the affinity between the “history of the world” and the “history of salvation.”<sup>21</sup> He explains the deliberate self-offering of God to all, the Kipsigis included, as the nature of salvation which had to be either freely accepted or rejected by humankind. He puts it in these words:

The history of the world, then, means the history of salvation. God’s offer of Himself, in which God communicates Himself absolutely to the whole of mankind, is by definition man’s salvation. For it is the fulfillment of man’s transcendence in which he transcends towards the absolute God Himself. Therefore the history of God’s offer of Himself, offered by God in freedom and accepted or rejected by man in freedom, is the history of salvation or its opposite.<sup>22</sup>

He goes on to explain:

Corresponding to man’s essence as transcendence and history, such a history of salvation has essentially two moments which mutually condition each other: it is the event of God’s self-communication as accepted or rejected by man’s own basic freedom, and this moment of God’s self-communication, which seemingly is merely transcendent and trans-historical because it is permanent and always present, belongs to this history and takes place within it. This self-communication is a moment in the history of salvation insofar as the self-communication and the freedom of its acceptance and rejection, which is really exercised in the concrete, historical corporeality of man and of mankind, come to appearance there. They are known by man in this appearance, even on the level of reflection to an extent, at least initial reflection, and they come to expression, although in images and likenesses.<sup>23</sup>

Drawing from the foregoing, Rahner elaborates that the history of salvation consists of: word coming from God and about God in His history; sacramental signs of God’s grace

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.142.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

and the historical development of these symbols, rites, likeness and signs; religious institutions and the historical development of these religious and social structures; and the event of self-communication of God Himself.<sup>24</sup> For him, the history of salvation and all history exist together since “wherever human history is lived and suffered in freedom, the history of salvation and its opposite are also taking place, and hence not merely where this history is actualized in an explicitly religious way in word and in cult and in religious societies.”<sup>25</sup>

He qualifies this assertion even more pointing out that:

The mediation of this experience of transcendence does not necessarily have to be an explicitly religious mediation. Consequently, the history of salvation and its opposite is not confined to the history of true and false religion strictly as such. Rather it also encompasses the apparently merely profane history of mankind and of the individual person, presupposing only that transcendental experience is actualized there and historically mediated.<sup>26</sup>

That is why, according to Rahner, unbelievers who follow their conscience, accept others with love and concern as they follow their conscience living uprightly may be said to respond positively though implicitly to God’s offer of salvation. As such, whether they reject or are unaware of the Redeemer and Savior do follow the path of salvation – according to Rahner’s perception of “anonymous Christians.”<sup>27</sup>

Edwards captures Rahner’s explanation of the aforementioned well. He says:

For Karl Rahner, then, salvation is always both transcendental and historical at the same time. It is transcendental because it is always concerned with God’s self-communication and human acceptance or rejection of this, and this exchange can never be captured completely in reflection. It is always historical because transcendence occurs in and through historical events, and our response to God’s self-communication finds expression in our concrete encounter with day to day life.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>27</sup> K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations, Vol 6* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), pp. 390ff.

<sup>28</sup> D. Edwards, *What Are They Saying About Salvation?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), p. 22.



Above all, in his article on *Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions*<sup>29</sup> like that of the Kipsigis, Rahner confronts the Christian doctrine of salvation with non-Christian religions endowment with salvation characteristics.

He affirms the presence of valid elements of gratuitous grace, supernatural giftedness from the Creator to human creatures and important revelation qualities which though not at par with Christianity's but, nevertheless, are salvation tools too though not under the umbrella of Christinity.<sup>30</sup> That is why the economy of salvation initiated by God who is present and communicates Himself freely to all in a way we cannot fully comprehend remains mysterious. God truly empowers even the non-Christians to personally experience Him in their very being and transmit that salvation experiential awareness to others living in this world through their religions. The issue here is that, other religions including that of the Kipsigis do have elements of salvation as a result of general revelation which is theocentric. Within this line of reasoning, one can then rightly infer that it is worthy digging for such salvation qualities in respective socio-religio- cultural items of respective ethnic communities then encounter them with those explicitly elaborated in Christian doctrine of salvation which is mainly Christocentric for a better and more meaningful explanation of the doctrine to various ethnic communities.

In Rahner's article on the "*One Christ and the Universality of Salvation*,"<sup>31</sup> the issue of "objective redemption" and "subjective redemption" in reference to salvation comes up clearly. The former refers to Jesus living, dying and resurrecting for the salvation of many. Rahner sees this not only as unmerited but also as a gift enabling the recipients to dispose themselves well thus making a conscious effort to convert and live a Godly life which implies self-redemption. The former is the deliberate free response on the part of the redeemed. Consequently, the gift of "objective redemption" triggers and freely enables "subjective redemption" in which people voluntarily embrace God's free offer of unmerited grace and loving mercy to live in harmony with God, with themselves and with creation. The understanding of the above comes out better as summarily articulated by Edwards below:

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<sup>29</sup> K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol 5 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), pp. 115-134.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124ff.

<sup>31</sup> K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol 16 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1979), pp. 199- 224.

An answer to the question of how the death and resurrection of Jesus is related to our salvation must, then, take account of the following factors: (1) it must account for the availability of salvation for all man and women; (2) it must show a real causal connection between Jesus' death and our salvation, rather than simply a connection by way of example or by way of the moral impact which that death has upon us; (3) it must not distort God into an angry Lord demanding vengeance but must make clear that the death and resurrection of Jesus are the expression of a God of boundless mercy and eternal love.<sup>32</sup>

The event of redemptive death for many was willingly accepted by Jesus Christ freely lowering Himself to the state of man living on earth and giving Himself to excruciating painful passion for people's wellbeing with the awareness that the whole episode was the will of His Father who is more interested in generous giving and restoring Godliness and loving merciful friendship with people than being propitiated.<sup>33</sup> On the bases of this, Rahner defines man – Christian or non-Christian – as “that which comes to be when God's self-expression, His Word, is uttered into the emptiness of Godless void in love.”<sup>34</sup> He goes on to point out that:

Man is the radical question about God which, as created by God, can also have an answer, an answer which in its historical manifestation and radical tangibility is the God-Man, and which is answered in all of us by God Himself. This takes place at the very center of the absolute questionableness of our being in and through what we call grace, God's self-communication and beatific vision.<sup>35</sup>

Such openness to God's free revelation, the capacity to hear it effectively, and gratuitous empowerment to relate to the Creator with love and friendship and access to salvation is profoundly explained in his book titled *Hearers of the Word*<sup>36</sup> which we will not handle so as not to deviate from the opted for study. Thus:

In this way man becomes precisely someone who participates in the infinite mystery of God, just as a question participates in its answer, and just as the question is born only by the possibility of the answer itself. We know this by the fact that we recognize the incarnate *Logos* in our history and say: here the question which we are is answered historically and tangibly with God Himself.<sup>37</sup>

In connection with the above, Rahner sees Christology as:

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<sup>32</sup> D. Edwards, *What Are They Saying About Salvation?* (London: Sheed and Ward 1978). p.25.

<sup>33</sup> K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (London: Sheed and Ward 1969).pp. 224-227.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

<sup>36</sup> K. Rahner, *Hearers of the Word* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969).

<sup>37</sup> K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1969).p. 225.

The beginning and end of anthropology and this anthropology in its most radical actualization is for all eternity theology. It is first of all the theology which God Himself has spoken by uttering His Word as our flesh into the emptiness of what is not God and is even sinful, and, secondly, it is the theology which we ourselves do in faith when we do not think that we could find Christ by going around man, and hence find God by going around the human altogether.<sup>38</sup>

The above is complemented by Dupuis' insights with regard to what he calls "ways of salvation" among others.

#### **4.2.2 Dupuis' Reflections on Salvation**

Dupuis explains the specificity of Jesus Christ on the issue of salvation as both "constitutive" and "relational."<sup>39</sup> By "constitutive" he means that "for Christian faith, the paschal mystery of the death-resurrection of Jesus Christ has, according to God's saving design for humankind, a universal significance: it seals between the Godhead and the human race a bond of union that can never be broken; it constitutes the privileged channel through which God has chosen to share the divine life with human beings."<sup>40</sup> He sees "relational" as:

Intended to insert the universal significance of the Christ-event into the overall plan of God for humankind and the manner it unfolds in salvation history. In particular, the term is designed to insert the reciprocal relationship that exists between the path that is in Jesus Christ and the various paths to salvation proposed by the religious traditions to their members.<sup>41</sup>

The concept "paths of salvation" within the parameters of religious traditions embraces both "a search for God, universally present in human beings even though never fulfilled through their own power" and above all "God's search for them and to God's gracious initiative in inviting them to share in the divine life."<sup>42</sup> On the basis of this assertion, Dupuis formulates guiding, or rather searching, questions. The quest is articulated as follows:

Whether the Christian character of the economy of salvation leads to the conclusion that the members of other religious traditions are saved through Him

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-226.

<sup>39</sup> J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 1997), p.305.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 305.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 305.

beside, or even in spite of, the religious tradition to which they adhere and which they practice with sincerity. Or are they, on the contrary, saved within this tradition and through it? And, if the second alternative is true, how does a Christian theology of religions account for the saving power of these paths? Would such power so compete with the universal saving power of Jesus Christ that it must *a priori* be denied, as is done in fact by the exclusivist thesis? Or would it simply manifest the variety of ways along which, as the pluralists claim, God can be encountered in human cultures and traditions – a variety which belies every theological claim to a well-ordered and unified plan? Where, in a Christian perspective, might the saving power of the various ‘paths’ fit into God’s saving plan, and how does that plan become effective?<sup>43</sup>

His assumption is that prior to handling salvation “paths” and “ways” in response to the above queries, one has to foremost know that “from a Christian viewpoint, God – and God alone – saves. This means that no human being is one’s own savior; it also means that only the Absolute is the final agent of human salvation.”<sup>44</sup> The Biblical rooting here is that: “In the Hebrew Bible, the title ‘Savior’ belongs principally to God; in the New Testament, it is applied only to God and to Jesus Christ – in a derivative manner which does not prevent God being the root-cause and the source of salvation: God saves through Jesus Christ (Jn 3:16-17). The principle cause of salvation remains the Father: ‘In Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself’ (2 Cor 5:19).”<sup>45</sup> On the basis of this, “early Christian literature refers to what will later be termed ‘Christianity’ as ‘the way’ of Jesus (Acts 9:2; 19:9; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14; 24:22). Nor can it be the intention of God here to hold that ‘other religious traditions save,’ any more, in fact, than does Christianity.”<sup>46</sup> In this kind of thinking, other religious traditions, like the Kipsigis one, “they too can be made use of by God as channels of His salvation; they can thus become ways or means conveying the power of the saving God – paths of salvation for the people who ‘walk the path’.”<sup>47</sup> Such an insight legitimizes further the quest for salvation characteristics of Kipsigis worldview traditions. Nevertheless, it is not to be equated to that explicitly coming from God through Jesus Christ as observed earlier.

Again, before tackling “ways” and “paths” of salvation, Dupuis sees it as indispensable to have the awareness that the term salvation is not monolithic. Religions understand it

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 305-306.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.306.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

differently although “all religions present themselves to their followers as paths to salvation/liberation.”<sup>48</sup> He gives the rationale behind these double concepts, i.e., salvation and liberation as below:

- The combined notion is easily applicable to diverse traditions, no matter how different their respective concepts.
- It is applicable to the Jewish concept of God’s liberation of His people through His mighty deeds; to the Christian concept of freedom for love and of a share in the divine life.
- It is applicable to the Buddhist advocacy of liberation through concentration and detachment; to the realization of one’s identity with Brahman advocated by Hindu *advaita* mysticism.
- It has the advantage of combining such complementary aspects, too often kept separate in Christianity itself, as: the spiritual and the temporal, the transcendent and the human, the personal and the social, the eschatological and the historical.<sup>49</sup>

The analysis, despite the divergencies of religious traditions, makes Dupuis recommend a universal concept of salvation/liberation in these words: “It has to do with the search for, and attainment of, fullness of life, wholeness, self-realization, and integration.”<sup>50</sup> As such, “the reality of human salvation must, from a Christian theological viewpoint, be conceived after one common model for all human beings.”<sup>51</sup>

Another important concept is “mediation” from the point of view of salvation. Although the term is used for both Jesus (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24) as well as Moses (Gal3:19-20), it has a distinctive meaning for each of the two. As applied to Jesus, He is “‘Mediator’ between God and humankind, insofar as in Him the Godhead and humankind have been joined together in a lasting bond: ‘By His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some way to every person’ (GS 22).”<sup>52</sup> With regard to Moses “he acted as ‘mediator’ between God and His people in God’s covenantal initiative towards them.”<sup>53</sup> The implication of the text is that “any participated form of mediation must, according to the text, be seen as essentially related to, and deriving its power from, the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

unique mediation of Jesus Christ.”<sup>54</sup> Dupuis does not stop here. He explores the sense in which a theology of religions applies the concept of “mediation” to the paths of salvation traced by the other traditions.<sup>55</sup>

After exploring the the issues of “many and various ways,” the inclusive presence of the mystery of Christ, the universal power of the *Logos*, the unbounded action of the Spirit, discerning saving values, complementary values and convergent paths Dupuis draws out the following crucial conclusion:

It seems legitimate to point to a convergence between the religious traditions and the mystery of Jesus Christ, as representing various, though not equal, paths along which, through history, God has sought and continues to seek human beings in His Word and His Spirit. Jesus Christ, it has been recently said, is the ‘Sintegral figure of God’s salvation’; the other religious traditions represent ‘particular realizations of a universal process, which has become preeminently concrete in Jesus Christ’ (O’Leary 1994, 253). Salvation is at work everywhere; but in the concrete figure of the crucified Christ the work of salvation is seen to be accomplished. Jesus Christ, then, is the ‘unique Savior,’ not as the unique manifestation of the Word of God, who is God Himself (O’Leary 1994, 261-65); not even in the sense that God’s revelation in Him be complete and exhaustive which it is not and cannot be; but in relation to the universal process of divine revelation which occurs through concrete, limited manifestations.<sup>56</sup>

In his other book entitled *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*<sup>57</sup>, his contributions on and about the doctrine of salvation are also useful. He explains how Jesus of history related with those considered as ‘foreigners’, those who did not belong to the people of Israel, and what he thought of their religious socialization in their respective world-views.<sup>58</sup> Dupuis showed how Jesus demonstrated behaviour of sympathy, respect and amicable attitude towards them and their worldview endowments. In this way, Dupuis sheds light on the need to be positive and optimistic towards non-Christian religious traditions – Kipsigis religion included- due to having salvation characteristics as a result of God’s free gift of general revelation.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>55</sup> He profoundly explains this on pp. 316-329.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 328-329.

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, (New York: Maryknoll Orbis Books, 2003).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

To complement the above, Gustavo Gutierrez, credited as the “father of liberation theology”, comes in handy by providing his reflection on salvation through the lense of liberation.

#### 4.2.3 Gutierrez’s Reflections on Salvation

Gutierrez too adds value to our work by providing a liberation touch to the explanation of salvation. Reacting to Latin American people’s poverty life-style, he comes up with a classic book in which he inter-relates liberation with salvation as he inserts himself into his own people’s situation in life within the context of history, politics and salvation.<sup>59</sup> His specificity is that he intertwines salvation propagated by Jesus Christ with people’s liberation. Perhaps that is why he qualifies the term “liberation Theology” as having a threefold aspects. These, and as recorded by Wachege,<sup>60</sup> are: Emancipation from sin and restoration of life in Christ; Freedom from oppressive conditions e.g. socio-economic, political, cultural and religious ones; and Re-establishment of human authenticity.

With this understanding, Gutierrez defines liberation theology as “a theology which does not stop with reflecting on the world, but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is transformed. It is a theology which is open – in the protest against trampled human dignity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love, and in the building of a new, just, and fraternal society – to the gift of the Kingdom of God.”<sup>61</sup> He sees it further as “a theology of the liberating transformation of the history of mankind and also therefore that part of mankind – gathered into *ecclesia* – which openly confesses Christ.”<sup>62</sup>

Gutierrez explains that “to announce the Gospel is to proclaim that the love of God is present in the historical becoming of mankind. It is to make known that there is no human act which cannot in the last instance be defined in relation to Christ. To preach the Good News is for the Church to be a sacrament of history, to fulfill its role as a community – a

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<sup>59</sup> G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973).

<sup>60</sup> P.N. Wachege, *CSRS 560: African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: University of Nairobi, 2012), p. 54.

<sup>61</sup> G. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973), p.15.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

sign of the convocation of all.”<sup>63</sup> In the light of Pauline symbols of salvation – converting from the way of evil through the grace of Christ to the path of salvation – he provides important reflections concerning salvation. This is how he puts it: “The Christian life is a Passover, a transformation from sin to grace, from death to life, from injustice to justice, from the sub-human to the human. Christ introduces us by the gift of the Spirit into communion with God and with all.”<sup>64</sup> As such;

The fundamental obstacle to the Kingdom, which is sin, is also the root of all misery and injustice; we see that the very meaning of the growth of the Kingdom is also the ultimate precondition for a just society and a new man. One reaches this root and this ultimate precondition only through the acceptance of the liberating gift of Christ, which surpasses all expectations.<sup>65</sup>

Within the umbrella of humanity as temple of God, Gutierrez affirms that “the Biblical God is close to man, He is a God of communion with and commitment to man. The active presence of God in the midst of His people is a part of the oldest and most enduring Biblical promises.”<sup>66</sup> He confirms God’s living among the people – irrespective of where they are from –using biblical references like Exod. 29: 45- 46, Ezek 37: 27-28 and Jn 1:14, among others. He goes on to explain that “it is in the temple that we find God...of closely related men, who together make history and fashion themselves.”<sup>67</sup> For him, it is in the poor, the dehumanized and the crushed ones that God is more vividly encountered. The reason behind it is that “the salvation of humanity passes through them; they are the bearers of the meaning of history...Our attitude towards them, or rather commitment to them will indicate whether or not we are directing our existence in conformity with the will of the Father.”<sup>68</sup>

Participating in transforming the society and ourselves from evil taking Jesus as the model is a manifestation of salvation too since “every human act which is oriented toward the construction of a more just society has value in terms of communion with God – in terms

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.176.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 203.



of salvation.”<sup>69</sup> Such an undertaking has to be done with *agape* (selfless love) in solidarity with the others. The reason behind it is that: “In human love there is a depth which man does not suspect: It is through it that man encounters God. If utopia humanizes economic, social, and political liberation, this humanness – in the light of the Gospel – reveals God.” Such an understanding, among others, results in what Gutierrez calls “spirituality of liberation.”<sup>70</sup> It involves “placing oneself in the perspective of the Kingdom ... a vital attitude, all embracing and synthesizing, informing the totality as well as every detail of our lives.”<sup>71</sup> To attain such a state, one has to undergo *metanoia* (a genuine transformed change) which he explains as follows:

Conversion means a radical transformation of us; it means thinking, feeling, and living as Christ – present in exploited and alienated man...to commit oneself to the process of the liberation...to commit oneself not only generously, but also with an analysis of the situation and a strategy of action.<sup>72</sup>

It is from this liberation spirituality as a means of salvation that Gutierrez enriches us with a more profound elaboration in his other book titled; *We Drink from Our Own Wells*<sup>73</sup> which has been inspirational to many.

It is instructive that for his main title, Gutierrez borrowed Bernard of Clairvaux’s assertion that on spirituality matters – and salvation is necessarily imbued with spirituality too – all must learn to “drink from their own wells.” Consequently, coming from Latin America, he qualifies the title with *the Spiritual Journey of a People* showing that his theologizing is deliberately from Latin American framework. In this regard, the study is inspired to drawing salvation values from our African own wells – more specifically Kipsigis one relating it to the Christian doctrine of salvation. These are wells with African/Kipsigis main world view of vitality, dynamism, sacrality, communality, anthropocentrism integrated and highlighted differently from other people’s – as previously explained.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>73</sup> G. Gutierrez, *We Drink From Our Own Well: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984).

The aforementioned “spirituality of liberation” i.e., that of drinking from own well, is analogically likened to “living water that springs up in the depths of the experience of faith.”<sup>74</sup> As such, “to drink from one’s own well is to live one’s life in the Spirit of Jesus as one encounters Him in one’s concrete historical reality.”<sup>75</sup> This shows that “liberation is an all embracing process that leaves no dimension of human life untouched, because when all is said and done it expresses the saving action of God in history.”<sup>76</sup> Gutierrez’s liberation perspective of salvation is complemented with Wachege’s inculturation below.

#### **4.2.4 Wachege’s Reflections on Salvation**

Wachege’s publication titled - *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio -Religio-Philosophical Touch*<sup>77</sup> has a very close connection with the study and, in fact, the study draws a lot of insights from it especially with regard to the perception of salvation, methodological approach and sequence.

Wachege attempts in a practical manner to root the doctrine of salvation in African worldview, beliefs and philosophy.<sup>78</sup> He brings to our awareness that God in his *hokmah* (divine wisdom) is generous to all people in their respective culture which God instills with redemptive and salvation elements.<sup>79</sup> Thus to him salvation is not people’s prerogative, neither is it any culture’s confine-not even the religiously dominant Jewish culture. It is a gratuitous gift from the almighty to all.<sup>80</sup> He then provides basic preliminary observation and definitions on salvation and related terms; these terms include: redemption, justification, objective and subjective redemption.<sup>81</sup> He observes that the concept of redemption and that of salvation ought to be handled concurrently since they are intertwined, thus for practical purposes, these terms are interchangeably used. His view that Objective redemption refer to the “mystery of Jesus Christ being the total self gift of God of love to humankind in His Son made man, in whom through a

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> P. N. Wachege. *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio -Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2000)

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

‘marvelous gift’ God calls all human beings to a personal communion with God as I to a Thou.’<sup>82</sup> From above Wachege reminds us that this kind of redemption emanates from that conscious submission to the will of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, subjective redemption refers to redemption through an unconscious following and acceptance of Jesus Christ through authentic following of human virtues qualities and actions.<sup>83</sup>

Moreover, Wachege’s view of salvation, particularly his definition of the doctrine of salvation guided this study a great deal. He observes that “salvation is a constant transforming process and gracefull reality of divinization, conversion and re-conversion with everlasting happiness in the heaven of the eschaton as the goal made possible by objective redemption and realized freely in subjective redemption, endowing one with a chance start a fresh as one perserveres in the realm of grace which in our diaspora situation on earth, is in great deanger of being dis-graced owing to sinful state, sinful deeds, sinful situations or environment inlife imbued not only with good forces but also with evil forces.”<sup>84</sup> In relation also to above term, Wachege shades light on “reconciliation” and “justification.”<sup>85</sup> He observes that “reconciliation” sometimes appears as parallel and equivalent to “justification” and it effects “peace.”<sup>86</sup> In view of these two concepts, he notes that reconciliation is peace with God as a consequence of justification.<sup>87</sup> Reconciliation then is the re-union, re-establishment of proper relationship between two parties; negatively as against enmity, alienation and positively as implying peace<sup>88</sup>; these terms went a great deal in guiding the study.

Furthermore, in enriching the study Wachege’s work on the Church identity and salvation palyed a very critical role.<sup>89</sup> He defines the church as “the community of those who have committed themselves to the person and cause of jesus Christ and who bear witness to it as hope for all men and women; it is no isolated, self-satisfied religious organization, but

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 58-85.

a community which forms a comprehensive community with other.”<sup>90</sup> This definition is very key in understanding the doctrine of salvation. In relation to above concept of the church, Wachege handles the doctrine of salvation chronologically in a threefold phases which enriched our study a great deal as follows;<sup>91</sup>

The first quarter of this century remained dominated by an apologetic attitude, mostly negative in relation to the doctrine under study.<sup>92</sup> In such a climate, the question which continued to retain the attention of theologians was the problem of the possibility of salvation for the members of other religion. At this period, the statement in relation to salvation; *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* dominated religious realms.<sup>93</sup>

In the second phase, Wachege further notes that this period marked the century and the years leading to and immediately following Vatican II witnessed a gradual change of climate, to which the Council gave a powerful impetus.<sup>94</sup> During this epoch, the approach became less defensive and more positive; in the wake of the council, theology of salvation became more affirmative and optimistic with regard to the salvation of other members of other religions; the non-christian religious traditions themselves were progressively considered as containing positive values or even as playing positive role in the salvation of their members.<sup>95</sup> With this new approach the theology of religions was born.

The third phase as Wachege observes it that which we have entered in recent years; it can be traced to the beginning of the 1980s.<sup>96</sup> During this period, a broader perspective, as we have noted above, is now being advocated, which is giving birth to a “theology of religious pluralism.”<sup>97</sup> Its main point of debate is going beyond the problematic of people’s salvation in and through their religious traditions, the new perspective seeks to penetrate more deeply into God’s plan for humankind.<sup>98</sup> It asks about the significance of

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

the plurality of religious traditions in the plan- and consequently in the unfolding of the history of God's dealings with humankind which we call the history of salvation.<sup>99</sup>

In regard to the above mentioned phases in view of our doctrine under study, it is notable that the RCC has undergone a historical evolution in the approaches and mentality towards other religion and cultures-African Traditional Religion included in regard to salvation of their members. This encourages renewal and transformation with newness which is vital for a more meaningful evangelization and catechesis of salvation.

In addition to above, Wachege underscored the need to inculturate in Christian manner positive cultural items.<sup>100</sup> He observes that proper critical analysis, modification and Christianization of these positive items would expose believers to mature witness of salvation in all spheres of life and in more understandable terms. Wachege asserts that in indigenous people's riddles, songs, myths, proverbs, plays, oral narratives, legends, idioms, indigenous sage, and religions are imbued with salvation items.<sup>101</sup> He points out that to ignore this will impoverish theologians and scholars to being barriers of salvation instead of being carriers of the same.<sup>102</sup> Thus Wachege's work not only endorses the study but also necessitated its urgency to investigate Kipsigis worldview items for better understanding and propagation of the Catholic doctrine of salvation in Kericho Sub-County.

In a more practical manner, Wachege demonstrates some African aspirations and inspirations can be inculturated for better understanding of the doctrine of salvation.<sup>103</sup> In his view, African communal and vitalistic elements have a lot to offer in elaborating the doctrine under study; particularly family, kinships ties, clan systems and blood pacts have a lot to offer.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, the African concepts of evil forces, sin and good powers can be inculturated to elaborate in our opted for doctrine, particularly in interpretation of salvation wholistically. As such he enriches the study by arguing that African traditional-cultural –philosophical heritage are imbued with salvific elements, God has been

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 117

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 118

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp. 116-145.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

communicating to his people through vital symbols, respective cultures, worldviews as a result of implicit revelation.<sup>105</sup> That is why the study sought to examine salvific characteristics among the Kipsigis people with the finality to broaden, comprehend and appreciate better the Christian doctrine of salvation utilizing Inculturational approach.

Furthermore, Wachege's book triggered the awareness that virtually all the works on the RCC doctrine of salvation over emphasized the influence on this doctrine on people's cultures while ignoring the other point of reference that is people's cultures influence on the foresaid doctrine.<sup>106</sup> That is why he asserts; "although the issue and problems of the topic are in vogue with significantly praiseworthy African and western contributions, one rarely encounters serious study that spells out African traditions, religious, cultures and philosophy of life as imbued with some salvific characteristics owing to divine general revelation to establish their impact on Christian conception, understanding and propagation of salvation."<sup>107</sup> While this crucial insight was among the important inspirations to this study, nevertheless, Wachege did not actually reflect from the Kipsigis point of view as this study intended to do. This was the challenge the study took to complement Wachege's.

In reference to the methodological approach and the sequence, the study was inspired by Wachege.<sup>108</sup> His view on inevitability of utilizing respectful cultural values in catechesis, Wachege indicates that religious missionaries failed because their evangelization was deficient of Christianity which demands "a sincere open dialogue with the culture being evangelized including its religion."<sup>109</sup> Indigenous cultures, religiosity, philosophy of life and languages must thus be taken seriously for mutual benefit.<sup>110</sup> Triggered by above, the study then adopted inculturation approach as opposed to other terms like; indigenization, contextualization, incarnation, reformulation, adaptation and interculturalization, reason being as Wachege observes, "the term inculturation contains and expresses best and most coherently our contemporary trend of understanding, presenting and concretely

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<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

interpreting Christianity in accordance with our African people's aspirations, needs, thought-forms and mentality."<sup>111</sup> It thus expresses best the effort of confronting the gospel message with our African cultures, philosophy and religiosity. His view on the sequence of carrying out an African theology helped the study a great deal, he observes that a good inculturation study ought to follow the following sequence<sup>112</sup>; an exposition on respective anthropological cultural contexts, their philosophies and worldview items.<sup>113</sup> This is then followed by an elaboration of the Christian doctrine to be inculturated for clear and total understanding of the gospel message.<sup>114</sup> Then third stage then is that of creative approach where the cultural items are confronted with the gospel message for mutual enrichment<sup>115</sup>, this stages guided the study to very great extent.

#### **4.2.5 Küng's Reflections on Salvation**

Küng is a RCC priest, theologian born in Sursee, Canton Lucerne.<sup>116</sup> He studied Theology and Philosophy at Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and was ordained in 1954.<sup>117</sup> In 1960s he became the first Roman Catholic theologian since late 19<sup>th</sup> century Old Catholic schism to publicly reject the doctrine of Papal infallibility, in particular in his book<sup>118</sup>, consequently, he was stripped off his license to teach as a Roman Catholic theologian although he continued professing on ecumenical theology at the University of Tübingen.<sup>119</sup>

While presenting at a conference in Bombay on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1964, Küng touched on what he called 'ways of salvation.'<sup>120</sup> In the presentation, he acknowledges that amidst the errors present in other religious traditions, they nevertheless also proclaim God's truth in some ways and have elements of salvation. In this regard he says;

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>116</sup> H. Küng, *On Being a Christian*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1974), p.35.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>118</sup> H. Küng, *Infallibility? An inquiry*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>120</sup> J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 1997), p.153.

As against the “extraordinary” way of salvation which is the Church, the world religions can be called-if this rightly understood- the “ordinary” way of salvation for non-Christian humanity. God is the Lord not only of special salvation history of the Church, but also of universal salvation history of all mankind; this universal salvation history is bound up with the special salvation history in having a common origin, meaning, goal and being subject to the same grace of God. Every situation, inside the Church and outside it, is thus in advance within His grace.<sup>121</sup>

He goes on to say;

A man is to be saved within the religion that is made available to him in his historical context. Hence it is his right duty to seek God within that religion in which the hidden God has already found him. All this until such a time as he is confronted in an existential way with the revelation of Jesus Christ, the religions with this forms of beliefs, and cults, their categories and values, their symbols and ordinances their religions and ethical experiences, thus have a “relative validity”, a “relative providential right to existence.” They are “a way of salvation”, we can even say for the people of world religions: the more common, the ‘ordinary’ way of salvation, as against which the way of salvation in the Church appears as something very special and extraordinary. The way of the Church can be considered as the great, the “extraordinary” way of salvation...the way of salvation for humankind outside the Church as the great “ordinary” way.<sup>122</sup>

From the above, Küng considers the social aspects of every religious life of the human person in which God’s grace is at work, thus he affirms that these religious traditions “contains quite certainly elements of a supernatural influence by grace.” Hence these religious traditions are thus in some way “means” or “ways” of salvation.<sup>123</sup> He goes further to term them as the ordinary ways for their followers. Küng thus argue that other religious traditions are ordinary ways of salvation while Christianity is the extraordinary- basing himself on the dichotomization of general history of salvation (for all humankind) and special salvation for (Judeo-Christian tradition).<sup>124</sup> While explaining the above distinction, he argues that apart from the fact that the vast majority of people of humankind as a matter of course reaches salvation outside the Church, those who have membership in the Church are advantaged, since to them is an extraordinary way/means of salvation.

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 153

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 153.



Among many of his publications is *The Church*.<sup>125</sup> In this monumental book, he strongly opposes the outdated assertion of “no salvation outside the Church” and that of “*extra ecclesiam nulla conceditur gratia*” meaning “no grace is granted outside the Church.” He states that;

An axiom, which in its negative and exclusive formulation was highly dubious right from the beginning, has resulted in more or less serious errors, and has proved open to misunderstanding in its application to non-Christians and impossible to understand at all in its application to non-Christians.<sup>126</sup>

He is of the opinion that it is better to use a positive formulation; ‘salvation inside the Church!’ and so emphasize the positive truth at the heart of the easily misunderstood axiom.’<sup>127</sup> With this in mind, he strongly recommended that;

The Catholicity of the Church has to hold good therefore for those outside the Church as well as those inside it. But the test is not whether the whole world can be brought into the Church in some way or other of course the world is in the hand of God, who is the God of all and not just of Jews or Christians, as both the Old and New Testament testifies.<sup>128</sup>

He further elaborates his understanding of salvation that in Christ the world receives God’s grace and that God’s plan of salvation has nothing to do with the outside, only an inside<sup>129</sup>, since God our Saviour desires that all men be saved and thus come to the knowledge of truth.<sup>130</sup> He further accentuates that the idea that the Church which exists in the world, has no mandate to lay exclusive claim to certainty of salvation *vis-à-vis* the world or to spiritual authority.<sup>131</sup> To him the Church’s mandate is to give selfless and unpretentious service of salvation to the world.

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<sup>125</sup> *Id.*, *The Church*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1968).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>129</sup> H. Küng, *The Council and the Re-Union*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1960), p.80.

<sup>130</sup> *Id.*, *The Living Church: Reflections on the Second Vatican Council*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p.10.2

<sup>131</sup> *Id.*, *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*, 40<sup>th</sup> ed., (Westminster: Knox Press, 2004), p.72. More of his ideas on the aforementioned doctrine are also replicated in his publications like; *Structures of the Church*, (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), *What Must Remain in the Church*, (London: Collins, 1973), *Signposts for the Future: Contemporary Issues Facing the Church*, (London: Collins, 1978), *Christianity and the World Religions: Paths of Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism*, (London: Collins, 1986), *Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View*, (London: Collins, 1990) and *The Catholic Church: A Short History*, (New York: Modern Library, 2001).

Moreover, in his other book titled: *On Being a Christian*<sup>132</sup> Küng while examining the doctrine of salvation, repeats his thesis on general salvation history and on the other religions as “ordinary” ways of salvation enjoying “relative validity.” In this book, while he is disposed to find in other religions elements of divine truth and salvation characteristics, his overall evaluation of them is that he remains quite positive. In a section titled; *The Challenge of the World Religions*, Küng outlines areas of weakness of these religious traditions which to his judgment Christianity supersedes them; “Unhistoricity, circular thinking, fatalism, pessimism and worldliness.”<sup>133</sup>

#### 4.2.6 Pope Paul VI’s Reflections on Salvation

ES, (*Ecclesiam Suam*) an Encyclical of Pope Paul VI, was published between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sessions of Vatican II in 6<sup>th</sup> August 1964.<sup>134</sup> This document marks the appearance of the term “dialogue” on the programme of the renewal intended by the Council toward the non-Christian religious traditions and the salvation of their members explaining that the history of salvation is that of an ongoing dialogue of God with humankind with the Church as its minister.<sup>135</sup> In this regard, the Pope argues that;

The Church’s dialogue with the entire world; with the members of other religious traditions; with the other Churches and within the Church itself” is indispensable and that the second level of dialogue is “composed of those who essentially worship the one sovereign God whom we too worship and it includes Jews, Muslims and the faithful of the great Afro-Asian religions.”<sup>136</sup>

With this in mind, the Pope instructs as follows;

It is obvious that we cannot agree with various aspects of these religions, and that we cannot overlook the differences or be unconcerned with them as if all religions had, each in its own way, the same value, which would dispense those who follow them from the need of inquiring whether God has revealed a way free from all error and certain, by which he desires to make himself known, loved and served. Indeed, honesty compels us to openly declare what we believe in, namely that

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<sup>132</sup> *Id.*, *On Being a Christian*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1974).

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>134</sup> J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, (Maryknoll, New York, 1997), p. 170.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

there is one true religion, the Christian religion and that we hope that all who seek God and adore him, will come to acknowledge.<sup>137</sup>

Additionally, he states:

We do acknowledge with respect the spiritual and moral values of various non-Christians, for we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals...on these great ideals that we share with them we can have dialogue, and we shall not fail to offer opportunities for it whenever, in genuine mutual respect, our offer would be received with good will.<sup>138</sup>

Following upon the 1974 Synod of bishops on the evangelization of the modern world, the release of the apostolic exhortation EN reaffirmed the above claims. Among the other themes analyzed by the Synod, was that on interreligious dialogue in view of this, on a Christian evaluation of non-Christian religious traditions imbued with elements of salvation which would serve as its necessary foundation. This apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI issued on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1975, has been thoroughly criticized as presenting a rather negative assessment of non-Christian religious traditions<sup>139</sup> thus being interpreted as a salvation barrier. While duly affirming the Church's esteem for non-Christian religions as professed by the document, Pope expresses himself, thus;

Even in the face of the highest forms of natural religion, the Church thinks that ... the religion of Jesus which She proclaims through evangelization truly puts human beings in contact with the plan of God, with his living presence and his action. It does enable them to meet the mystery of the fatherhood of God that bends over towards humanity. In other words through our religion an authentic and living relationship with God is truly established, such as other religions cannot bring about even though they have as it were, their arms stretched to heaven.<sup>140</sup>

From the foregoing, the Pope gives an open critical comparison between the Church and "other" religious traditions; pointing to a healthy dialogue whereby the church is superior owing to special revelation while also having a positive attitude towards other religions which have important elements of salvation. Thanks to general revelation and the religion

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<sup>137</sup> ES 655, in J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, (Maryknoll, New York, 1997), p. 171.

<sup>138</sup> ES 655, in J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, (Maryknoll, New York, 1997), p. 171.

<sup>139</sup> J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, (Maryknoll, New York, 1997), p. 172.

<sup>140</sup> ES 53, in J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, (Maryknoll, New York, 1997), p. 172.

of Jesus through which alone an “authentic” and living relationship with God is established.

#### **4.2.7 Pope John Paul II’s Reflections on Salvation**

During the pontificate of John Paul II, NA (*Nostra Aetate*) was released which actually became the foundation for a Christian understanding of the Church relationship with the world’s religion and their articulation of the doctrine under study providing a commonality between the Church and non-Christian religious traditions sharing a common destiny in God’s design of salvation for humankind which Jesus Christ the Savior and Redeemer fulfilled.<sup>141</sup>

In addition to the above, in his first encyclical letter, RH (*Redemptor Hominis*) released in 4<sup>th</sup> March 1979, the Pope saw in the “firm belief” of “non-Christians” an “effect of the Spirit of truth.” This prompted him to ask;

Does it not sometimes happen that the firm belief of the followers of non-Christian religious tradition—a belief that is also an effect of Spirit of truth operating outside the visible confines of the mystical body—can make Christians ashamed at often being themselves so disposed to doubt concerning the truths revealed by God and proclaimed and the Church.<sup>142</sup>

Thus Pope argue that for the missionary activity to be effective, it ought to begin with a feeling of deep esteem for “what is in the human being”<sup>143</sup>, he states that it is a question of respecting everything that has been brought about in one by the Spirit, who “blows where he wills.”<sup>144</sup> Thus even in prayer Pope demonstrate the importance of the Holy Spirit for salvation of the members of non-Christian religious tradition, he prays;

Even when for some, he is the great Unknown, he nevertheless remains always a reality the same living God. We trust that wherever the human spirit opens itself in prayer to the Unknown God, an echo will be heard of the same spirit who, knowing the limits and weaknesses of the human person, himself prays in us and

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<sup>141</sup> J. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books), p. 68

<sup>142</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Hominis, Apostolic Exhortation*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1979, p. 6

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

<sup>144</sup> Jn 3:8

for us is the fruit of mystery of the redemption of Christ, in which the all embracing love of the father has been shown to the world.<sup>145</sup>

From the above arguments, Pope John Paul II's teaching is gradually emerging; the Holy Spirit is present and active in the world, in the members of other religions and in religious traditions themselves. To him authentic prayer even when addressed to unknown God, human values, virtues, the treasures of wisdom hidden in the religious traditions and true dialogue as well as authentic encounter among members of these traditions are fruits of the Holy Spirit which is an agent for salvation of all humankind.

Moreover, the important address given by Pope John Paul II to the members of the Roman Curia on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1986 after the 'World Day of Prayer for Peace', which had been held in Assisi two months earlier in 17<sup>th</sup> October 1986, contains his reflections on the Catholic doctrine of salvation. The address focused on a "mystery of unity"-based on the unity of humankind in creation and salvation-which unites all people, however distinct may be the circumstances of their lives. He notes; "the differences are less important elements, when confronted with the unity which is radical, fundamental and decisive."<sup>146</sup> In one instance just as also seen earlier the Pope re-emphasized on the role of Holy Spirit for the salvation of members of non-Christian traditions, he observes that in Assisi there had been a "wonderful manifestation of that unity which binds us together beyond the difference and divisions which are known to all." He further explains;

Every authentic prayer is under the influence of the Spirit 'who intercedes insistently for us...because we do not even know how to pray as we ought', but he prays in us 'with unutterable groaning', and 'the one who searches the heart knows what are the desires of the Holy Spirit.' We can indeed maintain that every authentic prayer is called forth by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present in the heart of every person.<sup>147</sup>

The most explicit text on the economy of the Holy Spirit in relation to the doctrine salvation is, however, to be found in the encyclical on the Holy Spirit, *Dominum et Vivificantem* issued in 18<sup>th</sup> May 1986. In this encyclical the Pope explicitly mentions the universal activity of the Holy Spirit before the time of Christian dispensation-"from the

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<sup>145</sup> Message of Pope John Paul II to the inhabitants of Asia, in J. Dupuis, *Op Cit*, p. 61

<sup>146</sup> J. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books), p. 69

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p.69

beginning, throughout the world”- and today after the Christian event “outside the visible body of the Church.” The Pope argues that before the time of the Christian missionary enterprise, the activity of the Spirit, by virtue of the divine plan of salvation, was ordered to Christ and that outside the Church today, it results from the saving event accompanied in him. Thus, he explains the Christological content and pneumatological dimension of divine grace.<sup>148</sup>

Furthermore, in his encyclical RM issued in 7<sup>th</sup> December 1990, the theme of the universal presence and activity of Holy Spirit recurs once more<sup>149</sup>. The document explicitly explains with clarity that the presence of the Holy Spirit only affects the individual person but also the religious tradition themselves. It states;

The Spirit manifests Himself in a special way in the Church and Her members. Nevertheless, His presence and activity are universal; limited neither by space nor time...the Spirit...is at the very source of human person’s existential and religious questioning which is occasioned not only by contingent situation but by the very structure of its being. The Spirit’s presence and activity affect not only individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions.<sup>150</sup>

From the foregoing, it is clear that the encyclical affirms that salvation in Christ is accessible to those who are outside the Church, “by virtue of grace, which while having mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation.”<sup>151</sup> While stressing, “Christ’s one, universal mediation”, on the other hand, the document recognizes the possibility in the order of salvation of “various kinds of participated forms of mediation”, thus arguing, “although participated forms of mediations of different kinds and degrees are not excluded, they acquire meaning and value only from own mediations and they cannot be understood as parallel or complementary to His.”<sup>152</sup> Let it be noted that it is not explicitly stated whether among

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p.69

<sup>149</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio, Apostolic Exhortation*,( Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1990)

<sup>150</sup> RM Art. 28

<sup>151</sup> RM Art. 10

<sup>152</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Hominis, Apostolic Exhortation*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1979), p. 71

the “participated mediations” contemplated in this text are included, for the benefit of members of the other non-Christian religions and traditions they belong.

While crediting Pope John Paul II for repeated affirmation that the Spirit of God is present in the religious traditions, in some of his recent pronouncements; he seems to be reminiscent to Pope Paul VI’s assessment of “non-Christian” religious traditions in his encyclical EN.<sup>153</sup> Thus in his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* issued on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1994, the Pope writes;

Jesus does not...merely speak ‘in the name of God’, like the prophets, but He is God himself speaking in his eternal word made flesh. Here we touch upon the essential point by which Christianity differ from all the other religions, by which the human search for God has been expressed from earliest times. Christianity has its starting point in the incarnation of the word. Here, it is not simply a case of a human search for God, but of God who comes in person to speak to human beings of Himself and to show them the path by which He may be reached...the incarnated word is thus the fulfillment of the yearning present in all the religions of humankind: this fulfillment is brought about by God Himself and transcends all human expectations. It is mystery of grace in Christ; religion is no longer a ‘blind search for God’<sup>154</sup>, but the response of faith to God who reveals Himself...Christ is thus the fulfillment of the yearning of all the world’s religions and, as such, he is their sole and definitive completion.<sup>155</sup>

In the light of the above, this text visualizes the fulfillment of the other non-Christian religious traditions in Jesus Christ and Christianity in terms of God’s self-communication in His Son incarnate in response to the universal human search for God expressed in the religious traditions-in other words, in terms of divine revelation and grace meeting the natural religious aspirations of humankind; thus reaffirming the proclamation of Pope Paul VI’s in its classical form; for it seem to leave no room for recognizing in the other religious traditions themselves a first divine initiative towards human beings, no matter how incomplete and for attributing to the religious traditions a positive role in the mystery of salvation of their followers. The Christian “way” to him is the only one which “God may be reached” and with which the gift of salvation may be achieved.

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<sup>153</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1975)

<sup>154</sup>Cf. Acts 17: 27

<sup>155</sup> EN Art. 6

In another document jointly published by Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and Congregation for the Evangelization of peoples, entitled; *Dialogue and Promulgation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Promulgation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* which was issued on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1991, there is a closest affirmation of a positive role of the non-Christian religious traditions in proclamation of the doctrine of salvation.<sup>156</sup> In the section titled; ‘A Christian Approach to Religious Traditions’<sup>157</sup>, - a first among the documents Church’s magisterium on the subject of members of other religious traditions; this section contains an important paragraph which with regard to anything said previously in the Church documents. The paragraph reads;

From this ‘mystery of unity’, it follows that all men and women who are saved, share, though differently; in the same mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ who is the source of their salvation. The mystery of salvation reaches out to them, in a way known to God, through the invisible action of the Spirit of Christ. Concretely, it will be in the sincere practice of what is good in their own religious tradition and by following the dictates of their conscience that salvation in Jesus Christ is achieved, even while they do not recognize or acknowledge Him as Saviour.<sup>158</sup>

As evident from above text, there is recognition on the part of the Church authorship of a “participated mediation”- of a religious tradition in the salvation of its members. This is a sign of a movement from old (fulfillment theory) which confined the mystery of salvation to Christianity in the interpretation of the doctrine of salvation to that of active presence of the mystery of Jesus Christ in non-Christian religious tradition themselves. This then display openness towards other non-Christian religious traditions unprecedented in the previous Church documents; the Church begins to acknowledge existence of positive values in various non-Christian religious traditions-being interpreted as elements of “grace and truth” as well as hidden presence of God, though the Church does not acknowledge them as channels for salvation.

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<sup>156</sup> J. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), p. 72

<sup>157</sup> Bulletin no.77:26, no. 2 (1991), p. 14-32, in J. Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, (New York, Maryknoll: Orbis Books), p. 72

<sup>158</sup> See also; A G art. 3, 9 and 11



#### 4.2.8 Panikkar's Reflections on Salvation

In his book *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*<sup>159</sup>, Panikkar's ideas on and about the doctrine of salvation emerges. It is from this book that Panikkar's theory of the "presence of Christ" in the non-Christian religious tradition is developed. While making reference to non-Christian religious traditions with specific reference to Hinduism, Panikkar asserts: there is a living presence of Christ in Hinduism<sup>160</sup>; he argues that this presence resides not only in the private and subjective life of religiously minded and sincere Hindu but also in Hinduism as an objective and social religious phenomenon, thus there is the gift of salvation in Hinduism. Panikkar affirms his commitment to a theory that goes beyond, the traditional "fulfillment theory", he remarks: "Christ is not only the ontological goal of Hinduism but also its true inspirer, and his grace is the leading, though hidden, force pushing it towards its full disclosure."<sup>161</sup> He further asserts:

Christ is the only source of every authentic religious experience; He is the 'ontological meeting-point' between Hinduism and Christianity, for Christ does not belong to Christianity, he only belongs to God. It is Christianity and Hinduism as well that belong to Christ, though in two different level.<sup>162</sup>

Thus from the foregoing, it can be rightly deduced that Hinduism has a place in the Christian economy of salvation according to Panikkar; while demonstrating this place, Panikkar develops a "peculiar dialectic" of Hinduism and Christianity: that is, "Hinduism as the starting point of a religion that culminates to Christianity, it is 'Christianity in Potency'; it already contains 'the symbolism of the Christian reality'."<sup>163</sup> Panikkar cautions that this does not mean that a mere "natural prolongation", will eventually lead from one to the other. He continues: "For although Hinduism and Christianity both move in the same direction, the transition from one to other implies a 'conversion' which he calls 'a pasche', a mystery of death and life". Moreover, Panikkar further notes that "Hinduism must descend 'into the living water of baptism in order to rise again transformed', what emerges he says is a 'better form of Hinduism', for 'the Christian

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<sup>159</sup> R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964)

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. x

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-22

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-60

mystery of resurrection is not alienation.”<sup>164</sup> Panikkar thus argue that since Christ has been at work in anticipation, the Christian attitude is not ultimately one of bringing Christ in, but of bringing him forth, of discovery in Hinduism. Hence to Panikkar, the mystery of Jesus Christ is present in a hidden way perceptible to Christian faith alone, in the non-Christian religious traditions and in Hinduism in particular. Thus, the modes of active presence of mystery in Christianity and elsewhere are not clearly distinguished; thus he notes: “we are not self-sufficient monads, but fragments of the same, unique religion, though the level of the water may be different we must ‘discover’ our unity and ‘because we are same’, discard the veil of *Maya* that separates us.”<sup>165</sup>

Furthermore, in a new English edition of his book entitled; *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany*<sup>166</sup>; his reflections on the aforementioned doctrines are developed, in his introduction, Panikkar argues that while he still regards the main gist of his previous works, he perceives it through the new lenses. He describes the main crust of the work as: “I speak neither of a principle Unknown Reality, which Christians call Christ, discovered in the heart of Hinduism, not a stranger to it, who is its principle of life.”<sup>167</sup> He continues: “the Christ of whom this book speaks is the living and loving reality of truly believing Christians in whatever forms the person may formulate or conceptualize this reality.”<sup>168</sup> This Christ to Panikkar is the most powerful symbol, the object of salvation-but not one limited to historical Jesus-of the full human, divine and cosmic reality which he calls the mystery.<sup>169</sup> He further argues that the symbol can have other names; for example Rama, Krishna, Ishvara and Purusha<sup>170</sup>, Christians call him “Christ” because it is in and through Jesus that they themselves have arrived at faith in the decisive reality. Each name, however, expresses the indivisible mystery<sup>171</sup>, each being an unknown dimension of Christ.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp. 60-1

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22

<sup>166</sup> Id. *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964)

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-27

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., pp. 27

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., pp. 29

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., pp. 30

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., pp. 30

Moreover, Panikkar introduces here a distinction between faith and belief as main instruments for salvation, faith he explains, is “the person’s basic religious experiences; it is the constitute element of human person.” Belief on the other hand he notes is “the particular expression adopted by this fundamental human attitude in any given tradition.” The content of faith, which he calls “the mystery”, is the lived relationship to a transcendence which seizes the human being. It is common to all religions. Panikkar calls this mystery a “Cosmo-theadric reality” to denote a transcendence experienced by the human being in the cosmos. The content of beliefs, on the other hand, consists of the various religious myths in which faith takes concrete expressions. In Christianity we have “Jesus myth”; other religious traditions offer other types of myths; all of these myths have equal value. Christianity gives the mystery the name Christ, but the mystery can assume other names. While the various religious traditions differ on the level of belief, they are all seen to coincide on that of faith, thus he envisages that salvation therefore is not a confine of Christianity but it is a gift present even in non-Christian traditions. Panikkar hence hopes for a cross-fertilization of beliefs of various religious traditions.<sup>173</sup>

Using the example of first Christians as the apostolic kerygma testifies, Panikkar argues that the historical Jesus was personally identical to the Christ of faith. He had become Christ in his being raised by the father, he was the very mystery preached by Paul. Thus Jesus himself belongs to the actual object of faith. He is inseparable from Christ, on whom he bestows historical concretion.<sup>174</sup> While elaborating on the subject matter, he makes a distinction between the mystery and the Jesus-myth-that is, the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history-whom he distinguishes as objects of faith and belief, respectively.

Panikkar concludes that a Christian is aware that Jesus is the way to authentic salvation; furthermore, Jesus-the-Christ is in reality the way for even those who remain unaware of the fact. He maintains that it is indissoluble mystery of Jesus-the-Christ that is present both in Christianity and in other religious traditions; thus, it is through this mystery that Panikker argues not only that Christians but also others too encounter and receive the

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid., pp. 30

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., pp. 30

mystery of salvation; this is how the theory of the “presence of Christ” in other religious traditions is commonly understood.

### **4.3 Chapter’s Concluding Remarks**

After having explored the RCC teachings and theologians’ reflection on inculturation with reference to the subject in the previous chapter, the present chapter handled RCC teachings and theologians’ reflections on the Catholic doctrine of salvation. To accomplish this task, the RCC’s teachings on salvation were examined. This was done by focusing on the Church’s pedagogy concerning salvation. The other major theme in the chapter was that of theologians’ reflections on salvation. The theologians that were considered were Karl Rahner, Jacques Dupuis, Gustavo Gutierrez, Patrick Wachege, Hans Küng, Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, and Raymond Panikkar. The study then ended the chapter with concluding remarks.

The chapter, together with the previous chapters, empower us with adequate qualitative data to inculturate the Kipsigis worldview items with the RCC’s doctrine on salvation in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONFRONTING KIPSIGIS WORLDVIEW ITEMS WITH THE RCC DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

#### 5.0 Introduction

The foregone chapter, together with the previous chapters, empower the study with adequate data to inculturate the Kipsigis worldview items with the RCC's doctrine on salvation in the next chapter. On the basis of the latter chapter which has examined the selected RCC theologians' reflections on the doctrine of salvation together with the former chapter that handled RCC's instructions and theologians' reflections on inculturation, the present chapter inculturates it using related Kipsigis worldview values explicated in chapter two. The study does this with finality to enhancing better understanding and propagation of the aforementioned doctrine in Kipsigis worldview.

#### 5.1 Life Centrality despite Death

As the study found out from its respondents, to the Kipsigis, nothing was and is still more central and fundamental as life. In Kipsigis logic and existential philosophy of living, believing, dying and transiting to yonder life, a genuine Kipsigis appreciates life and the power that is involved in it. Among the Kipsigis life in the form of inanimate; life which though dead has elements of life hence their utility in rituals, life within the intricate family conceptual framework; moreover, life which does not end in death but in a different fuller and fullest life<sup>1</sup> is highly appreciated and respected.

As we learnt from our respondents, an authentic Kipsigis conceptualizes death in living terms.<sup>2</sup> With this in mind, the very idea of being in diaspora situation journeying to yonder life is very dominant in African vitalistic worldview – Kipsigis included.<sup>3</sup> Kipsigis explain earthly life as actualized in life after the mundane life, moreover to a

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<sup>1</sup> This conception of life is not a confine of the Kipsigis alone, other African cultures demonstrate this view see; P. Wachege, *Living to Die and Dying to Live: An African Christian Insights* (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2002), p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

Kipsigis, the two aspects of life namely, the terrestrial and the celestial tend to be interfered with by death. Death which to a Kipsigis is not annihilation into nothingness but an inevitable “medium” to eternal life. Thus, death becomes a disturbing shift to the realm of the spirits and spiritual beingness in fullness.

Let it be noted that an objective perusal of Kipsigis worldview items like images, aspirations and worldview as seen in the chapter two of this study, depicts that in Kipsigis worldview life intertwined with their philosophy of life and existential religiosity provoke life in perception of death. It should not be misunderstood that Kipsigis love death but they view death initiationally as a natural rite of passage to a most vastly vibrant life in the yonder realm.

In addition to the above, the compelling life force over death is ultimately verified in a risen life. The powerful void of death is overwhelmed by the supreme and super eminent life force which in African religio-philosophical terms is called vital force.<sup>4</sup> It is thus a living dynamic reality effecting vibrancy, spirit, fabulousness, life and above all vitality.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, in death, life to a Kipsigis is interfered with and not completely ended; life thus becomes endless and everlasting after death.

This perception is furthermore supported by the African notion of hierarchy of beings; to use the coining of Mbiti, the living dead.<sup>6</sup> Such African awareness (Kipsigis included) in vitalistic perception of worldview is significantly explored by Kwesi<sup>7</sup>, when he argues that; death is caused by evil, death does not end life, death does not sever the bond between the living and the dead, death does not negate natural self expression, and that death affects the whole community.<sup>8</sup>

Although Kipsigis perceive death in relation to life in the aforementioned manner, even though they mourn their dead and demonstrate dying phobia, they tend to celebrate death “longing” to die preferably during the old age. Kwesi observes that; Africans-Kipsigis

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>6</sup> J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> K. A. Dickson, *Theology in Africa* (Mary knoll, New York: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1984), pp. 192-199.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 196.

included believes that death binds up relationships in society, revitalizing the living and underscoring the sense of community.<sup>9</sup> Indeed this is a strong position in understanding Kipsigis notion of life and vitality.

Thus in Kipsigis wisdom, the transitory element of death, points to everythingness of life hereafter as opposed to nothingness of death. Nevertheless, to a true Kipsigis, and even a Christian at that, the “curse” of death is finally overcome by the blessing of post-terrestrial life; thus death is permanently sealed off by and in the resurrection as Christians understand and in yonder life as Kipsigis do understand.

Among the Kipsigis, death phobia is overcome by deep yearning for life, inclinations to fullness of life with ancestors and in proximity to the being with supreme life; hence the commitment among the Kipsigis to live according to the precepts, religiosity, traditional values, taboos and prohibitions. This has to be adhered to, for one to be a true Kipsigis here on earth and a representative in celestial family. Consequently, those in terrestrial life derive their confidence from pouring libation to the departed.

Furthermore life means so much to a Kipsigis that they go to the extent of celebrating it vigorously in music, with bodily movements, with harmonized voices, with rhythmic drumming, with greetings, with drinks and foods, with mode of speaking and with dances for life. On the other hand, death too is being accorded almost the same respect with dirges and mourning for the “life” erupting to be accomplished in yonder life. Thus, Kipsigis “celebrate” life and somehow they “celebrate” death.

As the study was informed, there are all kinds of Kipsigis songs and dances proper to diverse age groups, occasions, seasons and events. For instances, there are pluriformity of vitality related dances and songs for adults, uncircumcised boys, initiated girls and grandmothers. Many of these songs, dances and dirges are neither repugnant nor incompatible with Christianity. These songs depict vitality in fact properly inculturated and liberated, they are necessary prerequisite in fruitful understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation. As discovered by the study, the above are already incorporated and

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 196.

integrated into the RCC mass celebrations where liturgically purified and integrated songs and dances of life are integrated in worship.

## **5.2 Kipsigis Communal and Relational Items**

Kipsigis in their situation of life are deeply communal, relational and vitalistic as noted above. Their kinship ties bind them remarkably into united caring family members. Anything that severs the solidarity of the community as Wachege observes becomes a serious deviation, a deviation which Christians call sin, with the religio-communal personalistic conception.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, whatever promotes this cohesion among the Kipsigis becomes a blessing.

Furthermore, in Kipsigis proverbs, riddles, folklore, songs, dirges, dances, narratives and traditional teachings abound salvation elements and qualities. The Kipsigis condemn sinfulness through taboos and mannerism inculcated during pre-initiation, post-initiation rites and norms pertaining communal solidarity. Ancestral patronage and serious wrath of the “living dead” was used constantly among the Kipsigis so as to avoid any kind of deviation.

Among Kipsigis, blood pact binds individuals into closely knit family belonging. This is enhanced by the powerful elements of amicability, persuasion, communality, and mutual cohesion.<sup>11</sup> This symbolically can be used to infer to Christ’s bloodshed on Calvary that binds all into members of his mystical body and thus the “Family of God” in the Kipsigis Christian conception. This then evokes Christians to be vigorously brothers and sisters in African sense. It has to be noted that the lifelong solidarity with the family of God has both Christian and Kipsigis cultural as well as philosophical justification. Our research found out that salvation and life among the Kipsigis has no clear cut distinction; for a Kipsigis as we realized, the two are into each other and this stands out as a mystery of life in life be within the context of salvation in Kipsigis *stz im leben*.

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<sup>10</sup> P. Wachege, *Living to Die and Dying to Live: An African Christian Insights* (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2002), p. 225.

<sup>11</sup>This well expounded in the traditional Kipsigis worldview items in Chapter two.



Taking above into consideration, discriminating a person as a *mass damnata* is thus both unChristian and unKipsigis; this would be a serious misconception of salvation, since personhood is one of the tenets of Kipsigis worldview. Alviars notes the conception of a person as one in solidarity with the community and environment within African philosophy, he reiterates:

In contrast with the modern western accent on human nature in terms of liberty, self-determination, autonomy and self-fulfillment, the African mind refuses to conceive the human being separately from his social and cosmic environment. A person is, truly is, in measure in which he/she simultaneously belongs to a community and to the universe. The solidarity or completeness of existence consists not solely in strong internal coherence but also in immersion in a web of relationship ... with nature, with Supreme Being and in special way to others.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, it is important to bear in mind Ukpong's observation in regard to beingness in African context. He notes that Africans- Kipsigis included defines themselves not in egoistic terms but rather in terms of their community and thus find their identity there.<sup>13</sup> He further accentuates that individuals exist first for the community and then for themselves and that the community too exists first for the individual and then for itself.<sup>14</sup>

In Sarpong's words, the cardinal value of an African family-also evident among the Kipsigis is religiosity, common allegiance, sound spiritual overload and ownership of property is corporate. In the family, there are self regulating principles on the checks and balances to control authority and regulate life in general; mechanisms to reconcile members of the community who are at loggerheads also were in place to avoid disruption of harmony.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, Kipsigis religion employs person to person relationship and is communally, verbally and orally transmitted. The emphasis is on person's involvement and deep interpersonal relationship. That is why Kipsigis symbols of salvation are highly vitalistic, involving, communal, personalistic and sometimes experiential. Thus Kipsigis worship

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<sup>12</sup> J. J. Alviar, "Anthropological Foundation of African Christology", in P. Ryan (ed.), *African Christian Studies* (CUEA, vol. 13 no. 1, March 1997), p.19.

<sup>13</sup> J. S. Upkong, *African Theologies Now a Profile*, (Eldoret: Gaba Publishers, Spearhead, no.80, February 1984), p.60.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>15</sup> P. K. Sarpong, 'The Gospel as Good News for Africa Today', *A Symposium on the Dialogue Between Faith and Culture*, (CUEA 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, February 1998, Symposium), p. 4.

and service are convivial and full of life; dancing, drumming, dramatizing and all involving active participation as opposed to “religions of the book” like Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, thus these various approaches in worship influence diverse modes of salvation.

The Kipsigis dance their salvation, sing, dramatize...and above all, live their salvation. It would be interesting to observe Kipsigis in worship and one would verify this. For a Kipsigis, salvation involves all aspects and dimensions of life and corporeality such that they seem to lack a precise definition of salvation. Yet, the Kipsigis have living symbols and descriptions crowned with self and communal esteem; this was referred to earlier on.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, Christians read and study their salvation, meditate about it, reflect on it but living that salvation is a different thing all together. Thus Kipsigis religion could therefore play a great role in modifying the bookishness, outdated mode of evangelization of Christianity’s conception and propagation of the doctrine of salvation to a concrete, existential and personalistic notion.

### **5.3 Good Powers, Sin and Evil Forces**

Among the Kipsigis, the term *Oindet* or *Oiik* (plural) as seen in chapter two refer to both good and evil spirits. These spirits were as a result of good ancestors who were righteous departed persons; they act as intermediaries and reconcilers between the community and the supernatural realm. The malevolent ones are regarded as *Masambwaanik* they are destructive and thus enemies of life.

Traditionally Kipsigis dread enemies<sup>17</sup>; the belief is that enemies are agents of misfortune, calamities and catastrophes. That is why to this day, witches, evil eyed people and sorcerers are greatly despised and segregated. They are perceived as terminators of life and malevolent agents; within this perception, visitors to the Kipsigis family were generously welcomed provided they are well-willed. The Kipsigis community views *Poonik* (witches) as drawing “talent” or malicious powers from the evil. Such satanic empowerment for evil ends is not a confine of the Kipsigis alone.

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<sup>16</sup> For more insights re-study chapter two on anthropological Kipsigis community

<sup>17</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 60.

It is worth noting that a curse imposed by a person is very difficult to remove. Even the traditional medicine men had to struggle with such powers. In Christianity too, exorcism is not a simple matter either. It ought to be noted that in Kipsigis society, there are real and numerous manifestations of evil spirit activities; for the Kipsigis, in particular, the evil forces disrupt the healthy terrestrial universe thereby ruining the authentic interpersonal relationship and family solidarity involved.

The Kipsigis live fully; it flows in their blood and they strive to live it especially when drinking traditional alcohol, dancing, and traditional cum customary conviviality. Within this context, anyone who prevents or blocks or stop others from living fully commit a grave sin or rather on breaks the greatest taboo in Kipsigis term<sup>18</sup>, one who supports and ensures full living is appreciated and highly honoured. Kipsigis understood this as promotion of life.<sup>19</sup> Elders, medicine men, rain makers, medium, diviners, and pregnant women are highly respected because of their commitment to the promotion and protection of life. Thus in ontological sense the Kipsigis is pro-life.<sup>20</sup> For them, salvation has everything to do with life. In their philosophy of vitality, it is not just a matter of mere existing or surviving or living temporarily, it ought to be life fully and everlasting.<sup>21</sup> This supports Jesus' advice to disciples to live fully.<sup>22</sup>

Kipsigis understood *Asiis* as principle behind good forces. Such powers are delegated to some people for common good; among those who outshine in regard to this powers are the elders. Apart from sacrificing and offering prayers the elders manifest their role as community religious leaders by blessing and cursing. They strongly belief that they perform their role within the power and authority of God who endowed them with their own lives, power, fecundity, and families; it is also believed that they bless in collaboration with ancestral spirits who they belief are more powerful than them, owing to their proximity to *Asiis*; the source of their life.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>22</sup> Jn 10:10.

The notion of sin among the Kipsigis as noted earlier on is called *Tengekto* which can further be perceived through the concept of *Yeetan* which denotes prohibitions or the forbidden thus revealing the concept of taboo. The perception and practice of such prohibitions cut across diverse African cultures. As Nyamiti observes that;

A taboo related to a sacred reality connoting respect mixed with fear towards that reality, a sense of guilt followed when one committed an offence. This sense of guilt is shown by the belief that such offence requires purification of the malefactors and appeasement of the offended spiritual personages.<sup>23</sup>

Moreover for the Kipsigis, the blessing of salvation is linked with every aspect of life. Their indigenous names too, convey such treasure. Salvation for a Kipsigis is not just a religious issue; there is a binding connection with every existential aspect, which includes the cultural ones and environment entities. The diverse ethnic names for salvation reflect something. They point to hospitality and the generosity as well as the overwhelming cultural giftedness and religiosity implied.

Such aforementioned traditional elements should be taken into consideration while propagating the doctrine of salvation, commitment, and witness to the spreading and proclamation of Good News in the midst of evil forces is a shift from conservative mode of evangelization to an innovative mode. It is thus unChristian as well as unKipsigis to ignore any aspect of humanity and the accompanying existentialism, including African cultures (Kipsigis included), philosophy of life, environment and structures governing it.

As such, a comprehensive definition of salvation ought to be unequivocally concerned with all dimensions of life. Among the areas of challenges are; poverty, socio-economic challenges, illiteracy, disease dehumanizing, and depersonalizing elements, issues on peace, justice and democracy should not be ignored. The inference is that there is no fascinating split between salvation and all aspects of the “Family of God”, and indeed the whole universe; a true Kipsigis is a genuine exponent of all this.

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<sup>23</sup> C. Nyamiti, “*The Problem of Evil in African Traditional Cultures and Today’s African Inculturational and Liberation Theologies*”, in L. Namwera (ed), *African Christian Studies* (Nairobi: CUEA Publication Vol. II, no. 1 March 1995), p. 68.

#### 5.4 Kipsigis Notion of Salvation and Yonder Life

As the study learnt from the respondents, in Kipsigis worldview, salvation is more lived than talked about; it is more practiced than preached. Kipsigis views salvation as vitalistic, harmonious, personal, communal, relational ... and dynamic as imbued with mysterious force inspiring them to accomplish the aforementioned virtues.

To a Kipsigis mindset, salvation which separates the worldly from heavenly, the profane from religious, the corporeal from pneumatic, the contingent from the absolute is ridiculous.<sup>24</sup> Yet, the one that is integrally and holistically conceived makes sense and is welcome as transformative. *Asiis* (God) to Kipsigis manifests salvation will through the benevolent provision of rain among others. Vital insights are attached to life as the gift of life. With this pre-disposition, the Kipsigis are inspired to have an anthropomorphic vision of yonder life as where the blessings fall from for example the rains.

It is worth noting that though Kipsigis dread death as initially observed, it is an inevitable event marking entrance into the realm of the ancestors depending on how one lived. Thus, the peaceful calm manifested as death confronts them with deep religiosity and solemnity with which they accept. Kipsigis sees life in death, thus the common traditional etiquette of saying; “*kogoru*” meaning “so and so has slept in peace.” The Kipsigis tradition, religiosity and philosophy of life trigger all these.

As is the case with the Kipsigis, they did not conceptualize salvation in Christian terms. The word *sarunet* refers to “salvation”; nevertheless, it connotes “to rescue.” So, this term does not have the weight of the Christian concept though there is a parallelism in the connotation, even though this concept can be properly inculturated to convey a Christian concept. During calamities and catastrophes like hunger, floods, drought, and epidemics, it is worth noting that the Kipsigis seek deliverance from ancestors and ultimately, from *Asiis* (God) having consulted the medicine men, diviners and rain makers.

In connection to the above, the Kipsigis do not seem to have the term sin as such; the word *Tengekto* has to do with misconduct or social evil or the breaking of taboos by

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<sup>24</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 62.

either an individual or a community against society, ancestors and *Asiis* as well, as such it is used in a taboo conception as wrong acts or misdeeds destroying harmony and order. No wonder propitiatory offerings and sacrifices are deemed as seeking pardon and re-union.

Moreover, violating a taboo was a peril to somebody's happiness; for instance, if one breaks a taboo, one has to be cleansed through intervention of community representatives so as to be reconciled and accepted back into the community. Utilizing the cleansing rituals one is "delivered from" the wrath of ancestral spirits, the vengeance of the evil spirits and the anger of *Asiis* (God)<sup>25</sup>; salvation in this sense connotes the meaning of being at peace with all, acceptance into the living community and rescue from the powers of the malevolent forces.

Since the Kipsigis believe strongly in life after death, if one breaks the established taboos, it is one's responsibility to earnestly seek cleansing and reconciliation.<sup>26</sup> If one passes on while in bad terms with the living and the departed, one is not venerated as an ancestor. One becomes a shame and a bad example to his/her people and society at large. Analogically, it is right for us to argue that with this understanding and perspective, entrance into ancestral rank and the world of spirits as one who lives uprightly according to Kipsigis norms of morality, religiosity, customary law, vitalistic welfare, traditional values and family framework in the community is a way of salvation to them.

The foregoing explains that the Kipsigis do not explicitly speak about salvation *per se*, what they do is to let it show and live it. The kind of belief in letting action and living deeds speak louder than verbalism. If one is progressively pro-life, pro-community and one is at peace with the family, clan, ethnic group, the ancestral spirit, the self and all (*Asiis*-included) – maintaining Godly generosity and hospitality, Kipsigis familyhood, then one is assured of being in the realm of salvation. That is why they undergo tribal initiation rites, especially the rites of passage, endeavouring to remain faithful to

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

commitment involved thereby being on the right path and in solidarity with the departed, those present and the ones to come.

Furthermore, let it be understood that in Kipsigis worldview the past, present, and the future are so interrelated and interconnected that to split them as separate entities would ruin their integral understanding of the material and the spiritual, the worldly and the yonder world, the individual and the community, the oneness aspect and the pluriformity, the creature and the creator. Consequently, a presentation and interpretation of salvation not as abstract item dichotomized from life as articulated by Plato, Aristotle and Thomas' conceptions but within the above perception would be very meaningful and more fruitful in the articulation of the doctrine of salvation too.

It is important to note that to discard such an approach examined above as primitive and non-salvation will be misguided and prejudicial.<sup>27</sup> Thus we are obliged to dig deep into cultural, philosophical and religious elements and extract the positive values in them which are salvation, furthermore one should also critically examine even the repulsive elements which may appear to be repugnant to salvation and objectivity find out why they have been influencing a given people in their lives and why their conservatism is adhering to "obsolete" elements.<sup>28</sup>

Thus to a Kipsigis, the concept of salvation presented as a personalistic state of fullness of life with convivial community of the living dead and ancestral spirit in nearness to the Supreme Being would appeal most to a Kipsigis. The main justification is in the very worldview of the Kipsigis community which is characterized as relational, vitalistic, pneumatologically dynamistic, sacred all within the family setup. Thus, life force and accomplishment of ancestorhood in life after terrestrial life with proximity to the Supreme Being makes a lot of sense to a Kipsigis.

However, there is an ambivalence in the Kipsigis ontological existence; a Kipsigis normally yearns and longs to be with own ancestors and Supreme Being. Nevertheless, the same Kipsigis deplore death by manifesting a real phobia for departure from this

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<sup>27</sup> J. Jahn. *Mantu: An Outline of the New African Culture*, (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p.20.

<sup>28</sup> P. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2000), p.136.

world of tangible human terrestrial families.<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to note that one does not automatically become an ancestor neither is this title used on anybody among the Kipsigis, one has to earn and deserve it. There are vital prerequisites to be fulfilled and taken into consideration.<sup>30</sup>

While qualities like those of being pro-life, pro-community, pro-God and adherence to childhood and adulthood rituals and rites of passage are vital prerequisites for being an ancestor, those of exemplary conduct and Godliness are *condition sine qua non* among the Kipsigis. This explicates why when one goes against a taboo, one has to own up to such misbehaviour, consult and in sorrow be cleansed by the community elders by mediating between the wrong doer and the “living dead” who because of proximity to the Supreme Being are benevolent and thus revered.

As noted in the foregoing discussion, the fear of death is not a confine of the Kipsigis people alone. The intriguing question therefore, is not whether Kipsigis fear departure from this worldly life. The issue is formulating, explicating, and proclaiming the doctrine of salvation in accordance with Kipsigis deeds, thought forms, aspiration and mentality. This then amounts to understanding, interpreting, presenting and articulating the above doctrine in Kipsigis terms and point of view. Thus, the gist of the matter is the personalistic, communal and vitalistic mode of orientation among the Kipsigis.

It has to be appreciated that, Kipsigis religion intertwine the human body with soul as most African religions do.<sup>31</sup> This corporeal and pneumatic integration is vivid and has no tension within this Kipsigis ontology; there cannot be salvation of one without the other. In their worldview the body cannot be discarded; it is not only necessary but essential for a person. Like the soul, the almighty willed and created the body too. That is why in Kipsigis worship, service, liturgy and other existential rituals and rites particularly those of passage, the human body, like the soul/spirit is fully involved.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>30</sup> It is important to note that this is not a confine of the Kipsigis alone. Other African cultures replicate this characteristic, see also P. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2000), p.136.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p.139.



Thus, one cannot visualize a Kipsigis worship and ceremony without a dance, eating, drinking, loud laughter and talking heartily in conviviality.<sup>32</sup> Since in their own wisdom, Kipsigis strongly believe that the creator gave life into them as such, that vital force and dynamism should be left to show in everything human and humane. Vitality is also evident in Kipsigis greeting where kisses (without ulterior motive) are given as opposed to a dry “Hi” which is common to a considerable number of western cultures.

Such Kipsigis salvation aspects of human body involvement should assist in Christian (Catholic) catechesis and propagation of the doctrine of salvation. Just like other African communities, for a Kipsigis, the body is more than a “dust matter” thus the rivalry does not arise. Actually in Kipsigis religio-cosmology, even those in the “dust” are believed to be mysteriously living.<sup>33</sup> This justifies the act of pouring of libation; this Kipsigis conception could help a great deal in elaborating the Christian doctrine of incarnation; a core event which enriches and justifies the doctrine of salvation owing to the Saviour “becoming flesh.”<sup>34</sup> As such, it is clear in the Christian document that Jesus is not just the Saviour of mere souls; he is the Saviour of the body too. He is the Saviour of the human person in their integrity, for example body and soul. That is why the Christian creed reads “... I believe in the resurrection of the body... and life everlasting” and this confirms the Kipsigis’ conception of salvation.

The Christian revelation explicitly reminds us that the very essence of salvation is life; it has to do with life down here and in the yonder one. Kipsigis did not need the missionary proselytization process to remind them of what salvation is all about life because general revelation had already played its vital role among the Kipsigis before the western missionary era. For a Kipsigis, nothing is more fundamental than life. Vitality in the form of human life, ancestral life, spiritual life, material life and Godly life saturates them; life penetrates into them so much that they exude life. It’s beyond imagination for a genuine Kipsigis who cannot dance as expressions of vitality- not even the elders. There are all

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<sup>32</sup> This characterized many of such worship occasions I witnessed in the researched field.

<sup>33</sup> also P. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2000), p.138.

<sup>34</sup> Jn 1:1.

kinds of life dances proper to diverse age groups, occasions and events. The Kipsigis have their own dances and interesting songs for celebrating or mourning life.

The above then confirm why the Kipsigis are very much attracted, interested, curious, and anxious about enjoying life. In this end, salvation, healing, and stories of life are assurance of conviviality and presented in vitalistic manner. To a Kipsigis then salvation is a conscious, vital, forceful, communal and dynamic relationship of growth and fulfillment within family set-up. Without such integral relationship, talking of salvation to a Kipsigis is irrelevant and meaningless. In this light, it is not a matter of subjectivism of relating to oneself but from oneself to the others. This affirms why a true Kipsigis would find it almost impossible to explain in precise term the meaning of “salvation”. On the other hand, when asked to give salvation experiences, one can narrate generously a story rich with Kipsigis vitalistic philosophy.

Kipsigis religious and philosophical heritage thus confront us with the fore-analyzed salvation elements which ought to be exploited by the RCC in Kericho Sub-County for better articulation and propagation of the doctrine of salvation. It important to further note that prior to Christian missionary enterprise era, these elements had been instilled to all cultures, thanks to divine general revelation; to ignore these values will lead to impoverishing our modes of proselytizing and propagation of the aforementioned doctrine.

### **5.5 Kipsigis Concept of an Ancestor**

Having analyzed Kipsigis conception of ancestral spirits in chapter two, it is important to demonstrate how this worldview item can be inculturated so as to enhance a better interpretation, understanding and propagation of the Catholic doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County.

As Nyamiti observes, the utilization of the African category of ancestors, enable one to construct ancestral relationship in God.<sup>35</sup> In Trinitarian ancestral relationship, Nyamiti argues that the Church teaches solemnly that there are three persons in the God namely;

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<sup>35</sup> C. Nyamiti, “*Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation*”, *Studies in African Christian Theology*, Nairobi: CUEA, 2005, p.70.

the Farther, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In demonstrating how these three persons relate in an ancestral relationship, can thereby help in better understanding of Christian mysteries (doctrine of salvation included) among the Africans; he does it in the light of the five main elements that determine the African understanding of ancestor-Kipsigis included as well as showing how these elements can be analogically applied to trinity<sup>36</sup>. He asserts that if ancestorship can be applied to God analogically, by drawing similarities and differences with the African category of ancestorship, it can deepen the genuine ownership of the Gospel among the African Christians, thus leading to better understanding of the aforementioned doctrine. So as to know how Kipsigis category of ancestorship can be inculturated with the end to enhance better understanding of our doctrine under study, it is vital to analyze Nyamiti's monumental example. He thus examines the five elements in the ancestral relationship in connection to Trinitarian family as follows:

While basing on the element of kinship relationship, he argues that African ancestorship can be parental, sisterly, or clanic. In reference to God, he argues that such kinship can be demonstrated in Father–Son relationship between the first two persons. Thus to him if there is any ancestral relationship at all in God then it has to be demonstrated to exist in between these two: the Father, being the parent would be ancestor and the son would be descendant. Thus God the Father can be analogically speaking be interpreted as the mother of the Logos in the immanent Trinity; hence if the first divine person is ancestrally related to the Son, he is both his ancestor and ancestress<sup>37</sup>; Thus if such Kipsigis categories be used among the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County to teach the doctrine under study, it will lead to a more mature understanding and propagation of the doctrine.

On the other element of superhuman sacred status achieved through death, Nyamiti asserts that the ancestor imply superhuman forces and sacred relationship to his living kin. In analogically ascribing this element to God, the parallel to such status is the Father's sanctity which demands both fear and fascination/attraction and even

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

consequently unlimited powers. Such sacrality possesses all the positive items including the Kipsigis conception of ancestral sacredness.<sup>38</sup> It is important to take into consideration that interpreting God (the source of salvation) analogically using Kipsigis ancestral categories will not only makes the doctrine truly feel at home among the Kipsigis, but it will also lead to genuine witnessing.

On the element of mediation, Nyamiti argue that analogical reference can be drawn as follows; since the Father cannot be a mediator between his Son and another person superior to him, there is mediation in God similar to the one ascribed to African ancestor-Kipsigis' included. But he notes that this absence does not negate ancestorship in God since, as we saw, mediation is not indispensable in the Kipsigis conception of ancestors. The other element of exemplarity can also be ascribed to God as being exemplar of his son, who is his perfect image in being and anxiety, just as Kipsigis ancestor is model of his descendants conduct.<sup>39</sup>

Finally on the element of title to regular sacred communication evident in African ancestral category-Kipsigis' included, Nyamiti argues that it can be analogically ascribed to the Trinity Person through the parental status as well as superhuman condition<sup>40</sup>, the Kipsigis ancestor for example is believed to have a special title right to regular sacred communication with his descendants through prayers and ritual offerings; these are signs of love, homage and thanksgiving of descendants to the ancestors. Conversely, the ancestors as seen earlier on in chapter two are expected to respond profitably to his kin relatives, particularly by bestowing both material and spiritual benefits as an expression to his faithfulness, love and gratitude. Similarly within the Trinity, Nyamiti observes that there is some communication of being through begetting as well as through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is thus a product of communication between the Father and the Son as an expression of mutual love. In his ancestral Trinitology, Nyamiti thus analogically interprets Holy Spirit as not only a gift but also an ancestral oblation between the Father and the Son<sup>41</sup>; consequently the Father and the Son communicate the

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

Holy Spirit to each other in token of their mutual sanctity. Thus Nyamiti notes that the Holy Spirit is communicated in this manner, the Father is given not only a gift that is; the token of love but also as a ritual offer or oblation, because oblation is defined as “that which is given as an expression of homage or respect to a sacred or divine power or of the only desire to please that power.”<sup>42</sup> With this in mind therefore, love is interpreted as not only motivation of the mutual donation of the Divine Spirit in the Trinity, but also as homage or respect to the infinite holiness of the Divinity in each other two persons.

Moreover, Nyamiti observes that Fatherhood of the Father and his spontaneity in begetting his Son and communicating the Spirit to him are signs of the goodness of the Father to his Son and are for that very reason the motivating of the Son’s act of communicating the Spirit to the Father.<sup>43</sup> Understood from this angle, the love of the Logos in giving the Holy Spirit appears with the understanding of “gratitude”, namely; the Logos communicates the Spirit to his Father also as an expression of thanks giving for his infinite goodness the father too reciprocates the goodness of his Son by communicating the Spirit to the Logos as an expression of reward and thanksgiving to his Son. In this way therefore, Nyamiti notes that the Father’s pneumatic benevolence represents the material and spiritual benefits which a Kipsigis ancestor is supposed to bestow to his descendents as grateful reward to their ritual offerings.<sup>44</sup>

In view of the above therefore, one is legitimized to conclude that God the Father is analogically speaking the ancestor and ancestress of his Son, and this latter is his true descendant. This is because all the essential elements to the African conception of ancestor-Kipsigis’ included, apply in the relationship with the Son, in an infinitely higher and radically different manner, notwithstanding the similarities and the differences.<sup>45</sup> It is useful to note that the Father’s ancestorship to his son is parental, and dependency of the Logos implies the Sonship to his ancestor. With this kind of predisposition in mind, the Kipsigis Christians in Kericho Sub-County can then interpret Christ analogically as our ancestor, and we are his descendants. This kind of descendancy as Nyamiti observes

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>45</sup> See also; C. Nyamiti, “Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation”, *Studies in African Christian Theology*, Nairobi: CUEA, 2005, p.72.

cannot negate our brotherhood or sisterhood to him; through the grace of filiations then, He is our brother.<sup>46</sup> With this interpretation of Trinity using Kipsigis ancestral category of thought, thus will enable the Kipsigis Christians to be authentic by interpreting the sanctifying grace as being able to make us his descendants in that through him, with him and in him, we become sons and descendants of the Father, hence also we are descendants of Christ since he is the vital source of our grace of Sonship.

A thorough analysis of Kipsigis philosophy of life shows that in the Kipsigis mind, the exemplarity of ancestors is primarily linked with the activity or behaviour and way of life of his descendants, but also secondarily to their nature. In other words, whenever the Kipsigis speaks of his ancestors, as exemplar, he sees them more as models of his conduct or way of life in community, rather than a prototype of natural human structure. The Kipsigis is less concerned with the last exemplarity because it has little reference to practical life.

In additions to the above, there are various motivations which attract the Kipsigis to conform his behaviour to that of his ancestors. The ancestors goodness of conduct is one of such motivations; although there are others namely; piety, love, respect, homage, superhuman status and fear of evil consequences. This means whenever a Kipsigis conform his behaviour to that of his ancestors, he is motivated by filial love, piety, fear and religious homage towards them and less by the objective goodness of their conduct. Thus Kipsigis philosophy of ancestral exemplarity can be used to explicate the exemplarity of the Father to the Son in the Trinity. This concept therefore should be used to expound on the Trinitarian doctrine - a very important doctrine that leads to the understanding of the doctrine of salvation.

With the above considerations, the application of the Kipsigis category of Ancestor in explaining the Trinity leads to a better understanding of the doctrine under study in the following ways; firstly, Christian life will be interpreted as life of descendancy; this implies a Trinitarian life in us as the fundamental and primary foundation of all our Christian activities. Such descendancy means sharing in Christ's own pneumatic,

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

doxological, ritual and Eucharistic descendancy within Godhead. This sort of life also demands the necessity of sanctifying grace-an indispensable basis for genuine divine ancestral brotherhood with Christ, qualified by ancestral qualities, namely; seen as inseparable from ritual behaviour comprising of incessant prayers expressing our innermost sentiments of spontaneous loving, filial and grateful adoration of divine ancestor through the ancestral mediation of Christ, his unique Descendant, in the Holy Spirit-(the divine ancestral oblation, Eucharist and doxology) lovingly indwelling in us. Thus it is important to note that such life is diametrically opposed to “secular type of Christian behaviour”-which is in total denial of the super natural or by setting its primary concern on this-worldly affairs, such as liberation from socio-political oppression, or even denying or minimizing the importance of daily prayer accompanied by frequent devotion of sacraments especially the Eucharist-which is indeed the ancestral rituals and important ritual for salvation.

Secondly, sin and especially mortal sin be taught as the enemy number one of true descendancy in God. Nyamiti notes;

As an offence, it is much more serious than and qualitatively different from, it's African pendant. For once committed, it directly and immediately effaces Christian brother-descendancy in the offender by suppressing the grace of common Sonship with Christ; whereas the offence of an African individual against his family or tribal ancestors, however big it may be, can never blot out the ancestral brotherhood of the culprit.<sup>47</sup>

From this fact, the need for, and particularly importance of, the sacrament of penance-not only as the healing medicine for sin committed but also as a means to salvation as well as protection against such falls-becomes ineffable.

Immediately connected to the foregoing observation is the item of fear (filial fear) of God's “ancestral anger” prominent in Kipsigis ancestral belief, motivated by failure to render to him regular prayer and ritual or especially by disobedience to his commandments. Thus this point ought to be stressed particularly when God's mercy and love had been over emphasized over his infinite justice and anger frequently mentioned

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<sup>47</sup> C. Nyamiti, *“Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation”*, *Studies in African Christian Theology*, Nairobi: CUEA, 2005, p.114.

in scriptures against those who willfully oppose his holy will.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the Kipsigis ancestral behaviour emphasizes the significance of ancestral tradition in the life of the community. It is therefore impossible to have a life of Christian descendancy in proper Kipsigis sense without due respect for, and sincere acceptance of the authentic tradition of the Church. A contemptuous, destructive criticism of the authentic Church tradition is not only anti-Catholic but also opposed to the Kipsigis descendatal attitude.

As Nyamiti observes, another practical analogical implication of the foregoing argument is that the divine ancestorship towards us and its consequent descendancy in us to Christ and his Father are transcendent character, and for this reason, transcend all tribal, racial or sexual discriminations.<sup>49</sup> Therefore the human ancestral relationship in the Saviour is by its very nature “a relationship proper to the new indefinitely extended Family (the Church) in which everyone is kinly related to everyone”<sup>50</sup>; this thus indicate that such a relationship is altogether incompatible with any form of tribal, racial or any type of social or sexual discrimination or oppression. Hence, active participation in efforts against such evils is one of the signs of a true descendant of Christ and his Father.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the above, Kipsigis are known to crave for many children so as to have as many descendants as possible who will somehow perpetuate their earthly existence after their death through commemorative prayers and rituals offered to them. In this manner also, Christian revelation affirm that God the Father and his Son-our divine ancestor-crave for many descendants as possible all over the world (Math 28:19-20; Mk. 16:16.), who will perpetuate Christ-our Saviour divine descendancy in history.<sup>52</sup> It is therefore the duty of Christians to convert others to God’s flock where salvation is, applying this Kipsigis ancestral category renews the missionary effort among the Kipsigis Christians in Kericho Sub-County.

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. Gen. 19, 23; Num. 10, 12; Deut. 29; Math. 13, 42; Lk. 14, 21, 19.

<sup>49</sup> C. Nyamiti, “*Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation*”, *Studies in African Christian Theology*, Nairobi: CUEA, 2005, p.115.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>52</sup> C. Nyamiti, “*Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation*”, *Studies in African Christian Theology*, Nairobi: CUEA, 2005, p.115.



It is important to note that the ancestral approach to trinity affects our understanding of practically, the entirety of the Church's traditional trinitological concept- thus also giving a new understanding on the other doctrines- for our case that of salvation through the interconnection Christian mysteries; in such a way that all the traditional Trinitarian themes appear with new ancestral connotations, thereby enhancing their understanding and their propagation. Thus our conception of divine procession as Nyamiti observes becomes profoundly affected by our awareness of the production of the Holy Spirit (the key agent of salvation) as oblation, doxology and eucharist between the ancestor and the descendant. This allows the interpretation of divine procession with salvation terms like loving, pneumatic, eucharistic, doxological and sacred ceremonial activities. As we have seen earlier, the ancestral character of the first procession necessitates the production of the Holy Spirit through the will of the ancestor, who actually unites the ancestor and Descendant in sacred, loving and eucharistic ritual. We have also seen that the production of the Holy Spirit in this manner becomes an 'inner moment' of the first procession and the Father-Son relationship, and that since this kind of production belongs to the second procession, the Holy Spirit (as divine love, oblation, eucharistic) holds a central place in both processions.

Likewise the conception of the divine personal properties and notions is similarly affected. According to Nyamiti, Divine properties are traditionally known as Trinitarian "characteristics which distinguishes the three divine persons in the trinity from one another and as distinguishing marks of our knowledge of them are also called notion."<sup>53</sup> These include divine Fatherhood the "unoriginatedness" of the Father, Sonship, and passive aspiration.<sup>54</sup> The Kipsigis ancestral approach to trinity allows us to add to this list new divine ancestral personal properties and notions, namely; God's ancestorship, descendancy, ancestral oblation, eucharist and doxology in as far as the last three subsists in the Holy Spirit.<sup>55</sup> It is worth noting that the novelty which is brought about by the above context does not solely in the addition of the African ancestral properties and notions side by side with those of traditional Trinitology. What is important is the fact

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

that the Kipsigis divine items which are added help us to conceive the traditional notions and properties in a new Kipsigis way thereby enhancing better understanding of the RCC doctrine under study.

Finally, the conception of the divine mission is similarly affected by the Kipsigis ancestral approach to Trinitology. As Nyamiti observes, a divine mission is traditionally understood as sending one person from another with a purpose of creating some effect and a new manner of existing in creation and salvation history.<sup>56</sup> Nyamiti argues that there are two kinds of divine missions, namely; the one of logos from the Father (first mission) and the other of the Holy Spirit from the Father and through the Son (second mission), traditional theology argues that the fundamental basis of these two missions are on immanent and eternal Trinitarian procession<sup>57</sup>; these latter are said to be prolonged or extended by the Trinitarian missions into creation and salvation history. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, divine missions originate “immediately from Trinitarian love”, and ‘are contained in the mission of the Church’,<sup>58</sup> the ultimate goals of these missions “are the entry of God’s creatures into the perfect unity of the Blessed trinity.”<sup>59</sup>

With the above considerations, it is prudent that we now see how this traditional conception of the divine missions is affected when it is interpreted from the Kipsigis ancestral viewpoint, thereby enhancing better the understanding of the Church doctrines-including that of salvation.

In the foregoing, we have seen that when viewed from the Kipsigis ancestral perspective, God the Father’s (Ancestor’s) begetting activity in the trinity necessitates the production of the Holy Spirit-through the will of the divine Ancestor and descendant<sup>60</sup> as God’s ancestral oblation who actually unites the ancestor and descendants in loving, sacred, doxological and eucharistic ritual communication. We also noted that the production of

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>58</sup> CCC in C. Nyamiti, “*Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation*”, *Studies in African Christian Theology*, Nairobi: CUEA, 2005, p.125.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 125

<sup>60</sup> C. Nyamiti also concurs with this idea in his ancestral Trinitology, see, *Id.*, “*Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundation*”, *Studies in African Christian Theology*, Nairobi: CUEA, 2005, p.125.

the Holy Spirit in this manner becomes an inner moment and condition of the possibility of the first Trinitarian procession and the Father-Son relationship in the trinity.<sup>61</sup> Thus given the fact that the divine missions are prolongations and manifestations of the immanent Trinitarian activities, one is naturally led to the conclusions that the ancestral character of the first divine mission (ancestral-because it is sending of the divine descendant by his divine ancestor) necessitates simultaneous sending of the Holy Spirit-in such a way that the first mission becomes impossible to realize without the production of the second mission. Consequently, from the above considerations, this kind of ancestral interpretation of God's love (understood both as divine personified love in the Holy Spirit, and the Father's and Son's mutual love as source of the production of the divine Spirit) becomes central in both missions; thus divine love is the basis of the divine mission and are inseparable in the salvation mission.<sup>62</sup>

Another important issue that demands the attention of this study is one connected to the above divine mission; this is the Trinitarian basis or foundation of such missions.<sup>63</sup> In traditional Trinitology, the Trinitarian basis of the first divine mission is God the Father's generative activity; since the first mission is presented as the extension-into creation and salvation history-of first mission, Trinitarian mission in trinity is the activity of the Father and the Son, which is extended to creatures through the second mission. When the Trinitarian foundation of the divine mission is examined from the Kipsigis ancestral angle, it becomes necessarily to add divine holiness as a third basis of the missions. For as we saw earlier, when divine procession is interpreted from Kipsigis ancestral perspective, the holiness of the divine ancestor and descendant is manifested as the foundation of the production of the Holy Spirit as ancestral oblation. It thus follows from these considerations that the extension of the eternal procession into creatures through the divine missions must entail divine holiness as the basis of such missions. Thus, the divine missions are extended to humanity in order to share not only in God's Sonship and pneumatic love, but also in his Trinitarian holiness, and thereby glorify him through such

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

participation.<sup>64</sup> As we saw, such awareness implies practical consequences among the Kipsigis faithful in Kericho Sub-County, such as our due respect of human being and the world of nature. Such respect demands to be manifested through avoidance of sins against human dignity as well as through the refraining from the employment of elements of cosmic universe of sinful purposes for instance the exploitation or destruction of the nature through technological and scientific advancements.

In summing up, let it be noted that the above considerations confirm and affirm what we have said in the foregoing analysis, namely; the Kipsigis ancestral approach to the doctrine of trinity as well as other doctrines as implied through the theory of interconnection of other Christian mysteries, this leads to a new Kipsigis conception of this mystery and new understanding of other doctrines-including the one being studied, in such a way that each of the traditional trinitological themes is theologically affected in the new manner. The above themes and how they can be analogically interpreted through inculturational approach may not be exhaustive; nevertheless, it is hoped that what has been presented above suffices to show that the Kipsigis category of ancestors can be used to explain doctrines in the Church in a way that will fit into traditional Kipsigis worldview thereby enhancing their understanding, articulation and propagation of such doctrines.

## **5.6 The Kipsigis Family Values**

We have explained the main features of a typical Kipsigis family in the anthropological chapter. It is important to consider some of its values to see how they could be of help in understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation in Kericho Sub-County. In the first place, it is with much appreciation that the recent Popes regard African values, especially the extended family system, with high esteem. We see this in the writings of Pope Paul VI, notably in *Africae Terrarum (On African Lands)*<sup>65</sup>; commenting on this important aspect of African culture, Pope Paul VI remarks: “Another characteristic element of African tradition is the sense of family. On this, it is significant to note the moral and also

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>65</sup> Pope Paul VI, “*Africae Terrarum (Land of Africa): Message to Africa and Writers*”, In *32 Articles Evaluating Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, (Nairobi: Pauline, 1967).

the religious value, seen in attachment to a family, evidenced further by the bond with ancestors<sup>66</sup>.” In his own appreciation of the values of the African family, John Paul II challenges the Christian family to plant its roots deeply like the African family. Hence John Paul II observes: “The Christian family, as a domestic Church built on the solid cultural pillars and noble values of the African tradition of the family, is called upon to be a powerful nucleus of Christian witness in a society undergoing rapid and profound changes<sup>67</sup>.” Kipsigis cultural values based on the family are powerful cultural instruments for the inculturation of doctrine under study in Kericho Sub-County.

Looking at the Church in Kericho, for example, as a domestic Church, it could be appropriately called the extended family of God. This domestic Church incorporates all the peoples of different races and ethnic groups. “A special characteristic of African families noted in the answers to the *Lineamenta*, according to *Instrumentum Laboris*<sup>68</sup> is that they often contain members who belong to different religious confessions.” One of the challenges to the local Church is to organize the celebration of the eucharist (an important salvation event) to take place in the form of an African family, where the meal is central and where each person’s presence is needed and felt. In the same way, the eucharist must be central in the lives of all Christians in Kericho Sub-County.

As a starting point, just as the mother in any Kipsigis family makes sure that every member of the family is present at meals and also properly fed, in the same way, the Catholic Church in Kericho Sub-County, as a mother, must also not exclude from her celebrations Catholic members who are not fully married according to Church law. All Catholics at eucharistic celebration must be recognized and accorded the dignity that befits them. In other words, the Catholic Church needs to reconsider admitting those of its members who are married according to African custom by integrating the traditional and Christian marriages in the same celebration. It is a family where love and respect exist and a family where each member participates in those functions that promote the building up of a solid family. This is the fundamental characteristic of a Kipsigis family

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>67</sup> John Paul II, *The Church in Africa, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: Ecclesia in Africa*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1995), p. 71.

<sup>68</sup> *Instrumentum Laboris*, 1993, p. 35.

that must act as a model to Kericho Sub-County in her salvation event-eucharistic celebrations. Accordingly, this is an inculturation challenge to the Catholic Church in Kericho Sub-County. Healy & Sybertz describe a Church that celebrates the eucharist in the context of the family well in this passage:

The Church can be pictured as a great family with Jesus Christ as the head serving under the Father. Human kind is bonded together in a universal brotherhood and sisterhood. All Christians are adopted sons and daughters. Jesus is the oldest brother. One part of this great family is the African community in Christ.<sup>69</sup>

The 1994 African Synod of bishops did well to model the Church in Africa as an extended family of God. This model of the Church remains to be fully implemented when the eucharist is to be celebrated in the context of the Kipsigis family in Kericho Sub-County, with Kipsigis cultural values, where everyone is welcomed, loved and respected. The notion of one extended family in Kericho will dispose all Catholics present at eucharistic celebration to pray and to eat together. It is this cultural value that must be inculturated into the eucharistic celebration in Kericho Sub-County. We regard this as a challenge because it is yet to take place in this Sub-County.

The cultural values to be examined here, though applicable to other continents, are drawn mainly from Africa and specifically from Kipsigis culture. This section aims to bring to light the essence of culture-particularly Kipsigis family values in any given society. It has an important place in the study because it provides an explanation to inculturation of salvation thereby enhancing better understanding of the doctrine of salvation. Cultural values represent those aspects of culture that are important to a particular group of people. For example, Pope John Paul II has the richness of African cultural values in mind when he remarks:

Although Africa is very rich in natural resources, it remains economically poor. At the same time, it is endowed with a wealth of cultural values and priceless human qualities which it can offer to the Church and to humanity as a whole.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>J. Healy and D. Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 1996), p. 127.

<sup>70</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Hominis, Apostolic Exhortation*, Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 1979, p. 33.

The Synod Fathers highlighted some of these cultural values, which are truly a providential preparation for the transmission of the Gospel. They are values that can contribute to an effective reversal of the continent's dramatic situation and facilitate that worldwide revival on which the desired development of individual nations depends.

The Pope not only recognizes the richness of African cultural values-Kipsigis' included, but he also points out the salvation contribution they could make in the world. These values cannot fulfill the Pope's expectations if they are not explored, properly harnessed and promoted by Africans themselves-Kipsigis included. The study regards the Pope's statement as a challenge to Africans in general and to theologians in particular. This section identifies some Kipsigis cultural values, discussing their importance and suggesting how they can help in the promotion of inculturation of the doctrine of salvation in Kericho Sub-County. Those to be discussed here include: The extended family system or Familial solidarity; the sense of community life and the sense of hospitality.

### **5.6.1 The Extended Family System/Familial Solidarity**

The extended family system is also the bearer of important cultural values in Kipsigis society. Generally, this system characterizes the African continent, especially sub-Saharan Africa. Schineller explains the thinking behind the extended family system with this African popular saying: "The isolated self is an abstraction, it is unreal<sup>71</sup>." This statement is true because in the extended family system there are many people, ranging from grandparents, parents, and children to uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces, and so on. Thus it is not very common to see a member of a Kipsigis family experiencing isolation. In the extended family system, a "nuclear family" is not talked about because it does not make much sense.

In addition to introducing the extended family system, this sub-section makes suggestions about how this kind of system can help not only in building up the Catholic Church in Kericho but also in facilitating the inculturation of the doctrine under study in the Sub-County. References are made to other African cultures, but the discussion focuses on the

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<sup>71</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook On Inculturation*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), p.76.

extended family system based on Kipsigis culture. The extended family system is a reality in Kipsigis culture because it is fundamental and functional among the people. For example, when a child is born in a family, he/she becomes a gift and concern of everybody in the community, especially the neighbours. When the mother of the baby is in the field or at the market, she knows that the child is properly looked after by the mother in law, that is, the grandmother of the child as well as other extended family members. The idea is that “a child is not owned by one person alone.” When the child grows, he/she automatically imbibes the sense and the importance of the extended family system. This is precisely because the whole system is real and practical to him/her through experience. It is a system which is so rich and beneficial that it is reciprocal. For example, the grandparents take care of the infant-child and when he/she grows up, she/he helps to maintain them and to fulfill some errands for them. In short, the extended family system provides adequate care for all in the family. It creates a sense of belonging and homeliness.

The extended family system receives the child with praises, appreciation and blessings especially from the elders in the family. No grown up child would want to miss this kind of attention from parents, grandparents and the other elders of the extended family or from the neighbours. In these lines, Schineller describes the responsibilities of the extended family system:

Loyalty to and support for one's family are primary. One is one's brother's and sister's keeper. The key image of sin is separation, isolation from the family and breaking family solidarity. One always remembers and returns to one's roots in so far as possible, even if one has moved to a different location.<sup>72</sup>

In the Kipsigis extended family system, moments of joy, misfortune and sorrow are shared together. The system offers security in the sense that someone in the family is always there to help. It must be clear, however, that it does not encourage either laziness or over dependence, though it emphasizes family solidarity.

When the Church is referred to as a “Family of God”, the extended family system becomes an ideal. This is because every member is part of the group. No one is an

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p.76.



outsider or an alien. The notion of the extended family as it applies to the Catholic Church in Kericho Sub-County reduces or eliminates the uncaring attitude of members that prevailed in the Church during the “Western missionary era.” The support each member receives helps to make him or her grow and have a sense of belonging. The Catholic Church in Kericho Sub-County would benefit, therefore, from being modeled on the extended family system, where, as in the Acts of the Apostles, “there was not a needy person among them<sup>73</sup>.”

The extended family system can also be an important tool in promoting inculturation in the eucharistic celebration—a salvation event in the Church in Kericho Sub-County. Its first important role is to eliminate among members the insensitivity that characterizes large Catholic communities. Because of the largeness of the community and its insensitivity, many members are not known and their talents are not recognized and fully utilized. Many Catholic members are reduced to “anonymity,” a state similar to “non-identity,” which forces them to look for love and care from other smaller denominations outside the Catholic Church. It is interesting to note that this “anonymity” is not a state of life which people assume out of humility. Instead, it arises because people are not known, recognized and cared for. They see themselves as aliens in a place where they are supposed to be known as “first born” children.

As an extended family, Catholics in Kericho Sub-County would gather to celebrate the eucharist as one united family. This would enable all the members to be known and appreciated. As a family, also, no one is left out during meals. The extended family system would thus challenge the present Catholic practice where many attend Mass but are not allowed to receive Holy Communion. Should a family member for some reason decide not to eat on his or her own volition, the other members persuade him or her to join the family meal for the sake of family bonding. The sense of being a part of the family is normally so strong that none wants to be left out. The Catholic Church in Kericho Sub-County needs this sense of family-hood to be inculcated into the mind and heart of every Catholic member. This is an important task of inculturation, using the extended family system as a model—which enhances a better understanding of the

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Acts 4:34.

Catholic doctrine of salvation through the lens of eucharist celebrations. The Catholic Church in Kericho has much to benefit from the extended family system if it can adopt it as a model.

### **5.6.2 The Sense of Community Life**

Being part of an extended family system easily prepares a family member to identify with the wider community. This is because the sense of communalism is already acquired in the extended family system. Onwubiko is right in this regard when he affirms: “Therefore, the authentic African is known and identified in, by and through his [her] community<sup>74</sup>.” A Kipsigis proverb says “community is strength.” Since the community is the custodian of the individual, the individual must go where the community is found. Community life guarantees togetherness and solidarity. For example, when a member of the community has a misfortune, he or she is helped through communal cooperation. No amount of work is hard to accomplish because many hands join to do it. When someone’s house is destroyed by fire, it is immediately repaired or rebuilt without any regard to the time of the day. The joyful part of this type of work is that it is done happily and voluntarily. Onwubiko has an appealing description of this fact in these words: “When a job had to be done, the whole community turned out with supplies and music and proceeded to sing and dance its way through to the successful conclusion of each particular chore. In this way, work was converted into a pleasurable productive pastime.”<sup>75</sup>

Problems that require finance are solved with communal resources. Among the Kipsigis, for example, when such a problem arose, a whole village would agree that the proceeds of the farm produce would be used for its solution. Many destitute but intelligent pupils were sponsored in their studies through this communal solidarity. In Kericho, orphaned children of poor relatives have been looked after and sponsored through communal efforts. The community life is backed up by Nyerere’s philosophy of “Ujamaa.” It is rooted in “togetherness”, which is also the base for community life. The essence of this

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<sup>74</sup> A. Onwubiko, *African Thought, Religion and Culture*, (Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd, 1991), p. 14.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

philosophy, according to Nyerere, is that “African traditions should serve as the basis for all future African development<sup>76</sup>.”

The Kipsigis community life could be helpful in promoting inculturation of salvation in Kericho in the following ways. It would help to encourage and bring about a self-reliant Church. Community life fosters a unique charism that is able to reduce the dependence syndrome that characterizes the Catholic Church of our time. The dependence syndrome, where people look up to Europe or America for help in any project came with the Western missionaries who often won converts with gifts. Unfortunately, our people have relied so much on donors that many have lost the sense of self-reliance in the Church. What is needed in this age of inculturation is to appeal to the sentiments of Catholics in Kericho Sub-County toward their heritage of “Kipsigis communal life” which is salvation in nature. That is to say, there is need to appeal to Catholics in Kericho to reclaim their Kipsigis communal life and its good practices. The result will be that when there is something to be done in their Church, they will be encouraged to do it in groups and as a community.

This is where the establishment of “Small Christian Communities” (henceforth SCC) would be of great importance. The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (henceforth AMECEA) recognizes the importance of SCC in the building of the Church. In his book, *Communion at the Grassroots: Small Christian Communities*<sup>77</sup>, Mringi documents the essential teaching of (AMECEA) on SCC in these lines:

That Church life must be based on the Communities in which everyday life and work takes place: Those basic and manageable social groupings whose members can experience real inter-personal relationships and feel a sense of communal belonging both in living and working... Christian Communities at this level will best be suited to develop real intense vitality and to become effective witnesses to their natural environment— present Church structures and attitudes [should] be modified, for example establishing basic Christian Communities, by giving more

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<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>77</sup>A. Mringi, *Communion at The Grass Roots Small Christian Communities*, (Bangalore: St. Paul’s Press, 1995).

responsibility to the laity as local leaders, and by a better utilization and distribution of manpower.<sup>78</sup>

This long passage explains both the origin and function of SCC. As a way of empowering SCC members, Mringi suggests that, among other things: “the members could cultivate a common field and other small-scale projects to become self-supporting as a small Christian community<sup>79</sup>.” This type of empowerment would enable SCC members to work together as a community for the up-liftment of local Churches. Furthermore, eucharistic celebration—a salvation event in smaller groups would help to enhance community life; instead of lumping a huge congregation together. Therefore, Catholic members could be organized in small communities for effective administration and mutual support.

### 5.6.3 The Sense of Hospitality

Hospitality is another Kipsigis cultural value that requires attention in this sub-section. The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*<sup>80</sup> gives a precise definition of hospitality as: “a friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers, especially in one’s own home<sup>81</sup>.” Traditionally, the Kipsigis people, like other Africans, have a good spirit that is welcoming to their visitors. Onwubiko recognizes how this important cultural value has survived till the present generation and affirms: “The African sense of hospitality is one of the African values that is still quite alive<sup>82</sup>.” One quality that characterizes hospitality among the Kipsigis people, especially towards visitors, is its spontaneity and voluntary nature. The motivation behind the great respect for visitors is rooted in the belief that says: “Let the guest come so that the host or hostess may benefit (get well)<sup>83</sup>”.

A visitor is gladly received with *togotin*—a Kipsigis word expressing ‘welcome.’ When the visitor enters the house and sits down, the host expresses a very hearty greeting by the light clapping of hands, which is followed by a conversation and some form of

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>80</sup> *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, (London: OUP, 1989), p. 603.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 603.

<sup>82</sup> A. Onwubiko, *African Thought, Religion and Culture*, (Enugu: Snaap Press Ltd, 1991), p. 23.

<sup>83</sup> See also; J. Healy and D. Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications, 1996), p. 168.

entertainment. Such a welcome given to the visitor carries with it a psychological and emotional disposition. The language this type of welcome speaks is “feel at home with us.” Traditionally, a visitor in Kipsigis culture is served with milk. The rationale is that the visitor has traveled a long distance. This means that the visitor must be tired, thirsty and hungry. Milk not only serves to quench the thirst and to refresh the visitor, but it also serves hunger. Symbolically, milk here becomes life giving and life sustaining. The aforementioned virtue is not a confine of Kipsigis alone; among the Igbo of Nigeria for instance, kola nut is served first as a sign of welcome and hospitality to a visitor. The hospitality shown to a visitor has its own blessings since a visitor well received has a blessing to offer. A visitor brings about healing to the host. For example, in a family where there is a quarrel, as soon as a visitor arrives, the quarrel is buried so that all the family members can join hands together to welcome and entertain the visitor. When this team spirit of service prevails, the presence of the visitor has not only brought back peace, it has also brought reconciliation and healing. When a member of a family is sick and a visitor arrives, the patient cheers up, gets out of bed and joins the rest of the family members to welcome their visitor. Healey and Sybertz are right to conclude that: “Visitors are social healers— they are family doctors in a sense<sup>84</sup>.”

Kipsigis people believe that it is not what the visitor eats that will finish the food. It is in line with this thought or belief that Schineller remarks: “If there is food enough for three, there is enough for five or for six<sup>85</sup>.” Furthermore, in Kipsigis culture, it is believed that by treating a visitor well, the host will be treated well at another place where he or she will be the guest. It is this conviction that necessitates the Kipsigis proverb that says in a literal translation: “Do not scold people on a journey, foot has no nose.” It is interesting to note that this Kipsigis hospitality finds resonance in the biblical passage that reads: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that, some have entertained angels without knowing it<sup>86</sup>.”

Hospitality, as discussed, has two major inculturation implications for the Church. In the first place, as Jesus was a guest to the shepherds of Bethlehem and brought them Good

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p.174.

<sup>85</sup> P. Schineller, *A Handbook On Inculturation*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), p.79.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Hebrew 13:2.

News, so was He to Zacchaeus at his home and to the two going to Emmaus. These He also brought Good News. In the same vein, the Kipsigis hospitality would enable the Kipsigis people to welcome Christ-our source of salvation well so that He not only settles among them, but also becomes part of them and gets deeply rooted in their culture. In other words, Christianity would begin to take gradual root in Kipsigis culture. What is required here is proper catechesis that enables the local people to appreciate the Good News of Christ which they have received so that as he transforms them, he may also transform their culture. Secondly, by receiving visitors well in the Catholic Church, irrespective of their tribe, colour, religion—especially denomination--hospitality will become a means of breaking division among people especially between Catholics and non-Catholics. This is one important role inculturation is expected to play, thereby promoting salvation of other members who are non-Catholics.

### **5.7 Salvation values in Kipsigis rites of passage**

The statement from the letter to the Hebrews helps sum up the focal point of this subsection as well that of the whole thesis.<sup>87</sup> It is hinged upon the conviction that God has ever been present among his chosen people in the same way as he has been present to all peoples, cultures and religious tendencies of the world though in different ways. Since His Spirit has ever been actively present, it is possible thus to assume that there are a lot of good and valid elements in the cultures of humankind and these positive elements, in the spirit of Vatican II, must be worthy of respect, preservation and integration into Christianity since they are the result of God's activity among his created people.

As seen earlier in chapter two, for a Kipsigis, life is a sacred journey through natural cycle of birth, maturation, marriage, old age and death in which each milestone is marking major biological and emotional stages is solemnized through sacred religious rituals. These sacred religious ceremonies are termed as rites of passage. They are rituals performed according to prescribed traditional cultural customs and rules to mark a transition in the life of an individual or a group of individuals from one state or status.

According to van Gennep;

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<sup>87</sup> Cf. Hebrews 1:1.

Transition from group to group and from one situation to another are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence so that a man's life becomes to be made up of succession of stages with similar ends and beginnings: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a higher class, occupational specialization and death. For every one of these events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the individual to pass from one defined position to another.<sup>88</sup>

Rites of passage, such as birth, puberty, and marriage are essential Kipsigis values, the rituals threads that introduce and bind people to defined groups and roles in Kipsigis society and provide the needed structure for growth and development. They are meant to integrate the individual or groups of individuals into the community, into the broader and more potent spiritual world.<sup>89</sup> Rites of passage give individuals the societal support to discover their potentials, fulfill their life mission by contributing meaningfully to the wellbeing of the family and society.<sup>90</sup>

In celebration of these rites, family and friends and indeed the whole community draw near; lend support, advice and encouragement. Through these rites, family heads and traditional priests invoke the Supreme Being and ancestors for blessings and protection during these important turning points of life, praying for individuals and community development, since it should not be taken for granted that people automatically grow and develop into responsible, community-oriented adults.<sup>91</sup> They give a solemn accompaniment to the various transitions in life. For example, birth marks the transition from the existence within the womb to life in the outside world; naming ceremony marks transition from being born to the acceptance and incorporation into the family and the human community as a unique individual with a distinct identity; puberty rites marks the assuming of a vital responsibility of wanting to perpetuate life through procreation and death marks the transition from the realms of terrestrial life to the spiritual ancestral world.<sup>92</sup>

In Kipsigis worldview, it is believed that transition from one state of life to the other have the potential to disrupt the psychological functioning of transitioning individual and the

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<sup>88</sup> A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

smooth running of the community at large. For instance birth, marriage and death can disturb the hitherto normal relationship among individuals in a family, community and society. Rites of passage are the strategies devised by human societies to mediate whatever social upheaval and personal turmoil that could be associated with life transitions. As Onuh puts it;

... Life consists of successive motions from one stage to the other, involving change from one status to another. The various phases of this passage from birth to death are generally crisis moments. In order to confront these moments with their corresponding crises, and ensure a successful transition from one to another, practically in every culture, people evolve a system of rites and ceremonies to punctuate and accompany these transitions, so that life's experiences and tensions involved in them can be adequately dealt with.<sup>93</sup>

In the same light, van Gennep points out the rites of passage “are intended not only to neutralize an impurity... but also to serve as actual bridges, chains or links-in short, to facilitate the changing of condition without social disruption or an abrupt cessation of individual and collective life”<sup>94</sup>, Fontaine corroborates that “events and developments of the life-cycle constantly involve changes in conditions which do not occur without disturbing the life of society and the individual, and it is the function of the rites of passage to reduce the harmful effects.”<sup>95</sup> Rites of passage are therefore, meant to be shock absorbers, and supposed to neutralize any possible disruption and to ensure that transitions to the different stages of life are successfully made.

Rites of passage among the Africans- Kipsigis included, significantly binds individuals to society, “they have a lot of religious meanings, and through their observations religious ideas are perpetuated and passed on to the next generations.”<sup>96</sup> They “try to concretize the fact that humans are not merely naturally born as men and women, nor merely procreate

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<sup>93</sup> C. O. Onuh, *Christianity and the Igbo Rites of Passage: the Prospectus of Inculturation*, (London: Streams, 1984), p. 139.

<sup>94</sup> A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 48.

<sup>95</sup> J. S. La Fontaine, *Initiation*, (Manchester, United Kingdom: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 27.

<sup>96</sup> J. S. Mbiti, *African Traditional Religion and Philosophy*, (Nairobi: EAEP, 1989), p. 19.



and die, but they are culturally made what they are through ceremonies and rituals; even though by birth one is male or female, adult, husband or wife.”<sup>97</sup>

Three distinct stages are a characteristic of every rite of passage; separation, transition, and incorporation. The classical work of van Gennep<sup>98</sup>, gives a valuable insight into the essential structure of these rites. Separation means the neophyte(s) that is; the person or group of the society and is in the process of being integrated into the next defined group. The process of integration is termed the transitional period. This is a liminal stage; a stage of non-belongingness, the preparatory and learning stage is mostly in secluded place. The incorporation stage involves the open presentation of neophytes to the community. This is accompanied by religious rituals which punctuate the official reception into a socially defined stage of life.

The aim of this sub-section therefore is to examine the providential values in rites of passage upon which RCC can utilize for better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation. Surely, in every culture of a people, there lies providential values which have stood the test of time and these stands as indicators of where an engrafting work can be carried out. Apart from providing the platform from which to work on, such values could enrich the understanding of some teachings and symbols in the universal Church-just as the study seeks to demonstrate. The following salvation values in the rites of passage are discussed:

### **5.7.1 Respect for life**

In the eyes of the Kipsigis life is such a sacred gift to be cherished and not tampered with. Giving birth to a child is the greatest thing that can happen to a Kipsigis couple without which marriage would be at risk. To a Kipsigis man or woman, life must be given, lived, enjoyed and is to be long and peaceful. Such a high respect for life accounts for the great care that is given to someone nearing the sunset of his/her life on earth. As noted earlier in our anthropological chapter two, effort is made to save the person from the grip of

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<sup>97</sup> C. O. Onuh, *Christianity and the Igbo Rites of Passage: the Prospectus of Inculturation*, (London: Streams, 1984), p. 58.

<sup>98</sup> A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 48.

death by moving him/her from his/her homestead with the hope that the evil powers of death will not be able to locate where he/she is. Such a respect for life is also seen when one is too old to move or rise easily but not yet on his/her deathbed. Traditionally, elders take cow dung and rub it on the back of that person to ease the pains of old age when rising or sitting down. It would be unheard of for a Kipsigis person to have terminated the life of his/her mum or dad on the account that he/she was too old or too sick-with the exception of those who are begging dead.<sup>99</sup> To cause this to happen knowingly and willingly constitutes one of the worst crimes against oneself, the community and society at large. Writing on the general African understanding on the value of life Magesa says;

... What is demanded as the ultimate good is that life is to be preserved and perpetuated in every possible way, in its past, present and future forms. This is taken so seriously in Africa that for a person to so much wish otherwise, even without verbally articulating such a wish, is seen as evil. Even such a wish represents an internal personal trait of seeking to destroy life that must be struggled against, for it can externalize itself in various sinister ways, including the practice of witchcraft.<sup>100</sup>

Among the Kipsigis, such a respect for life was seen even in war situations. When one killed an enemy, one had to undergo ritual ablutions to purify oneself for the earth was believed to abhor bloodshed. The respect for life among the Kipsigis contrasts sharply with an anti-life mentality which is developing in some parts of the world. In this modern world of Science and Technology, it appears a non-bother issue to the conscience of some people to terminate a pregnancy, for example, or ask for euthanasia. As for euthanasia, Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg are on record for legalizing such an activity. Such a legalization of euthanasia, however, does not rule out the possibility of the existence of pro-life activists in these countries who might be fighting for the repealing of such laws. Learning from the Kipsigis on this aspect of the sacred value of life and that salvation is a life-business can thus go a long way in correcting this anti-life mentality and it can also be used as a reminder of God's original intention in creating man and woman in his own image and likeness thereby enhancing better understanding, articulation and propagation of the doctrine under study.

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. refer to Chapter two for more insights.

<sup>100</sup>L. Magesa, *African Religion: The moral traditions of abundant life*, (New York: Orbis Books 1997), p. 64.

### 5.7.2 Sacredness of the Verbal Last Testament

As we saw in the anthropological chapter, the sunset of one's life was the period when one was expected to say his/her last verbal testament. Even when one had finally come to rest with his/her ancestors, people would be keen to know the contents of those last words as reflected in the often-asked question; *Kole nee en kiraget nyin?* (What were his/her last words?). Customarily among the Kipsigis, there is no way in which the verbal last testament of a dying person is subtracted from, added to or disputed. Even if those words were disclosed to a young person or if it was only one person who may have heard it, that word is always honoured. It is unheard of that a person would put into the mouth of a dying person what he/she would not have said.

Generally, African traditional religion-Kipsigis religion included does not tamper with the spoken word. Before the advent of the Whites, the word of mouth was considered as much more sacred than what the written word is now which is open to contest. The manner in which elders were installed, initiation rites were done, warriors commissioned and so on through the word of mouth only, without anything written down, speaks volumes on the sacredness which the word of mouth was accorded. To break a verbal oath, as Towett rightly notes, is one of the greatest felonies or taboos among the Kipsigis.<sup>101</sup> Once leaders, ancestors and the Supreme Being have uttered a word, people are urged to obey, respect and uphold that word. The RCC and the world can learn from the Kipsigis in redirecting attention to the salvation power of the word. Jesus even displayed in clear terms the value which is in the word of mouth when he founded the Christian religion through the power of his word, writing nothing down himself. In a way this paper culture of the modern world shows the decadence of our societies. Though what is written down is what is glorified, written evidence, as perceived by Majawa, exhibits the worst in humanity.<sup>102</sup> Fidelity and conviction in the last verbal testament as displayed by the Kipsigis goes a long way to remind the Church to be faithful and committed also to Jesus' golden rule of loving one another<sup>103</sup> a key command in his last

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<sup>101</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 38.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. C. Majawa, *Integrated Approach to African Christian Theology of Inculturation*, (Nairobi: Creation Enterprises, 2005), p. 87.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Jn 13:34-5.

verbal testament among other things. The Kipsigis system here leaves an indelible lesson that religion is all about fidelity and conviction. Thus even though there is nothing written down in the form of Scripture, the effectiveness of Kipsigis religion is in no way compromised. The Kipsigis system stands as a testimony to the “purity” of religions in their original form. In time immemorial, as is well known, religions have existed and survived because of oral traditions. Religious teachings and practices were simply passed on from one generation to another orally.

### **5.7.3 Non dualism**

In the ontological existential understanding of the Kipsigis, the concept of wholeness stands out clearly. A human person in the eyes of the Kipsigis is a unity of spirit and body thus he/she must be treated as such. *Asiis* (God) created both body and soul. Such a perception explains why the Kipsigis make sure that a corpse is treated with great respect and accorded proper rites in preparation for burial. Though the person would be dead in the eyes of the living, his/her spirit is believed to be still lingering around the corpse hence the formal addresses which are made to the corpse lying in state. Even after burial, says one of the key respondents, people do not say that we have buried the body of X but they rather say that we have buried X.

The concept of wholeness displayed here in the practice of the Kipsigis is actually a phenomenon which touches the whole of their lifestyle. To the African-Kipsigis included, as Majawa testifies, “the rigid dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, the secular and the religious, the material and the immaterial, is artificial.”<sup>104</sup> Religion is not divorced from the ordinary life of the Kipsigis; it permeates a person’s life from the cradle to the grave.

Wholeness as manifested in the beliefs of the Kipsigis is a salvation theme which the universal Church cannot afford to brush aside as of less value. The Church has always taught on the wholeness not truncated person of Christ. The Church could thus be enriched by this theme and use it to drive home in a more understandable way its

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<sup>104</sup> C. Majawa, *Integrated Approach to African Christian Theology of Inculturation*, (Nairobi: Creation Enterprises, 2005), p. 96.

teaching that Jesus had the nature of God and the nature of man at the same time. The Church could use it also to bring light and correction to the many problems of today's world which stem from the artificial barrier which humanity has now come to place between the religious and the profane.

#### **5.7.4 Sense of Community**

On hearing the message of death, the Kipsigis engage in the mourning ritual; neighbours, relatives, friends, non-relatives, people from various communities or even passersby come in their numbers to express their sympathy and pay condolences to the bereaved family. A funeral in a Kipsigis set-up is never a family or single village event rather it attracts people from various corners of the country for the matrix of relationships goes beyond tribal boundaries. The Kipsigis family is very much extended and most of these extensions come as a result of marriages. Marriage, in other words, widens one's circle of intimate contacts. There are also cases of friendship whereby the bond of friendship becomes even much stronger than the bond between one and one's own kinsfolk. Speaking on the centrality of relationships in an African set-up Sindima had this to confirm; "We cannot understand persons; indeed we cannot have personal identity without reference to other persons. The notion of being together is intended to emphasize that life is the actuality of living in the present together with people, other creatures and the earth."<sup>105</sup>

Opoku expresses the same sentiment proverbially when he says; "Life is when you are together, alone you are an animal."<sup>106</sup> With the encroaching spirit of individualism in the modern world, the Church has a lot to learn from Kipsigis practices. Baptism as we know incorporates us into the family of Christ which has no racial, social, national or even continental boundaries but the reality of things shows that we are still miles from this ideal. The sense of community attested in the mourning ritual of the Kipsigis could even motivate the Church to explore ecumenism with more earnestness. In Christ, as Paul would say; "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither

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<sup>105</sup> H. Sindima cited in L. Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, p. 64.

<sup>106</sup> K. A. Opoku cited in L. Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, p. 65.

male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”<sup>107</sup> All these ingredients which would go to form a true extended Christian family as the Church would aspire can thus be gleaned from the Kipsigis social structure.

### **5.7.5 Richness of Symbolism**

During the rite of mourning also, one observes the richness in symbolism displayed when the Kipsigis pay their condolences. Note was made that every mourner places his/her gift near the corpse or in some places, people make their contributions via someone who would have been chosen for that task. The most important thing here as observed was not the size of the gift but what that gift symbolizes, namely: relationship. Even the beast which is killed as provision for the deceased’s journey, in no way would the Kipsigis imply that the deceased would physically consume part of the meat. It is more a symbolism of honour and love given to the dead. It is not an offence when nothing is killed. The daily life of the Kipsigis is pleat with evidence of such cases whereby certain families, due to financial constrains, have simply bade farewell to their dear ones with eating vegetables. It may, however, be offending to the deceased as well as to his/her relatives if a beast is deliberately not slaughtered yet it would be there.

Looking at religions in the world today, it is an indubitable fact that symbols are indispensable in any religion. Coming in contact with the deity is not in the normal course of things hence religionists use some kind of a bridge. The bridge, as well articulated by Majawa, may take the form of words, postures, gesticulations, objects, signs and so on but they are not the reality itself. What they do is to give us an idea of the reality. They are, in other words, the connecting links between the seen and the unseen.<sup>108</sup> Thus, without the use of symbols, religion would almost be impossible.

In almost all African cultures-Kipsigis included, symbols still play a vital role in the day to day lives of people. Be it in schools, political rallies, social gatherings like marriages, funerals and so on what is evidently clear is that African culture is a symbolic culture. While the same could be said of the Western world, it appears a host of symbols are

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. Gal. 3.28.

<sup>108</sup> C. Majawa, *Integrated Approach to African Christian Theology of Inculturation*, (Nairobi: Creation Enterprises, 2005), p. 97.

becoming meaningless to the present generation. As the Western world continues to lose the true value of symbols it is no wonder also that it is gradually losing the sense of religion itself. Religion, without the use of symbols, as observed earlier on, is almost impossible. Here again the practices of the RCC could be a challenge to orthodox Christianity, re-awakening thus the sense of the lost treasure found in symbols. Jesus Christ himself, whose glory the Church seeks to spread, symbolized the Father's love for humanity and at the same time symbolized humanity's response to that immense love of the Father. Kipsigis symbols then can be used to articulate and propagate the Catholic doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis of Kericho Sub-County hence enhancing its understanding more fruitfully.

#### **5.7.6 Spiritual view of Life**

Looking at Kipsigis religion one finds that its constant and general foundation is the spiritual view of life. Such a view goes beyond the animistic concept, a misnomer which was the choice of many early writers in describing African traditional religion. The spiritual view of Africans-Kipsigis is a deeper, broader and more universal concept which considers all living beings and visible nature as essentially linked to the invisible world of spirits. The Kipsigis, in paying caution to the times of burial as we saw, display nothing other than acknowledging that the living cannot do anything without the help from the invisible world. It is a display of humility as well as a way of showing honour to the living dead by entrusting everything into their hands. In the spiritual view of the Kipsigis, a person is never considered as consisting of mere matter, limited to earthly life but rather the presence and power of a spiritual element in virtue of which human life is always related to the after-life is strongly recognized and acknowledged. At the helm of the spiritual view of the Kipsigis is the idea of *Asiis* (God). God among the Kipsigis is perceived as the ultimate cause of all things and enjoys a status immeasurably higher than any other being. In commending the deceased to the ancestors before burial, the Kipsigis ask the ancestors to present further their child to *Asiis*. Acknowledging the importance of the idea about God and his presence in the spiritual worldview of African cultures, Pope Paul VI wrote to say that this concept: "perceived rather than analyzed, lived rather than reflected on, is expressed in very different ways from culture to culture. But, the fact

remains that the presence of God permeates African life, as the presence of a higher being, personal and mysterious.”<sup>109</sup>

### **5.7.7 Belief in the Existence of an Evil Force**

Related to the admission that no one is perfect is the belief among the Kipsigis in the existence of an evil force that should be dealt with to avoid further catastrophes. The Kipsigis, as we saw in the anthropological chapter, ensure that after burial rite everyone and everything associated with the deceased is ritually cleansed. This evil force is associated with the powers of witchcraft and that explains also the reason why when the Kipsigis go for a burial, they would inspect closely to see if there were any signs of tampering with the grave. If there happens to be any signs that something was done to the new grave, a diviner is called in immediately to deal with this evil force. The same would apply even after the post-burial ceremony, if a diviner confirms the suspicions of witchcraft he or she would normally advise on what precautions should be taken to root out this evil. With this in mind, this belief can be inculturated to emphasize the point that just as the elders ensures that the whole community has been saved from the evil force of witchcraft, Jesus Christ has willed that whoever goes to him shall not perish but have eternal life; this would ensure a better understanding of the doctrine of salvation.

### **5.7.8 Responsibility of the Living for the Success of the Deceased’s Journey**

Death, as we saw, is a journey in the eyes of the Kipsigis whose success depends so much on the living members. The desire of every spirit, as the Kipsigis would perceive, is to reach a place of rest. To reach such a place of rest it should look up to the members of the family to perform on its behalf the necessary rites for its admission in the world of the ancestors. If such rites are not done or improperly done the ancestors refuse to receive the spirit and in turn the spirit has a way of manifesting itself to the living to make its demands known and this could be in the form of sickness of one of the family members. Once the living members respond positively the illness disappears, a sign that the spirit has been granted what it wanted and can now rest in peace. Even in the world of the

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<sup>109</sup> Paul VI, “*Africae Terrarum (Land of Africa) Message to the Countries of Africa 1967*”, in T. Okure (ed) in *32 Articles Evaluating Inculturation of Christianity in Africa*, (Eldoret: 1990), p. 17.



living dead, the living still play a part, they are, according to Towett, the ones who sustain those in the immortal life. Once there is no one to remember a deceased person his/her name just disappears and this is why the Kipsigis place much value on the importance of children for through them their names live forever.<sup>110</sup>

### **5.7.9 Respect for the Place of the Dead**

As noted in the previous discussion, the graves are generally avoided by the Kipsigis except for ritual purposes. While the memory of their dear one they would have laid to rest vividly still clings on, the Kipsigis would not want the dear one to be disturbed by continuous crying or some unrespectful actions. The dead, so they believe, deserve their rest. When need be that someone should visit the grave, salutation is made through the clapping of hands. In respect of the sacral value of the graves, no tree near the graveyard should be cut away except just pruning when need arises. As for those among the Kipsigis who bury within the courtyard of their homes, they ensure that the graveyard is kept smart through regular sweeping and removal of any plants which may be growing within the vicinity.

### **5.7.10 Immortality of the Spirit**

Looking at all the post-burial rites of the Kipsigis, one thing which stands out so clearly is the belief in the immortality of the spirit. Death in the eyes of the Kipsigis is not the end of a person but rather a simple change of state. As we saw already, the Kipsigis conceive death as a journey to a better world where one would live forever. Just as their fellow African brothers and sisters, the Kipsigis too believe that in that better world where one goes, a person is not indifferent to what happens among the living, he/she is rather so alive and active, he is interested and actually takes part in the affairs of the living. This would explain why the Kipsigis would now and again brew beer in honour of their ancestors and remind them in case they would have forgotten their sacred duty towards the living. Attached to the idea of immortality is the notion of retribution among the Kipsigis. The Kipsigis in a way believe that a person is judged after his/her death in accordance with his/her deeds on earth. Though most Kipsigis tend to subscribe to the

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<sup>110</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 39.

often-said sweeping statement, “once dead one is good”, there are some reservations to such a general perception. Such reservations would explain why the Kipsigis would not perform the post-burial ritual for someone who was a real moral disaster during his/her life on earth. The same would apply to persons who would have committed suicide. The Kipsigis fear that reinstating such spirits would bring a real bad omen to the family.

#### **5.7.11 Communion of the Living and the Dead**

Going hand-in-hand with the concept of immortality is the belief that the living and the dead sustain each other. The living offer sacrifices to honour their ancestors and in so doing ensure that their names do not die out but rather are remembered in perpetuity. The dead, on their part, apart from responding to the material needs of their living members, they assist the living to observe faithfully all the injunctions that they left them with as a lasting legacy. Though the belief in God, as seen already, is quite strong among the Kipsigis, the dead tend to be more “user friendly” in that they can easily be approached with daily less complicated problems. *Asiis*, so the Kipsigis would believe, has left certain things in the hands of his lieutenants (ancestors) to deal with for it is right to delegate. It was only in real serious matters like drought that direct recourse to *Asiis* was made in Kipsigis religion. Those who have died, so the Kipsigis would believe, operate in communion in their dealings with the living. Thus when it comes to offerings made to ancestors during rituals the offer passes through a bureaucratic kind of system, junior A tells senior B and senior B tells more senior C and on and on till it reaches the spirit head of the family who may also pass it on to *Asiis* (God) when need be. The dead play a vital role in the lives of the living, doing everything possible to assist the living each time they cry for their intervention. The ancestors, as Magesa would note, are not separate from the family lineage or clan from which they come but are rather part and parcel of it and in the same relationship, the father will always be the father, mother as mother and so on. The expectations from them will also not change but remain similar to those that govern the social order among the living.<sup>111</sup> A glimpse into the Church’s teaching on the Communion of Saints and the parallel between the Triumphant Church and the Militant

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<sup>111</sup> L. Magesa, *African Religion: The moral traditions of abundant life*, (New York: Orbis Books 1997), p. 48.

Church had as it were their seeds in the Kipsigis belief in the communion between the living and the dead. A revisit to these Kipsigis traditions would boost the understanding and propagation of the doctrine under study among the Kipsigis and also in explaining the aforementioned parallelism.

#### **5.7.12 Sense of Family Bondedness**

The post-burial ritual brings to light the precious gift among the Kipsigis which is the sense of family bondedness. For the Kipsigis, just as with the majority of Africans, the family comes to be the natural environment in which one is born and acts, in which each finds the necessary protection and security; and eventually through union with his or her ancestors has continuity beyond earthly life.<sup>112</sup> Without the help of the family one would not have someone to assist him or her in the journey to the world of the living dead. Such a person, as we saw, wanders restlessly as an alien spirit. In the post-burial ritual the bond of togetherness characteristic of ideal families is clearly demonstrated. The sharing of a meal in honour of the deceased who would have been brought back into the family illustrates the oneness of the family since the Kipsigis family comprises also the dead and the unborn. Likening post-burial ritual to the eucharist- a salvation event in Church life; which is partaken of in a spirit of familyhood, a key informant to this study had this to say: "... it brings the people to eat the meal together, celebrating the salvation of the soul after its transformation to new life in the spirit; it is Easter of its own kind." This as seen above betters understanding of Church doctrines if properly inculturated.

#### **5.7.13 Respect for the role played by a Father**

In the family, which is also reflected in the post-burial ceremony, it is worth to note the respect for the part played by the father of the family and the authority he has. During his life on earth as well as even after his death, the father in a Kipsigis family set-up has a typically priestly function assigned to him whereby he acts as a mediator not only between the ancestors and his family but also between *Asiis* and his family. The post-burial ritual re-accords this temporarily lost role to the father of the family, giving him his

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<sup>112</sup> Pope Paul VI cited in J. Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, (Maryknoll, New York, 1997), p. 170.

rightful place in looking after the family. In the case of a misfortune, for example, which occurs in the family after the post-burial ceremony, the family knows whom to appeal to for mediation. The respect for the role played by the father of the family is well demonstrated also in the rituals of honour. As we saw, the spirit head of the family is accorded his rightful place in the family group through the annual festivities held in his honour. Plea is again made to him to continue and not tire in his mediatory role for the survival of his clan group. As one who is considered the most senior in the family lineage, he is believed to be near *Asiis*, capable thus of receiving blessings for the whole extended family group.

#### **5.7.14 Progeny should be looked after**

Flowing from the value placed in the family is the strong conviction among the Kipsigis that children of a deceased person have to be cared for. The inheritance ceremony is the external sign which tries to perpetuate such an understanding among the Kipsigis. The wife/wives and children as we saw are placed into the hands of a brother to the deceased man so that he assumes the duties of his deceased brother to the family.

Such a transfer of roles ensures that the deceased's family does not fall apart but maintains its position within the extended family structure. In this modern world where many families are breaking up following the death of parents, the Church could learn from the Kipsigis in sending a message of care for progeny. Though institutions which try to cater for orphans are there in the world, the love in these institutions is less compared to the love one would receive in a family set-up. Cases of exploitation by the masters of these institutions may as well not be completely ruled out.

#### **5.7.15 Our interaction with the Dead should not be a onetime event**

If there is anything which the Kipsigis rituals of honour demonstrate also, is the idea that our interaction with the dead should not be a onetime event. Sometimes people have a tendency of forgetting once they have done the post-burial ritual as seen in the often-said statement of the, "we cleansed him/her, it is over." The Kipsigis family, as we saw, comprises also the dead, so as fellow members constant interaction with them is believed

to ensure lasting memory of them and helps also secure favours of life from them. In poetry form, Towett's words help as it were sum up the central point in the Kipsigis rituals of honour: "They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old, age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn at the going down of the sun, and in the morning we will remember them."<sup>113</sup>

#### **5.7.16 Faithfulness to one's Obligations**

Kipsigis religion lays emphasis on fidelity; one has to be faithful to one's pledge or obligations. African religion-Kipsigis religion included, as Majawa rightly notes, stresses the horizontal dimensions of life and once that is in order, so it is believed, the vertical relationship of man to God will then be regularized.<sup>114</sup> It insists on faithfulness to one's religious duties, authority, relations, and traditions as a concrete indication of love. Failure to be faithful is treachery of the highest ideals of the society and such a person who betrays his/her people by exposing them to suffering, ridicule and disdain is simply viewed as a disgrace to the society. It is basically such cases of disgrace that the Kipsigis rituals of appeasement seek to address. In instituting such rituals, the Kipsigis were indirectly sending a strong message on the need for one to be faithful to one's obligations. During life, so is implied by the message of the Kipsigis, a person must and should never do anything that could provoke someone to return as an avenging spirit. Covered here is the need for respect and care for one's parents, faithfulness in the payment of one's debts and in the distribution of property after death, care for one's spouse, hospitality towards a stranger and so many other acts of virtue towards fellow human beings.

#### **5.8 Inculturation of Kipsigis Rites of Passage**

In this sub-section, our inculturation effort focuses on how the Kipsigis rites of passage can be inculturated by initiating dialogue which provides the needed interaction for the RCC to express salvation message. This interaction would help translate the doctrine

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<sup>113</sup> T. Towett. *Oral (Traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p. 39.

<sup>114</sup> C. Majawa, *Integrated Approach to African Christian Theology of Inculturation*, (Nairobi: Creation Enterprises, 2005), p. 102.

under study into the concrete life situation of the Kipsigis and help transform Kipsigis mentality and make present the model of Church-as-a family in the mode of integrating the gospel values and Kipsigis salvation values. This is hoped, will make Kipsigis go beyond their ethnic family barriers to make renovative transit to the universal “Family of God” denoted concretely by the RCC; thereby sharing the salvation values with the universal Church.

This sub-section therefore examines Kipsigis rites of passage and Christian sacrament, with a view that Kipsigis values can be analogically applied to enhance a better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation. As already seen in chapter two, in Kipsigis religious world, life is a journey which is accompanied by various rituals to invoke the blessings of the ancestors, and ultimately of the Supreme Being. The rituals ceremonies are believed to ward off possible dangers of disruptions and initiate smooth development and fulfillment in both individual and community life. These rites of passage which accompany Kipsigis life from pregnancy/birth and continue through puberty and marriage will be discussed and elaborated on how it can help to better the understanding of the aforementioned doctrine by utilizing Christian sacraments of baptism, confirmation and marriage.

In religious world, signs and symbols play a significant role particularly in sacraments; God conveys his saving power to humanity in visible signs and symbols understandable to man. God takes the common elements from the world around us –objects which can be touched, felt and tasted, words that we can hear and gestures that we could understand- and makes these carriers of his salvation grace. Some of these salvation actions of God are crystallized and codified as sacraments. Sacraments are the “outward signs of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our sanctification.” They are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace instituted by Christ within the Church. CCC defines sacraments as “efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required predisposition. They are powers that come forth from the body of Christ which is ever-

living and life giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his body, the Church.”<sup>115</sup>

Sacraments therefore are instruments of divine power, signs of divine communication with humanity. They are formal religious ceremonies, conferring specific graces on those who receive them. The signs and symbols, used in the celebration of each sacrament, act as vehicle of the grace which nourishes, gives growth and development, oil for the grace which soothes and strengthens. Signs and symbols, words and gestures therefore combine to express profound religious and liturgical acts which mediate salvation grace. They are the divine helps which God gives us to punctuate certain significant moments of our life’s journey, to strengthen our faith and grant us growth in it. The Kipsigis rites of passage therefore can be inculturated to elaborate the Church sacraments, which apparently touch on all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life; thereby enhancing better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation. These sacraments give birth and increase healing and mission to the Christian’s life and faith. There is thus resemblance between the stages of natural and spiritual life.<sup>116</sup> This section thus discusses possible concrete interaction between them and shows how the doctrine could be integrated in these Kipsigis rites to give more credibility to the doctrine under study in the Kipsigis milieu.

### **5.8.1 Rites of Passage and the Sacrament of Baptism**

The sacrament of baptism is the gateway to a special relationship with God, the entrance into the “Family of God”, the Church. It is the Church’s way of celebrating and enacting the entrance of God who first loved us before even our conception. Baptism is the foundation upon which all the other sacraments of faith by which men and women, enlightened by grace of the Holy Spirit, respond to the Gospel of Christ. It is the sacrament upon which the people are incorporated into the Church; baptism thus is washing with water accompanied by the living word, cleanses men and women of all stain of sin, original and personal, and makes them shavers in God’s life as his adopted

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<sup>115</sup> CCC no. 1131.

<sup>116</sup> CCC no. 1210.

children.<sup>117</sup> Since baptism is a serious step of commitment to God in the community of believers as well as an instrument for salvation, faith is required for reception of the sacrament.

Considering the importance of the future orientation of both Kipsigis naming rites and the RCC sacrament of baptism and the fact that both religious rituals introduce people into defined groups as cultural bearers of the Kipsigis family and into a lifelong journey of discipleship in the Church, it is important that parents be strong role models to lead the way in both traditional life and in authentic Christian living. It is in this light that the preparation of parents for both the Kipsigis naming ceremony and the Christian baptism is very important. The preparation of parents as well as the entire family for naming ceremony in the Kipsigis set-up could be a vital ingredient for inculturation. The Kipsigis cultural practice sets good grounds for pastoral ministry and catechetical instructions.

The selection of African names for baptism is necessary and vital for Kipsigis Christian identity. The Kipsigis practice of taking names of their family ancestors throw light on the Christian invocation of the saints in the celebration of baptism. The revelatory and protective role of ancestors, after whom children are named, can be illuminating in relation to the mediatory role of saints in the sacrament of baptism. The recognition and invocation of well-meaning family ancestors in inculturated baptism ceremonies could be exhilarating for Kipsigis. This explains better the Church's idea of the communion with saints thereby enhancing the understanding of the doctrine of salvation as well as solving the double identity crises among the Kipsigis Christians in Kericho Sub-County.

There is need to integrate the Kipsigis in the core of his community and solidarity family ritual in naming ceremony with the sacrament of baptism. This will lead to true identification with the Church as "Family of God", thus also providing solution to the double identity crisis among the adherents.

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<sup>117</sup> A. Flannery (ed.) *Vatican Council II Post Conciliar Documents*, Vatican Collection vol. 2, General Introduction to Christian Initiation, 24/6/1973, no. 3-5.



### **5.8.2 Puberty Rites and the Sacrament of Confirmation**

The sacrament of confirmation together with that of baptism and Holy Communion are salvation events in the life of the Church which form the sacraments of initiation which were celebrated together in the early Church. These sacraments initiate the individual into the life, passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In baptismal front, we die and rise to new life in Christ; confirmation is a sacrament of mature Christian commitment which intensifies the baptismal gift and roots us more deeply in our salvation identity as God's children in the community of believers, the Church. Consequently, the preparation for confirmation includes learning to internalize and articulate more appropriately what it means to be a responsible and committed Christian. Preparation for confirmation should aim at leading the Christian towards a more intimate union with Christ and more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit- his actions, his gifts, and his biddies-in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life.<sup>118</sup> In this sacrament, we receive the Holy Spirit, the very Spirit that directed, inspired and empowered Jesus Christ in his ministry of salvation; so that we too may lead lives of true witness, thus be saved. That is why the prayer of confirmation solicits the gift of the Holy Spirit; the rites of passage are essential for development and transition from one stage of life to the other thus leading to good orientation in life. In order to anchor the doctrine of salvation into the cultural life and liberate people for a more fulfilling life, there is need to inculturate the puberty rites into the sacrament of confirmation.

The identification and continuous integration in the Church-family can be consolidated in the transformation and integration of sacrament of confirmation into the Kipsigis family value of puberty rites. Puberty rites are vital Kipsigis family value which serves the fundamental function of consolidating childhood education, instructing and integrating adolescents into the norm of adult life in a more comprehensive and detailed manner. Their basic goal is to ensure the shaping up of productive, community oriented responsible adults. To achieve this goal, the elders responsible for initiation rites take the young initiates out of the community and away from the concerns of everyday life to teach them the way of adulthood: including the rules and taboos of society, moral

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<sup>118</sup> CCC no. 1309.

instructions and social responsibility and further clarification of individual's mission in life. This is systematized in a socially recognized way of incorporating adolescents into the social strata of the society. It is an organized way of accompanying young people to achieve their life's mission in society. Puberty rites thus impart clearly to the initiates the solidarity and cooperation demanded of them henceforth and grants them the socially recognized status in the society. This is essential for social integration, self identity and clear orientation in life. They establish rights and responsibilities and define roles for the initiates and anchor them more concretely into family and community life.

To effectively integrate Kipsigis adolescents into adult life, it is imperative on the Church to adequately inculcate the sacrament of confirmation. When the Kipsigis family value of puberty rites are taken seriously and transformed, purified by Holy Spirit and integrated to the doctrine of salvation, they can contribute meaningfully to anchor faith into the Kipsigis culture, give clear orientation to the youth on sexual matters and educate them on mutual respect and responsibility.

### **5.8.3 Rites of Passage and the Sacrament of Marriage**

The study has revealed from the anthropological chapter that marriage is a vital Kipsigis rite of passage the diligence of searching for a marriage partner amply demonstrates the importance of marriage in Kipsigis milieu. Among the Kipsigis, marriage involves the entire extended family as an alliance and the participation of the family members makes this evident. The Kipsigis aspect of taking time in selection of marriage partner offers great pastoral opportunity for Christian instruction and pastoral evangelization. The above aspect can be inculcated so as to lead to publication of marriage bands and investigation for marriage impediments, the contractual of marriage can be inculcated thus leading to dialogue, community transformation, reconciliation, peace and eventually salvation of its members.

### **5.9 Chapter's Concluding Remarks**

On the basis of chapter three and chapter four, the current chapter has made an effort in actually inculcating the Kipsigis worldview items with the Catholic doctrine of salvation through inculturation approach. It has been done in order to better

understanding, articulation and propagation of the aforementioned doctrine in Kericho Sub-County and elsewhere. As one reads through the chapter, one is made to appreciate that Kipsigis worldview items and traditions have rich values which can be beneficiary explored and integrated into Christianity for fruitful propagation of the doctrine among the Kipsigis.

It is worth reiterating that within framework of the Kipsigis family, the doctrine of salvation evokes a philosophy of life and living which embraces both we who still live on earth, the “living dead”, the ancestors, the creator and the rest of the creation, hence as such, such a formulation become more pragmatic and existential rather than impose abstraction. Thus, it becomes salvation in, through, and by the family for the perpetuation of the ideal “Family of God”- the family that will incorporate us with ancestors of the yonder life.

All the above insights together with the investigations and explications made in the previous chapters enable us to make a summary of the study, draw out implications and emerging recommendations together with areas for further study in the next last chapter.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY, EMERGING RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

With the insights gained from the previous and the other chapters analyzed so far in the study, we are empowered to make a summary, draw implications of the study and make recommendations together with areas for further study. We will treat them in the following sequence: summary of the study, implications of the study namely: spiritual, catechetical, pastoral and liturgical; emerging recommendations; areas for further research and conclusion.

#### **6.1 Summary**

In summary, the study has examined the Kipsigis worldview items for better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation through inculturation approach investigating the positive salvation values found in Kipsigis worldview with a view of utilizing them to help in better understanding and propagation of the above doctrine thereby making the doctrine to truly feel at home in Kipsigis culture. As such, the main goal of the study was to investigate Kipsigis worldview items for better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation among the Kipsigis through inculturation approach. This was achieved through the following specific objectives: To explore Kipsigis worldview items that would enhance a better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation by means of inculturation; To examine RCC's teachings and theologians' reflections on inculturation; To discuss RCC's teachings and theologians' reflections on the doctrine of salvation and to confront emerging insights from Kipsigis worldview items with RCC's and theologians' explanation of salvation for mutual enrichment and accruing implications.

The main hypothesis tested in the study was that through inculturation approach the Kipsigis worldview items when properly investigated and critically analyzed contribute

to better propagation and understanding of the aforementioned doctrine. The specific hypotheses were: Properly examined, employing inculturation approach, the Kipsigis Worldview items would enhance a better understanding of the RCC doctrine of salvation; There are important RCCs' teachings and theologians' reflections on inculturation that can be explored to help in understanding salvation better. The doctrine of salvation as expounded by RCC and theologians is invaluable but not sufficient for African world-view and situation in life and that Kipsigis worldview items *vis-a'-vis* RCCs' teachings and theologians' reflections are significant in understanding and explaining the doctrine of salvation.

Furthermore, the study was guided by four complementary theories namely: mediation theory expounded by Boff and Boff, redaction criticism theory expounded by exponents like Käsemann, Bornkamm, Conzelmann, Fuchs *et al*; Congar's general revelation theory and Nyamiti's *nexus mysteriorum* theory. Through these theories, the study has been able to achieve its main goal and objectives.

The second chapter has exposed and elaborated the Kipsigis social and religious way of life: this part is anthropological and it presents preliminary issues; for instance the historical and social contexts of the Kipsigis, which when utilized are useful for understanding the RCC's doctrine of salvation. The study found out that Kipsigis way of life is deeply communal, relational and vitalistic in its socio-religious-philosophical way of life; key elements which if inculturated will enhance better understanding of the aforesaid doctrine.

As was explained, while it would have been more realistic to base the study on many ethnic groups to have a wider representation, the study chose one i.e. the Kipsigis. One of the reasons we gave is that the study is both anthropological and theological. On the latter, divine revelation informs that there is family solidarity that embraces ethnic groups. We saw that the endowment is an enmerited gift from God for individual and common good. With this in mind, it was elaborated that whatever is of value in a given ethnic group should benefit others as well. On the other hand, as explained, the shortcomings in a particular community ought to be helped by others according to the

principle of mutual benefit. We asked: But why the Kipsigis and not any other sub-Kalenjin community namely, Marakwet, Pokot, Tugen, Elgeyo, Nandi, Sebei, Terik and Sabaot? The presented justification was that among the cluster of the Kalenjin, the Kipsigis are the largest and their worldview philosophy of life has been neglected by the RCC evangelizers more so with regard to the doctrine of salvation. We also agreed with Kaswiza that opting for a particular ethnic group in theologizing is the in thing today. Another limitation that was pointed out is that of the choice of inculturation approach rather than that of liberation or even the perspective of re-construction. The argument the study raised is that inculturation already implies the other two orientations. So it is a question of emphasis and not exclusion.

Chapter three examines inculturation; the main issue in this chapter was that of explaining inculturation approach employed in our study. It commenced with handling the nature of inculturation. It then showed that the issue of inculturation has been generating important ideas and instructions in Church history. On the basis of this observation, the chapter elaborated the concept of “inculturation” in relation to other related terms. It also explored RCC’s teachings on the issue as it tackled theologians’ reflections on the subject. The fundamental argument of the chapter was that our study will not be introducing new ideas on inculturation but will be building on ongoing Church instructions and insights from other scholars who have continuously and ably participated in theologizing from this approach. This chapter then, supported this kind of study.

In chapter four, the study handled RCC teachings and theologians’ reflections on the Catholic doctrine of salvation. To accomplish this task, the RCC’s teachings on salvation were examined. This was done by focusing on the Church’s pedagogy concerning salvation. The other major theme in the chapter was that of theologians’ reflections on salvation. The theologians that were considered were Karl Rahner, Jacques Dupuis, Gustavo Gutierrez, Patrick Wachege, Hans Küng, Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, and Raymond Panikkar. The study found out that the selected contemporary theologians’ reflections on the doctrine of salvation is invaluable but not sufficient for African worldview for our case the Kipsigis of Kericho.

The kernel of this study is chapter five where an effort to explore and relate the invaluable Kipsigis worldview items with the RCC understanding of salvation was carried out. It was discovered that Kipsigis religion and philosophy has vitalistic elements and interpersonal relationship with the departed. It was also realized that the Kipsigis are life-centered a perspective that shapes family, community, relationship and their religiosity; thus if inculturated, this will help the Kipsigis understand, formulate and present salvation which is more pragmatic than abstract.

With such a summary and what has been treated so far in the previous chapters, the following implications can be drawn from the study that are aimed at empowering the Church in Kericho Sub-County to effectively propagate the aforementioned doctrine in order for the Kipsigis to own and authentically live the Gospel.

## **6.2 Implications of the Study**

The following interrelated implications can be drawn from what has been explicated so far in the study. They are examined in the following order: spiritual implications, catechetical implications, pastoral implications and liturgical implications;

### **6.2.1 Spiritual Implications**

The study is imbued with a number of aspects that would go a long way in enhancing the spirituality of the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County and elsewhere. In the first place the study's exploration of Kipsigis worldview salvation values go a long way in helping the Kipsigis in general to appreciate these rich values better. As a result they would own and live with these inherent values alongside the invaluable Christian insights-on the doctrine under study and the Gospel message transmitting them to their children and other younger generations thus enhancing authentic Christian living.

The very exercise of inculturating Kipsigis' worldview items with Church doctrines-and particularly that of salvation and theologians' reflections on the aforementioned doctrine will go a long way in empowering Kipsigis Christians in Kericho effectively thus becoming authentic within the realm of the "Family of God." With our effort so far, they will feel encouraged thus solving the double identity crisis problem in their lives. They

will understand better Vatican Council II's instruction that they have a duty to inculcate positive salvation values so as to make the Gospel message truly feel at home in their culture.

From this kind of study's explication elaborating the doctrine of salvation using Kipsigis salvation values will enable us to live more authentically. This then will impact tremendously on our spirituality since this will bring a new vision and attitude to life. Moreover, utilizing both elderhood values in creating Christological studies just as Wachege<sup>1</sup> rightly puts or creating ancestral Christologies using the Kipsigis ancestral categories of thought as Nyamiti<sup>2</sup> observes, will enable Kipsigis Christians to rule as Christ did, serve as He served, relate as He did, forgive and encourage us to grow as He did; thus Kipsigis Christians will be enabled to endeavour to live Him within their historical, concrete existence and their situation of life; this then enables Kipsigis Christians to take Christ as their model and exemplar -Jesus Christ, who emptied Himself for all and laid the foundation of our salvation as Christians.

In this regard as well, inculturating Kipsigis Worldview values, will encourage the RCC Christians in Kericho Sub-County to venture into Christ-like life, it involve living fully in accordance to His will. Thus, the Kipsigis Christians will become better assured of moving towards fulfillment in vitalistic community. This then would demonstrate that the Kipsigis worldview values significantly dispose the Kipsigis Christians positively to Jesus Christ-the Saviour of humanity.

Furthermore, the study found out that the RCC magisterial directives do not destroy the Kipsigis cultural values and philosophy of life. The instructions and directives demand inculturation of positive salvation values and liberation of the destructive values thereby enabling Kipsigis Christians to inculturate these positive items to Christianity thus enabling them to witness maturely and authentically. These directives therefore lead to liberty of utilizing the positive cultural values consequently setting us free from superstitions and parochial tribal absoluteness; it also enables Kipsigis Christians to

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<sup>1</sup> P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ our Mūthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study based on Agikuyu Understanding of an Elder*, (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1, Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundations* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), pp12-34.



incorporate all in tribal inter-communion, since all belong to the “Family of God”-thus treating others as *massa damnata* (hell material) is un-Christian. Hence, using Kipsigis values of generosity, community and vitalism it enables Christ to live among Christians.

The foregoing study thus enables Kipsigis Christians to live Christianity more deeply and in fuller personal manner. Such a study of salvation anchored in Kipsigis Worldview way of life, Kipsigis worldview equips us with vital tools in realizing the possibility of understanding the doctrine better using Kipsigis items as well as taking our fellow human beings with respect and dignity since we all belong to the “Family of God.” This study on doctrine of salvation is not merely inculturational; it is also liberational too. The Kipsigis worldview, with particular reference to worldview items, enables the study to respond to our people’s needs and aspirations in their particular situation of life, thereby leading to relevant and authentic spirituality on how people ought to understand the doctrine and think about Jesus Christ-the author of our salvation.

### **6.2.2 Catechetical Implications**

These implications have close affinity to the spiritual implications explicated above. As such, the study wishes to draw some of these catechetical implications that will go a long way in assisting the RCC Church in Kericho Sub-County to propagate and handle better the doctrine of salvation. Catechesis refers to “that ecclesial activity which leads the community and the individual Christian to maturity of faith.”<sup>3</sup> This study was a real attempt to make the doctrine of salvation more relevant not only to the Kipsigis but to all those who possess the Kipsigis kind of salvation values and even those without them. It is also evident that Kipsigis worldview items, though discarded as obsolete, create an awareness for posterity and godliness to direct our lives towards salvation.

From the study, Kipsigis Christians are enabled to explain more meaningfully “being Christians.” It urges that being a Christian signifies our solidarity with Christ, and thus the need to commit to follow His way. Thus our expectations, demands, talking, acting, reacting, interpersonal relationships and living fully, ought to lead to realizing His will

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<sup>3</sup> A. Flannery (ed.) *Vatican Council II Post Conciliar Documents*, Vatican Collection vol. 2, General Introduction to Christian Initiation, 24/6/1973, p. 543.

and unity of one human family that is the “Family of God.” Utilizing Kipsigis Worldview items in explicating the concept of Trinity will enable Kipsigis to understand it in a more intelligible, venerable and fascinating manner that would be the case with some other attributes or titles appropriated by western categories of thought. This kind of study will be valuable and important to the youth in the search for a hero in our world of rapid changes as well as in the evident erosion of moral values, exposure to drug addiction and other dehumanizing issues.

Furthermore, having witnessed the salvation values in the initiation rites should encourage the Church in Kericho Sub-County and elsewhere to support and effect initiatory growth and involvement of the youth. It should prepare the youth to undertake this process despite the challenges of *status quo* persisting in the current society. This would enhance a strong relationship between the Kipsigis youth and Christ thus enabling them to perpetuate Christ in their youthful stage. Hence, Christ will be an attraction to them as well as an object of reflection in the daily living.

The study as well challenges the Church in Kericho Sub-County particularly the Priests to review their catechism process. They are challenged and provided with some examples on how to inculturate the positive salvation values in the Kipsigis worldview. The Local Church in Kericho Sub-County and elsewhere is challenged by the study to review and revise the local catechism in light of the local situation. From the study, the pastoral agents are challenged that instructions given to the Christians should include the needs of others in the local Church. Such instructions should aim at building the Church as a “Family of God,” as a community of members sharing spiritual and material resources. They should include the duties and obligations the faithful have in helping other members of the Church, families and the society. After all, “the specific aim of catechesis is to develop, with God’s help, an informed as yet initial faith, and to advance in fullness and to nourish day by day the Christian life of the faithful, young and old.”<sup>4</sup> Formed through such instruction, Christians; young and old, single or married, will feel obliged to live by these instructions as they grow within the “Family of God.”

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<sup>4</sup> John Paul II, *Catechesis Tradendae* (Catechesis Today), (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1979), p.20.

Pastoral agents will as well be challenged that catechesis “must be systematic... programmed to reach a precise goal, it must deal with essentials...must be an integral Christian initiation, open to all other factors of Christian life.”<sup>5</sup> With such understanding they will seek to provide catechesis that responds to needs, aspirations and mentalities of the Kipsigis people in their socio-cultural contexts. They will thus seek to address some of the challenges such as double identity crisis thereby leading to a more mature witnessing and authentic Christian living within the realm of the “Family of God.”

With the above insights therefore, those giving the instructions will be challenged to be properly prepared to ensure holistic and relevant formation of catechumens. A further catechetical implication derived from this study is that of fulfilling the will of God. As we saw earlier in our anthropological chapter, the last will of a departing elder has a tremendous vitality on the people; as such, there is an analogical relationship between Christ’s last will and such a belief in the last will of the Kipsigis people. Thus as our Saviour, we depend on Christ so much for spiritual and bodily welfare for us. Thus this study on salvation raises awareness not to disregard our Saviour’s last will.

In addition to above, as evident from Wachege’s Christological study basing on elderhood values<sup>6</sup> and Nyamiti’s Ancestral Trinitarian<sup>7</sup> study, inculturating elderhood and ancestral values respectively will enable a particular community-including the Kipsigis to answer the pertinent question; ‘Who is Jesus Christ for the Kipsigis?’-this thus will enable the Kipsigis to understand the Saviour, redeemer and source of grace (the central point of discussion and source of the doctrine of salvation). Hence explaining the Saviour using the Kipsigis categories of thought shows the importance of the study for catechetical purposes. Once Christ is presented using Kipsigis categories of thought then, we hold that the Saviour will no longer appear a stranger to the Kipsigis. Such catechetical instruction will, moreover, be a good preparation for the entry into Kipsigis Christianized categories of thought through Kipsigis rituals raised to the level of sacramentals of the Church, as will be suggested in the liturgical part.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.21.

<sup>6</sup> P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ our Mūthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study based on Agikuyu Understanding of an Elder*, (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992), p. 244.

<sup>7</sup> C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology Vol.1, Jesus Christ, the Ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian Foundations* (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), pp12-34.

### **6.2.3 Pastoral Implications**

These implications are closely related to the spiritual and catechetical implications examined above. As aforementioned, all these three are interrelated and thus shed light to each other. What has been explicated so far therefore have pastoral implications but the following implications are added. The tedious exercise of investigating the Kipsigis worldview items for better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation in Kericho Sub-County, through inculturation approach should challenge the Church; the laity and ordained to revisit the important demands of the magisterium in making the Gospel truly feel at home in various cultural contexts. In this case, the study brings to the attention of the Church the urgent need of utilizing salvation values in Kipsigis culture for better understanding and propagation of the aforementioned doctrine in order to help Kipsigis Christians witness and live authentically the Gospel message.

In this regard as well, awareness is created that Kipsigis Worldview is imbued with salvation items that can be inculturated to explicate various Church doctrines. With the study's option for the doctrine of salvation, Pastoral agents are challenged to explore this approach with other Church doctrines. They are thus to discover in their pastoral activities, the diverse and diverging Kipsigis categories of thought and how each will contribute to the understanding of various doctrines in the Church. They will in turn adopt a better pastoral approach to catechesis thereby making the Kipsigis to own and live the Good News authentically.

Through redaction criticism method of Biblical study explicated and used in the study to draw some relevant Biblical insights on our subject, the Pastoral agents and the Laity members of the Church are better equipped to source scientifically and authentically from the Bible as the main inspirer in Christianity. The Pastoral agents will handle better Biblical Scriptures in their Pastoral work and use it as a tool to guide, counsel, encourage, correct, comfort and empower their members in their diverse situations in life. They will thus utilize Kipsigis categories of thought while carrying out their pastoral work. The Priests and the laity generally, will also have a better approach to the Bible. They will be

able to source better and critically from the book of life drawing encouragements, comfort and hope even at difficult times.

Furthermore, through Boffs' Mediation Theory used in the study, the pastoral agents in Kericho Sub-County and elsewhere will be able to insert themselves better into the situations of their congregants. Through such insertion they will understand better and identify well with the needs of their members. With the subject treated in the study in particular, the ordained and the laity in the Church will be able to understand better how to inculcate the doctrine under study. They will then equip themselves better and relevantly in their pastoral work in light of the Word of God thus ensuring more fruitful ministry. They will as well come up with practical and achievable plans and activities aimed at addressing doctrine under study. Since the process is continuous, they will keep on equipping themselves and their members better to handle emerging needs and challenges at different times.

#### **6.2.4 Liturgical Implications**

Closely related to the above is the liturgical implication. The Church should consider and if found worthy, elevate the Kipsigis worldview items exposed and explicated in the foregone chapters to the level of sacramentals. To our understanding, doing this will enable the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County to participate and celebrate Christianity with seriousness, commitment and within a renewed disposition. Thus, they would be able to worship *Asiis* (God) in their own ways of life and in accordance with their needs, mentality, thought forms and aspirations. This should be done after necessary liberation, transformation and Christianization of Kipsigis rituals by experts and exponents in liturgy in collaboration with the Kipsigis community. This involves continuous catechesis and evangelization. With such, there would be a deeper and a meaningful service of sacramentals in view of realizing its salvation power. Through the new sacramentals, the Kipsigis will be enabled to put on and be virtually linked with Christ-the Saviour thus allowing Him to be effective in their ethnic community. This then leads us to make the following recommendations below.

### **6.3 Emerging Recommendation**

Drawing from the foregoing, the following recommendations were hereby outlined for considerations:

#### **6.3.1 Utilization of Kipsigis items in Catechesis**

There is great need of utilizing diverse Kipsigis symbols, thought forms, cultural artifacts, images, proverbs, riddles and rituals drawn from Kipsigis customs, philosophy and traditions which are God given treasure. A proper inculturation of these will not only purify Christians from sin but also bring a new understanding of the doctrine of salvation. The Kipsigis rites of passage in particular are invaluable and this needs to be confirmed and affirmed.

The Kipsigis initiation rites are still useful in transiting individuals from lesser demanding stages of life to more demanding ones; they mark a person's new stage in life through convivial transition distinguishing an old realm of life from a new one. These rites also entail initiation and societal elaborate dialogical and pedagogical programme.

Their proper inculturation would remove the double identity crisis, a dichotomized life as a Kipsigis and as a Christian, which is incompatible to Christianity. The promotion of these rites, with proper modification and Christianization, would expose Kipsigis believers to mature witness of salvation in all areas of life. A proper examination of the above showed, as we have seen, that Kipsigis do not use the word "salvation", these rites are imbued with a rich understanding of salvation with personalistic, communal and pneumatological sense of proximity to *Asiis* (God).

The research moreover, brought to our awareness that the Kipsigis explain the process of growing more, of being more, of living more and of gradual final accomplishment through their philosophy of initiation rites. They may not have a clear concept for salvation as Christians do. Nevertheless, the underlying symbolism of living fully in this life and yonder on with the "living dead", with ancestral spirits and proximity to God is indicative. Such characteristics are full of vitalistic analogical descriptions as discussed

previously, are more meaningful and heavenly to Kipsigis than abstract and “bookish” propagations.

While evangelizing to the Kipsigis, it is important to be cautious of professional/secularized or westernized perspectives, one should bear in mind that; “in traditional life, the individual does not exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people ...the individual can say: “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.”<sup>8</sup> This is a cardinal point of understanding African view of man-Kipsigis included. The above is also echoed by Nyasani where he highlights this conception from metaphysical perspective. He notes that; “with this traditional religio-cultural, philosophical and social roots, more stress should be put on salvation in, through and with our neighbours than on “me and my God reductionism.”<sup>9</sup>

The edifying vision from such on Kipsigis fabric of life is that we are deemed to be saved with others too. This emphasis of self-within-community solidarity should provoke and intensify the Church’s catechesis on salvation. It is an outlook which should be reviewed, transmitted and appreciated by staunch Kipsigis Christians and all of good faith.

While endeavouring to make the doctrine of salvation understood better and genuinely owned among the Kipsigis Christians, Christ’s being and activity ought to be presented as fundamental bases of Christian morality. Hence, when such morality is envisaged from the Kipsigis ancestral viewpoint, it must be essentially Christocentric by focusing on Christ as our Brother-Ancestor; who is our principal model, vital source or ultimate basis and final goal (Saviour) of Christian conduct.

The exemplarity of Christ in Christian behaviour signifies that his teachings and way of life will be the primary models or criteria for attainment of salvation. Even though Kipsigis tradition may have others like ancestors and elders; they are considered as models only if they reflect Christ and his teaching and leads towards Him the source of salvation. Christ also should not be taken as an exterior model of conduct but as the animating principle or vital source of such conduct. This is only possible through Christ’s

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<sup>8</sup> J. S. Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, (Nairobi: EAEP), p.108.

<sup>9</sup> J. Nyasani, “*The Ontological Significance of ‘I’ and ‘We’ in African Philosophy*”, in L. Namwera (ed.), *African Christian studies*, (Nairobi: CUEA Publications, vol. 7, March 1991), p. 58.

pneumatic descendancy implying the divine Sonship as seen earlier in chapter five. Furthermore, Christ should be considered as the ultimate goal (Saviour) of Christian life or conduct. Thus from the foregoing, no moral act can be good in itself if it does not lead to vital union with the divine Saviour; thus Kipsigis Christians must learn to live as Christ, in Christ and for Christ, the Ancestor.

### **6.3.2 Transformation of the Mode of Evangelization**

Due to today's changing situations of life and modernization imbued with and reinforced by the reality of the world as a global village, our mode of catechesis ought to be innovative to meet the needs and aspirations of the targeted group - for our case the Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County. It ought to be transformed to fit new changing generations, new challenges, new diverse methodologies and new way of life. Nyamiti notes;

Accordingly, the Africans today should be taught to consider any authentic cultural values from any African society as belonging to his or hers. In order to inculcate this attitude in the minds of our people, the teachings of an African theology based on common African cultural elements is particularly useful.<sup>10</sup>

Nyamiti's sentiments thus encourage that whatever is edifying and comes from a particular African context, if it is salvation, then all believers ought to accept as their own – this then approves the foregoing that it can be applied by all African ethnic groups even westerners and not Kipsigis alone.

From the foregoing it is evident that Eurocentric or western approaches to catechesis ought to be avoided in African contexts and instead African ones be adopted. In this way, though rather fluid, we will enrich ourselves and enhance a better cum meaningful impact to our people. This ought to be done while being cautious of false particularism and parochial mindedness<sup>11</sup>, as Wachege cautions.

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<sup>10</sup> C. Nyamiti, "The Trinity from African Ancestral Perspective", in *African Christian studies*, (CUEA Vol. 12, no.4, Dec. 1996, p.44

<sup>11</sup> This issue has been well tackled by P. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2000), p.165



Accentuation ought to be put on interdependence on one another rather than dependence. Awareness ought to be created that we are and should be saved, that Christians are all Saviours as well as subjects of salvation. Sin ought to be taught as harmful to the family solidarity and wellbeing, destruction of cosmo-theadric harmony of the universe as understood by Africans. The re-introduction of the taboo philosophy should be seriously considered and investigated. Thus salvation ought to be interpreted in terms of, “a matter of how we live; as one in love for each other.”<sup>12</sup> An individual approach to this ministry ought to be discouraged and instead, communal approach should be encouraged.

Thus innovative approach to replace conservative one to catechesis should be adopted to make the Good News fit into the changing situations of life for it to be meaningful and fruitful to a particular context of life – just like the Kipsigis as the research endeavoured.

### **6.3.3 Need for More Pragmatic Salvation**

Awareness ought to be raised that we are all Saviours and thus the need to preach and identify with salvation to be more fruitful. This can be achieved by striving to live by what one preaches; this implies witnessing by and through oneself. There is need to do as Jesus did by his words deeds, allegories, parables, teachings and actions; our Saviour and example.<sup>13</sup> This issue need not belabor since it has been handled adequately in the previous chapter.

### **6.3.4 Salvation be preached as the Principal Way of Life**

Since religion to an African – Kipsigis included, is the principal way of life, it therefore, follows that the doctrine of salvation ought to be propagated as such; it should be propagated as away of life. Moreover, since within Kipsigis cosmo-theadric conception of accomplishment of being is acquired via gradual initiation rites, salvation should be conveyed as such in personalistic, communal, relational vital step – reaching climax in yonder life.

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<sup>12</sup> C. Mwoleka, *Do this! The Church of the Third Millennium. What face should it have?* (Peramiho Tanzania: Benedictine Publications Ndanda – Peramiho, 1988), p. 42

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42

Thus the RCC ought to address salvation issue among the Kipsigis more seriously. This should be done within the context of ecumenical, pluralistic, inculturation and integral liberation. The issue of inculturation then should be explicit and be handled pragmatically for it to be more meaningful and fruitful among the Kipsigis.

### **6.3.5 Responsibility for both Personal and Social Sin**

Conscientization should be created that all are culpable for both personal and social sins; thus ALL are in need of salvation transformation. It is important to note that nobody – including heretics and schismatics are completely sinful or completely good, we are all partially good and partially bad; thus we are a mixture of both “saved” and “unsaved.”<sup>14</sup> As such none can therefore rightly condemn one as unsaved or *massa damnata*; it should be appreciated that it is the primary will of God that ALL – Kipsigis included be saved.<sup>15</sup>

### **6.3.6 Examine the Preachers**

There is need to reflect on the possibility that not every preacher of the Good News is rightly informed, adequately trained and educated to handle the critical issue of salvation, correctly and with responsibility. There is need also to make distinction of those opportunist preachers concerned with orthodoxy (right teaching), orthopraxis (right action) and orthopathy (right feeling/compassion) in salvation affairs and those who are authentically so.<sup>16</sup>

There is need of being courteous of anything that would drift us away from Jesus Christ who is the anchor of salvation. One should be able to differentiate holiness from pseudo-pietism since there are those who are misinformed and propagate a distorted conception of the doctrine of salvation.

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<sup>14</sup> P. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2000), p.164.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4.

<sup>16</sup> *Id. Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio-Religio-Philosophical Touch*, (Nairobi: Signal Press Limited, 2000), p.166.

### 6.3.7 Leaving None to the Evil One

Since salvation is for all, no person should be left to or for the evil one; neither do we leave anything for Satan. Salvation should permeate everyone and single aspect of or life and living. It would be impoverishing to narrow it to our spirituality and spiritual realm; this is why Jesus embraced our terrestrial bodies, through the process of incarnation. The logos through incarnation changed completely people's situation due to entering into human history and eventually the human ontological transcendence. The logos thus became a family member, with all humanity by perfectly promoting genuine interpersonal relationship. Rahner explains this through what he terms as "Christology and anthropology acquiring a correlationship."<sup>17</sup> The inference then drawn from Rahner's treatise is that none should be left for the evil one.

Love of the neighbours then dictates that there is need to show warm attitude towards ALL (both the "saved ones" and the "unsaved ones") in equal measure. As explained before, Kipsigis have an integrated salvation in the sense that after one has examined and understood their worldview which is notoriously religious, one appreciates that salvation permeates every aspect of life. In the light of the foregoing, to exclude salvation from any life domain is to miss the whole point within the Kipsigis philosophy of life. For the Kipsigis, there is no area left for the evil one, no wonder the term "Hell" does not exist among the Kipsigis as the domain of Satan. Thus there is a challenge to the "saved ones"; to be transformed by the salvation they propagate. This then provokes the need to be equipped with the ability to dig deep into their respective African traditional religiosity – as we have done with the Kipsigis, so as to enrich themselves with an all embracing salvation items as they inculcate.

The universality of salvation has been reasonably hailed.<sup>18</sup> Salvation should be presented in such a way that it touches us holistically. It should be enabled to penetrate each and every area of us, our lives, of our living and of our interpersonal relationships.

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<sup>17</sup> K. Rahner. "On The Theology of Incarnation", *Theological Investigations*, vol.4 (London: Darton, Longmann and Todd, 1974), pp. 117ff.

<sup>18</sup> Re-visit the previous Chapter, to internalize the gist of salvation.

### **6.3.8 Reviewing of the Procedure of Catechesis**

The procedure of catechism in the RCC in Kericho Sub-County should be reviewed to make it more meaningful and relevant to the participants. The procedural structure should be relevant to the different categories of participants and its meaning be made clear to members of the Church. Catechumens should be instructed on the need of others in the local Church. Such instructions should aim at building the Church as a “Family of God,” as a community of members sharing spiritual and material resources. They should include the duties and obligations the faithful have in helping other members of the Church, families and the society.

### **6.3.9 Respect for Human Beings and the World of Nature**

The other practical consequence that is of relevance to our subject matter and that which calls for emphasis is that human and spiritual beings, as well as the entire cosmic world are sacred, and through such sacredness they are meant to glorify God. This awareness therefore demands that salvation be taught as respect for human beings and the world of nature as Kipsigis do. Such respect demands to be manifested through the avoidance of sin against human dignity and exploitation or destruction of the world of nature through technological or scientific advancement.

### **6.3.10 Kipsigis Symbols be applied in Worship**

As understood by the Kipsigis, symbols give not only participatory knowledge but also incite the concerned people mentally and affectionately towards the value and meaning which it symbolizes. Moreover, they also have a transformative power thus its impact on the behaviour; it arouses commitment and imagination towards such commitment.

The Kipsigis symbol of “ancestor” for instance should be applied to God in worship; this will enable Kipsigis Christians to conceive God using Kipsigis categories of thought, such symbolic awareness would incite Kipsigis Christians mentally and affectionately leading to authentic witnessing among them.

### **6.3.11 Need to Strengthen and Utilize Small Christian Communities**

The Small Christian Communities should be strengthened more to reflect the Kipsigis philosophy of communality as is known to them. It means the gathering together to celebrate life. People should experience real interpersonal relationships and feel a sense of communal belonging, both in living and working in these communities. The SCCs should not be just prayer groups resembling Church services, but communities where interpersonal relationships are cherished and nurtured. In this regard, they will help one another in addressing some of their challenges in life. They should be diversified to respond to the needs of its members at different times otherwise they become irrelevant.

### **6.4 Areas for Further Research**

The study recommends the following areas for further research since the present study is not exhaustive in explicating the inculturation of worldview items with the RCC doctrine of salvation.

Owing to the kind of limitations imposed on the study, the study limited itself to the Kipsigis Worldview items particularly in Kericho Sub-County. As such, a further study can be done on another or other categories of thought among the Kipsigis worldview without excluding the worldview aspects with a view to inculturate the salvation values for a more fruitful ministry among the Kipsigis.

A study could as well be done on Kipsigis initiation rites and the Roman Catholic initiation sacraments through inculturation approach. Such a study would investigate how the Kipsigis socio-cultural upbringing of children from birth and naming to circumcision and marriage and even death in relation to the Roman Catholic Church's sacraments of Christian initiation.

Another area for further study is that of inculturating the doctrine we opted for from the point of view of other ethnic groups since the theory of general revelation discloses that all communities, and not just that of the Kipsigis, are gratuitously gifted with salvation characteristics that may be usefully exploited for a more useful evangelization.

The study further triggers important area for more research. By virtue of the theory of *nexus mysteriorum*, other Christian mysteries like Christology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology and Eschatology can be explored using the case study we adopted as a humble model.

### **6.5 Chapter's Concluding Remarks**

The study has examined Kipsigis worldview items in Kericho Sub-County through inculturation approach investigating the RCC doctrine of salvation with a view to enhancing better understanding of the above mentioned doctrine. Due to the limitations imposed in our kind of study, the current study limited itself to the Kipsigis Worldview items as well as the specific doctrine under study; the study therefore bring to our awareness the above can be inculturated for mutual benefit.

By using the case of Kipsigis in Kericho Sub-County, the study has shown that Kipsigis and generally African worldview contexts have rich salvation values which the Church should appeal to, through inculturation approach, in order to better understanding, articulation and propagation of the aforementioned doctrine.

It is hoped that the findings of this study and the tedious effort of inculturating Kipsigis Worldview items with the RCC doctrine of salvation would go a long way in enhancing better understanding of the doctrine not only in Kericho Sub-County but in other African communities. This is because African worldview systems share common values that can be beneficiary explored in the diverse cultures for a more fruitful understanding of the Church doctrines.

Furthermore, the study hopefully, would inspire the Church in diverse cultures to seek to make the Christian message relevant to her members and therefore respond to their needs, aspirations, and mentality and thought forms in their diverse situations in life. This challenges the Church in general to consider inculturating not only the liturgy and vestments but also the Christian message in relation to their respective local situation for a more authentic Christian living.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Glossary of Terms

*Abai-* going on a journey to the home elderly man or warrior to request him of using his name to name a son.

*Burgei-* a warm country in Kipsigis legend that points their origin to Egypt

*Chiito ne likwoop-* a person who is blameless or without imperfection

*Lilat-* the energy behind lightening

*Iseet-aap koot-* it is the rite performed after the death of a man in a family so as to cleanse the house.

*Kaapolobi-* the scars made on the forehead and cheeks of a child; these were pre-initiation rites that instilled perseverance as youth prepared for real initiation.

*Kaatumet-aap Lakwet-* it is a rite performed on accident or illness prone child to protect that child.

*Kaayaaet-* the rite where the initiates washed in the river; it symbolized cleansing all impurities of the past; also referred as *Kaayaaet-aap taarusyek*

*Kaburbuuret-* a ceremony for all the *tegeriisyek* in the community

*Keesaan-* to refrain from; it is the root term for the *Kisanei* the ceremony that took place in the crossroads.

*Keetyenji-* a ceremony held for the initiates a month after *labeet-aap Euun*.

*Kibendi mutyo-* it is a song about tortoise which reminded the Kipsigis people to be slow to anger since being angry was not in their culture.

*Kiil kaarik-* the ceremony of oiling the weapons of the deceased man to cleanse it then it's being handed over to the successor.

*Kiit ne itabaanaat*- a thing set a side; a taboo.

*Kiit ne yeetaat*- a thing forbidden; a taboo

*Kimyeet*- a stiff corn meal mush; food commonly referred as *ugali*

*Chaalwogiindet*- a sinner; a person guilty of a wrong doing

*Kisanei*- the place in the *Sach Ooran* where leaves were piled

*Koyumgoi*- the name used to call the son of the second eldest father in a group of initiates

*Kuleet-aap Eitaap Muget*- the ceremony of sacrificing a goat or a sheep in honour of a respected person in the community; this ceremony indicated the promotion of a man's standing in the society.

*Kuresiet*- a species of a cactus used for fencing

*Kuurseet*-the process of naming done by calling the ancestral names to the newborn until the child sneezes

*Labootweet*- Sodom apple plant or its fruits

*Lelet*- a mistake, sin or error done ignorantly

*Likwoop*- unblemished; with no spot in character

*Loteet-aap keelek*- extraction of two permanent teeth of a child

*Mabwaita*- the family altar; a place of prayer in a family

*Masagisyeeet*- the practice of begging for food at the crossroads with a basket and commonly done by a child

*Masambwaanik*- a category of Spirits commonly with evil intentions and harms

*Meenyjeet*- a temporary abode where male initiates lived during initiation period

*Mumiatab sogoot*- an oath undertaken by striking a leaf with a stick

*Mumiatab artet*- an oath undertaken by a goat being killed by the suspect

*Mwaitaap imanek*- oil from wild castor beans used in ceremonies

*Mwaitaap meengit*- a fat from ram's tail

*Naaryet*- a crown which is normally a head dress made from goat's hair

*Ndipchoot*- a hole made at the earlobes

*Noogirwet*- ceremonial stick

*Peleet-aap soreemik*- marking of scars on the face to instill courage on the children

*Rateet*- a ceremony of confirmation of engagement when the groom to be, herds boy and nurse girl visited the bride's home

*Rogoreet*- the long tube for sucking the beer

*Rootyneet-aap Lagok*- the ceremony done the day before the initiates went into seclusion

*Sambuut*- a headgear made of the hides of black monkey

*Seguutyet*- spoon shaped wooden item that is used to scoop food when one was considered unclean and not allowed to touch food.

*Sirimdo*- a metal bracelet worn by *Tegeryoot* as a protective

*Soongoolyet*- an ostrich's feather commonly used as a symbol of peace

*Sweet-aap Tuuga*- the ceremony where the bride's family viewed the animals meant for dowry

*Tebeng'weet*- a tree whose leaf is used for taking an oath and other ceremonial purposes in Kipsigis worldview

*Tegeryoot*- a child born to a family after the preceding ones have died

*Yaateet-aap Ooret*- it is the ceremony of the opening of way as initiates are ushered into adulthood; it is the final ceremony

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Introductory Letter**

I am a PhD student registered in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies-University of Nairobi. As part of requirements for award of the degree, I am conducting a research on the topic; “Investigation of Kipsigis Worldview Items towards Understanding the Catholic Doctrine of Salvation through Inculturation Approach: A Case of Kericho Sub-County.” The questionnaire attached herewith is meant to gather information for this study from you.

Kindly respond to the items in the questionnaire. Please do not indicate your name anywhere in the questionnaire. The information provided will be solely used for the Study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are requested to tick the spaces [ ] for appropriate alternative or just fill in the spaces provided and give your opinion where explanation is required.

**APPENDIX 3**

**Questionnaire for the Elite Members of RCC**

1. Please tick (√) the appropriate answer in the spaces provided.
  - a) How old are you?                      18-24 [ ]              25-30 [ ]              over 30 [ ]
  - b) What is your gender:                      Male [ ]              Female [ ]
  - c) What is the name of your Church? .....
  - d) What is your academic qualification?
    - Certificate holder    [    ]
    - Diploma holder        [    ]
    - Degree holder         [    ]
    - Any other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
2. How long have you been a member of your Church? .....
3. What is your occupation? .....
4. What is your understanding of the family as a Christian? .....  
.....
5. Has the Roman Catholic Church among the Kipsigis utilized some aspects of Kipsigis culture in their worship?                      Yes [ ]              No [ ]
  - a) If your answer above is yes, mention such aspects which have been utilized?
    - i. ....
    - ii. ....
    - ii. ....
  - b) If your answer above is no, explain  
.....
6. Can Kipsigis social and cultural elements enhance better understanding of the Catholic doctrine of salvation?                      Yes [ ]              No [ ]
  - a) If your answer above is yes, which elements of the Kipsigis community can enhance the above mentioned doctrine?
    - i. ....
    - ii. ....
    - iii. ....

b) If your answer above is no, explain your position

.....

7. Does the Roman Catholic Church teach on utilization of African cultural elements in worship services?    Yes [ ]        No [ ]

a) If your answer above is yes, name the elements of a particular culture which the Church demands to be used?

.....

b) What are the reasons that the Church gives for the need to use such cultural values in worship?

i .....  
.....

ii .....  
.....

iii .....  
.....

8. In your opinion if Kipsigis Worldview items are used in worship can it have any effect on the understanding of the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of salvation?        Yes [ ]

No [ ]

a) Please mention such implication to support your answer.

i .....  
.....

ii .....  
.....

iii .....  
.....

9. What does salvation mean to you?

.....

.....

10. Do you agree with the opinion that various cultural elements have positive values which can be adopted in Christian worship?

Yes [ ]

No [ ]

a) Explain your answer

.....

.....

b) If your answer above is yes, give examples of such values in Kipsigis culture

-----  
11. a) Does your Church have Small Christian Communities?

Yes [ ]                  No [ ]

b) What are the roles of SCCs?

.....  
.....

c) Suggest ways of making worship to be more involving in your church?

.....  
.....

12. a) Does your Church depict itself as a family of God?

Yes [ ]                  No [ ]

c) Suggest ways of making improving interpersonal relationships in your church?

.....  
.....

## APPENDIX 4

### Interview Guide for Kipsigis Elders

1. Historical and social contexts of the Kipsigis community:
  - a. Give the origin of the name 'Kipsigis'.
  - b. Explain the origin of the Kipsigis people.
  - c. Identify the paternal descents of the Kipsigis people.
  - d. Did Kipsigis have totems? If so explain how they were derived.
  - e. Mention various age-sets of the Kipsigis.
2. Socio-cultural items of Kipsigis community:
  - a. Identify the various rites of passage among the Kipsigis.
  - b. Explain the significance of the aforementioned rites of passage.
  - c. What other Socio-cultural items in the Kipsigis worldview have religious significance.
  - d. Discuss the performance of various rites of passage giving significance of each stage.
  - e. Mention various taboos and their significance among the Kipsigis.
3. Religious aspects of the Kipsigis community:
  - a. Explain the worship of *Asiis* and His attributes.
  - b. Identify and explicate the various places of worship among the Kipsigis.
  - c. Explain the concept of sin, cleansing and forgiveness among the Kipsigis.
  - d. Enumerate other ceremonies in the Kipsigis worldview that have religious significance.