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TOWARDS AN INDIGENOUS MODEL FOR PASTORAL
COUNSELING AND CARE, BASED ON SOME SOCIO-
CULTURAL, ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL
PRESUPPOSITIONS OF CERTAIN NIGERIAN PEOPLE.

School of Theology at Claremont, Ph.D., 1975
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TOWARDS AN INDIGENOUS MODEL FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING AND CARE
Based on some socio-cultural, anthropological and theological
presuppositions of certain Nigerian people.

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Musa Dimka Gotom

June 1975

This dissertation, written by

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and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

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For Baba and Nana

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

This dissertation develops a model of pastoral counseling and care indigenous to the people of Nigeria. The study explores the socio-cultural, anthropological and theological presuppositions affecting illness for the Nigerian. With over 500 tribal groups and languages in Nigeria, it is not possible to examine every tribe. The study has therefore dealt with a few essential attributes common to the Nigerian people. Emphasis is placed on the traditional worldview; the social structure, socialization, healing and the life cycle; the impact of change on the traditional presuppositions and social structures and on the concept of disease and healing; the response of the missionary and native churches to the mental and emotional needs of the people.

In the traditional Nigeria religion is intimately interwoven with life and socialization. There is no codification of creed or theology in any of the tribal religions. The family, the clans and the tribes have been the vehicles for transmitting the faith down the generations through the images, folklore, proverbs, myths and legends. Religion is therefore inseparable from the ancestral family and clan lineages. The traditional person believes that the spirit world and the material world co-exist and that they interact for good or ill. God is believed to be separated from the people and is seldom worshipped, although prayers are addressed to God by persons whose being is threatened. The spirits which seem closest to the traditional Nigerian are the spirits of his ancestors, who are regarded as part of

the society and are believed to assist their households and clans and to punish them when they break taboos that ensure the harmony of the living and dead community. The lower spirits, good and evil, are believed to play an active role in the health of the living.

Treatment and counseling of the sick and emotionally disturbed are done within the context of the community in a group. It is not uncommon to find two or three elders working together as counselors to a group or family. The social structure with its emphasis on togetherness under elders seems constructed to facilitate care and early action on emotional problems. The care of the community as a whole is handled preventively in childhood, initiation, marriage and mourning. The source of disease is often sought in the spirit forces and societal responsibility. Although there is evidence of belief in individual responsibility, it is the witches and spirits that are held responsible for illness and ill fortune.

The traditional healers, who are believed to be in touch with the spirit world, approach their task in a multidimensional way: diagnosis of the mystical (spiritual) cause, treatment of the spiritual cause, treatment of the physical cause, and strengthening of the patient's ego by rituals which symbolically emancipate the patient from the disease or misfortune.

The model recommends the use of the traditional forms of therapy--prayer, divination, prescriptions of medicinal remedy, sacrifices and ritual discharge and dieting.

Therapy, however, seeks through educative methods and the

use of some western psychotherapeutic techniques to lead the emotionally disturbed to resolve inner conflicts, claim responsibilities for their own feelings, face reality, reclaim unused psychic power and maintain a harmonious relationship with the spirit world and the social and physical environment.

The counseling and care model takes into account the spiritual and social view of disease and misfortune and aims at normalizing interpersonal relationships within the community. Therapy in groups can best deal with the problems of the community-oriented society since it is in the community group that emotional problems leading to witchcraft accusations arise. Therapy needs also to aim at normalizing a person's relationship with the spiritual world, the individual's relationship with God, and the ancestors.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Thesis:

The prime purpose of this dissertation is to propose an indigenous model of pastoral counseling and care for a relevant and effective counseling ministry among the people in the Church of Nigeria. This thesis will point out the socio-cultural and religious realities which define the contemporary Nigerian, including anthropological peculiarities. Maslow's categories of human needs hold true crossculturally; the basic needs are for fresh air, water, food, shelter, rest and sex; the deficiency needs are for security, safety, belongingness, identification, love, self-esteem and prestige; and the growth needs are meaningfulness, self-sufficiency, effortlessness, playfulness, richness, vitality, simplicity, order, justice, perfection, aliveness, individuality, genuineness, goodness and truth.¹ It has, however, to be admitted that methods and procedures by which some of the deficiency needs are acquired may differ from culture to culture.

According to some sociologist, and anthropologist society has a way of captivating its members by "social control", and "social stratification." The patterns of social control and stratification

¹Abraham H. Maslow, Towards a Psychology of Being, (Princeton: Van Nostrand 1962), p. 21ff.

may appear at first sight as rigid facts, as Durkheim sees them, and at the same time to a close observer appear like a "drama." willingly created by the members of the society who determine the form and shape the society should take.² The common human needs and the sociological "facts" that are a reality to people in every culture and society seem to point to the possibility of some general forms by which people act within any society, and to support the belief in cross-cultural psychiatry that methods of healing in one culture could be effective in another culture. Murphy and Leighton have argued that there are common denominators in every culture in the areas of marriage and family, the incest taboo, and the struggle of the individual against the society; these often affect the individual's mental health. They have also argued that certain aspects of behavior, are culturally defined as healthy or sick.³ Kiev adds that certain religious experiences and behavior which are respected in one culture may be viewed with suspicion by another culture.⁴

This model would seek, to adapt to the Nigerian society and culture the scientific information about human nature and its function, the insights into the human psyche and behavior and the techniques of

²Emil Durkheim, The Rules of Sociological Method, (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1962), p. 3f.

³Jane M. Murphy and Alexander H. Leighton (eds.) Approaches to Cross-Cultural Psychiatry (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 22-23.

⁴Ari Kiev (ed.) Magic, Faith and Healing (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1964), p. 16.

the Western psychotherapeutic schools. However, the main structures and approach of Western psychotherapy are designed for the Western middle class and, therefore are based on a different philosophy of life, a higher economic standard of living and the expectations of a technological environment. This consideration does not imply that an adaptation of Western approaches in psychotherapy would be ineffective in the Nigerian society. Rather it points out that some of the expectations and the frame of reference cannot be the same. Adoption of some Western approaches and techniques can be successful only if counselors and psychotherapists remember the advice of Luzbetak:

... no matter what art or science, sacred or profane the Church may wish to apply in carrying out her religious mission, she will have to apply the skill in full cultural perspective, with the ways and values of the particular society in view.⁵

Similarly Bascom and Herskovits state: "Innovations must be related to traditional patterns if they are to be accepted and transmitted as a part of the cultural heritage to future generations."⁶

The person who seeks help will have to be seen not only as an individual but as the bearer of a culture and as a member of an interacting group. The pastor who uses Western techniques and approaches will need to be acquainted with the culture of the individual in need. Lambo, a Nigerian psychiatrist who has successfully combined the

⁵ Louis J. Luzbetak, The Culture and Church (Techny, IL: Divine Word, 1970), Preface, p. ii.

⁶ William R. Bascom and Melville J. Herskovits, Continuity and Change in African Cultures (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 13.

practice of Western psychiatry and Nigerian traditional healing practice, has this to say:

Our observations in societies that are not "Western" or literate have forcibly demonstrated the importance of cultural factors in the entire management of the patient. The concept and practice of medicine in these non-literate societies is bound up with the whole interpretation of life. Thus a disease, its prevention and healing play a tremendous social role. A knowledge of the culture (and its prevailing attitudes) is not only essential in epidemiological studies within a community, but it is the culture which determines the acceptability, the success or failure of a particular treatment orientation, it is also the culture (including the attitudes and social experiences) which either permits or hinders the readiness of the relatives to adjust to the sick person and his emotional needs. Community attitudes as outlined by the culture, clearly permits the bulk of African mental defectives with varying degrees of insufficiency and some psychotics, who keep themselves at some sort of functioning level, to live as tolerated members of the general community.⁷

The model to be proposed does not in the name of cultural emphasis advocate clinging to traditional modes even if they have been outdated. At the same time it is realized that the primitive tradition includes effective modes of treatment and healing which should be reclaimed and improved. The study explores those aspects of the culture that are related to traditional healing and health in Nigeria. The model is based on the religious beliefs and philosophy of the people; on their traditional views of ill health, healing and health; on the place of the individual in the traditional and modern society and on general information about the traditional concept of human personality and behavior.

The model attempts a synthesis of traditional and Western

⁷T. A. Lambo, "The Importance of Cultural Factors in Treatment," Acta Psychiatrica et Neurologica Scandinavica, XXXVM (1962), 178.

psychotherapeutic techniques and procedures that may prove of therapeutic value in the present period of rapid cultural change.

B. Background Information

The traditional society and the Muslim communities have always made provision for therapeutic counseling in their religious and social ministries, it being clearly understood that help is available from their religious leaders. The leaders of the African Independent Churches have also made provision for counseling and healing practice in their communities.

This integrated style of therapeutic counseling was eliminated in the Christian church in Nigeria, by the Western missionary founders who saw nothing good in the African culture and customs. The pioneer missionary related to the traditional African from an ethnocentric position; Christianity was largely confused in his mind with his own culture. The almost dehumanized state of existence of the African made it difficult for any except the very patient, wise and objective truth seekers to accept anything of value from the African. Possibilities for dialogue with the African culture were dismissed with such remarks as, "Who can enter into any such relations with witch doctors, with superstitions, heathenism, black magic, mumbo jumbo, juju, idolatry, devil worship or fetishism,"⁸ and:

⁸"The Wholeness of Human Life," Study Encounter IX:4 (1973), SE/52, 8.

However anxious a missionary may be to appreciate and to retain indigenous social and moral values, in the case of religion, he has to be ruthless . . . and he has to admit and even to emphasize that the religion he teaches is opposed to the existing one and the one must cede to the other.⁹

Since African religion is inseparable from the African life styles this attitude saw African customs as the vehicle of religious superstition. The early converts, who are the present Church leaders, were cut off from their traditions with the result that today most Christians have little appreciation for traditional ways of solving problems. Most African pastors are therefore not understanding towards people with emotional problems if the sick person sees his sickness from the traditional point of view.¹⁰

1. The society. The Nigerian society is a complex one for several reasons. Nigeria is composed of over 500 language groups, commonly called tribes, in a population of about 70 million.¹¹ Some groups like the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, have a population of at least 12 million each, while other groups, like the Tambes of Benue Plateau have less than 20,000 people. Ola Balogun, in his series in the New Nigerian, describes Nigeria as a "rather heterogeneous entity characterized by a plucultural background."¹² Some

⁹Westermann, cited by John V. Taylor, The Primal Vision London: SCM Press, 1972), p. 26.

¹⁰M. M. Makhaye, "Sickness and Healing in African Christian Perspective," in H. J. Becken (ed.) Relevant Theology for Africa (Durban, South Africa: Lutheran, 1973), p. 160.

¹¹Nigeria Yearbook (1973), pp. 91-143. The figures were probably based on 1963 census which was very controversial.

¹²Ola Balogun, "New Role to Revive Culture," New Nigerian (October 18, 1974), 5.

of the peoples, like the Hausa-Fulani, Kanuri and Yoruba, once formed parts of the ancient Black-African Empires and therefore have long been partly city dwellers and rural village farmers. Some, like the Tiv, and Igbo, were traditionally village settlers and farmers. The nomadic Fulani who comprise a large percentage of the population in the North, are pastoral. The Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa are known throughout the country as business-minded.

2. Religions:- The traditional religion has similar systems of belief and cultural practice and expectations throughout the various tribal groups. Islam, which claims a higher proportion of adherents, is a book religion but has managed to retain some of the traditional Nigerian values, customs, practices and beliefs systems, Christianity, the most progressive of all in evangelistic outreach is built on Western structures and seeks to fulfill Western expectations, earning its adherents the name Yan Mishan, Hausa for "the children of the missionary."

3. The Age of Transition - The colonial experience and the awareness of nationhood, combined with communication, education and industrialization, has created dualities in the society - literate and illiterate, rich and poor, the traditional rural settlers and the urban dwellers of many language groups who are exposed to the fascinations and confusions of the Western civilization. Nigeria, like the rest of Africa, is undergoing a period of change characterized by the kind of anxiety described by Tillich in his book, 'The

Courage to Be.¹³ The traditional cyclical concept of time with its emphasis on the present and past is changing to a linear concept with emphasis on the present and the future, resulting in great uncertainty. There is a tendency in some to cling dogmatically to the old and in others to adapt wholesale the forms of the new. There is no avoiding the juxtaposition of the traditional and the modern. Wycliffe Bible Translator has this to say on West Africa:

The "today" of West Africa is made up of "yesterday" and partly of tomorrow. A young dynamic elite is already living in the tomorrow. Hundreds of smaller ethnic groups still live deeply rooted in the yesterday. The rest, the majority, are somewhere in between. They are confronted with the tomorrow but have not broken with their ancestor's way of life nor with their beliefs.¹⁴

Change through urbanization, industrialization and Western influence has not greatly altered the basic traditional attitudes and concepts of life:

Changes in the area of birth, death and basic philosophy are minimal. Take the idea of death. Many Africans, sophisticated and primitive urban or rural still believe deeply in reincarnation. The concept that the world of the dead and the world of the living overlap, co-exist. Many Africans still belong to both worlds, the traditional and the modern, and operate within two inner patterns. Even I do.¹⁵

Bascom and Herskovits have observed that Africans tend to take on new innovations selectively, and new ways are adopted additively and

¹³ Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 62.

¹⁴ "Tomorrow, Yesterday" (Santa Ana, CA: Wycliffe Bible Translators, 1973), p. 2.

¹⁵ James P. Breetveld, "Brief Conversation with Thomas Lambo," Psychology Today, VI (February 1972), 64-65, Lambo speaking.

not necessarily substitutively.¹⁶ Existing in two rapidly changing worlds, the Nigerian is often unsure of his identity; he seeks to imitate the Western scientifically oriented person but often lacks the economic and philosophical and cultural foundation, and his traditional world view is still intact in his unconscious. The educated and urbanized individual does not readily admit in the circle of his peers that he still holds the spiritual world views of his parents including belief in and fear of the spirits, ancestors and witches. However, when he is under personal stress for which medicine fails to bring immediate cure, he starts thinking in terms of witches and spirits. Close friends and relatives believe in and reinforce the traditional views of the spiritual aspects of illness even in devout Christians. Many Christians secretly consult the traditional and Muslim diviners, seers and medicine people because the Church elders and pastors would not accept the framework of the traditional world view.

Lambo recommends "an accelerated pace mental health service" in the face of the great changes taking place.¹⁷ The Christian Church needs to rethink its attitude and share responsibility for creating the state of mental health and also for the emotionally

¹⁶Bascom and Herskovits, p. 6.

¹⁷Lambo, "Socio-economic Change, Population Explosion and the Changing Phases of Mental Health Programs in Developing Countries," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XXXVI (1966), 82.

blocked and disturbed people of the Nigerian society.

4. Poverty - Although Nigeria has come a long way in developing national resources and raising the standard of living the country is still on the border of famine.¹⁸

C. Method of Procedure:

1. Extent of Research - The cultures of the various tribes are similar in the areas of beliefs, expectations in life, values, social structures and outlook, although these may vary in emphasis, or some aspects may be absent in some groups. Where information is available on any tribe I have treat it at some length; this does not imply that the other language groups are without such practice and beliefs, but rather that the information from the particular tribe is representative of the whole traditional culture.

The purpose of this research is not purely anthropological, sociological, cultural nor religious. The study is an attempt to bring for the consideration of the pastoral counselor those aspects of cultural, social, anthropological and religious values and beliefs that are generally held by the majority of the people of Nigeria. It is also an attempt to outline the framework of the psychological, religious and social realities that an individual would normally

¹⁸Times (May 13, 1974), 50. Nigeria has earned much through her oil industries but she has started from scratch.

grapple with in his search for a meaningful and vital life.

Since culture is constantly changing,¹⁹ this model will, of course, need revisions and improvements in the years to come. I have focused my research on the Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv and the Ngas peoples, because more has been written on them. Isolated findings on other tribes will be included to shed more light on the general situation. Since the cities and towns are an amalgam of all language groups, it would not be easy to single out certain tribes. Since Nigeria is a Black nation, some facts about other parts of Africa may be found to apply to Nigeria as well.

Most of the case reports will come out of the TEKAS church region which covers about a quarter of the country towards the northeast. The writer comes from this area and is therefore more directly acquainted with that church; however the problems of the church in TEKAS are not unique to that region.²⁰

2. Sources of Data. The main sources of information have been the works of writers on the African and Nigerian cultures and the changes affecting the people. Friends, some staff and students of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria have supplied answers to questionnaires from their different tribes.

¹⁹ Murphy and Leighton, p. 15.

²⁰ TEKAS - Tarayar Ekklessiyar Kristi A. Sudan is the Fellowship of the Churches of Christ in the Sudan. It is a fellowship of eight church denominations.

The writer is a member of the Ngas people of Benue Plateau State. Although his parents are Christian, he spends a substantial part of his life with non-Christian relatives of the Plateau traditional society and witnessed many traditional counseling and healing processes. He is well aware of the radical changes which have taken place in the Ngas society during his lifetime. He is a member of the EKAS church (a section of the TEKAS), was ordained into the ministry and has been serving that church since 1971.

Lambo and Asuni, the innovative Nigerian psychiatrists, have written much on the effects of change on the mental health of the Nigerian. They have combined Western psychiatry with traditional healing practices in a traditional Nigerian context with remarkable success at the Aro-Lantoro Hospital and Village complex.

The work of Clinebell, Johnson and Oates on pastoral counseling have been used. Sources used from the Western psycho-therapeutic Schools include Freud, Erikson, Sullivan, Frankl, Glasser, the transactional analysts, the Gestalt therapists with some input from the behaviorists. The work of Satir on family counseling have been of tremendous value.

3. Use of Data -- The materials that have been collected are those that shed light on emotional illness the socio-cultural realities affecting mental health in Nigeria. Differences between the language groups will be noted, although comparison is not the aim of the research.

The second chapter is a general survey of the religious world view of the Nigerian traditional person, with emphasis on those subjects dealing with the health of the people. The third chapter is an attempt to look at the individual through the eyes of the Nigerian: the social structure, the life cycle, and the practice of traditional healing. The fourth chapter deals with the effects of the juxtaposition of the Traditional and the Western styles of culture and expectation on the mental health of people; and the manner in which the people are handling their problems. The fifth chapter deals with the response of the church to these changes. The sixth chapter outlines the role and objectives of pastoral counseling and care in the Nigerian churches. It presents some Western approaches to counseling and seeks to integrate them with Nigerian techniques of healing.

D. Definition of Terms:

This study deals with a culture that is different from the Western cultures. Many of the terms used are fully understood only as a person experiences being in the Nigerian culture. Where possible the writer has provided brief literal meanings of the Nigerian words. The traditional Nigerian culture is not a technologically oriented culture, therefore words like highway, house, shrines or temple need to be understood as different from those in the Western societies. There are, however, a few terms that need to be understood before further reading of this paper.

1. The Church Personnel - The term pastor, or priest are used here to refer to persons who have been specially commissioned by the church, by ordination, to minister to one or more local congregations of believers. The word "evangelist" and catechist are used in Nigeria to refer to unordained persons who assist the pastor in serving a church. The catechist or evangelist is usually placed to take charge of a local congregation. Many catechists and evangelists are doing the work of an ordained minister. Each church congregation has elders who may be male or female. In this model, the writer assumes that the pastoral counselor could be the pastor, catechist, evangelist, elder or any gifted member of the church who is entrusted with counseling and caring responsibilities.

2. Traditional - The word, traditional is used here to refer to customs, religion, life styles, and all the cultural characteristics that were not borrowed from the West or the Arabic world.

3. Tribe - Words like people, language group, and tribe have been used interchangeably to bear the same meaning. The word popularly spelled as Ibo is spelled Igbo according to the way the tribe calls itself. The writer has retained the spelling, Ngas, instead of the popularly known Angas for the same reasons.

PART I

THE TRADITIONAL

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL WORLD VIEW

A. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The major religions of Nigeria are the traditional (commonly called Animist by English writers and speakers), Islam and Christianity. Islam, the Muslim religion, was introduced to West Africa during the tenth and eleventh centuries¹. Christianity came to some coastal areas of Nigeria earlier with the Portuguese explorers; however, work that was started seemed to have died down² and the Christian missionary work that has remained was begun about the middle of the nineteenth century. The main concern here is the traditional religion. Although it was and is outwardly rejected by converts to Islam and Christianity, its spirit continues to live with and haunt these converts in the depressive moments of their lives.

Religion is so intricately woven into the life of the Nigerians that it is not possible to know them without their religion. Religion permeates and regulates every department of life. Ojo says of the Yoruba:

¹Geoffrey Parrinder, Religion in Africa (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), p. 182

²C. Raymond Beazley, "Missions," in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, VIII, 722.

It is no overstatement to say that religion is not just one complex of African culture but a catalyst of other complexes. . . Some aspects of Yoruba life cannot be fully and satisfactorily explained and understood; they must be understood in terms of their religion.³

Another Yoruba states that "the people live religiously, eat religiously and die religiously."⁴ The same would be said for the Igbo, Tiv, Ngas and other tribes. They are born into religion, they grow into it, they die and are buried in it, and their spirits continue to live and participate in it.

Earlier studies of the African religion were undertaken by outsiders, travellers, traders, anthropologists, colonial administrators and some missionaries. All these observers were Europeans whose economic standards, culture and philosophy were very different from those of the African. The intensive contact of Sub Saharan Africa with the western world started with the explorers around the middle of the 19th century. Those were times when most of Europe thought of Africa as a land with potential for exploration and trade and peopled with primitive, ignorant natives of infantile mentality. The intense poverty, the disorder among some of the ethnic groups and their unfamiliar life styles made them appear to the European as people without a culture. Study of the African religion of this period reflects more the mentality and reaction of the foreign

³C. J. Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Culture (London:University of London Press, 1966), p. 158.

⁴J. Olumides Lucas, The Religion of the Yorubas (Lagos: C.M.S. Bookshop, 1948), p. 33.

observers than the religion itself. These early studies were greatly influenced by the philosophy of evolution which was popular in Europe at that time. The African religious world views were placed at the bottom of the line and the western religious world views at the peak. This approach reserved the prejudiced and derogatory terms to describe African religious practice and lavished the terms of higher esteem on the supposedly higher world views. Adherents of the "lower" religions were regarded as primitive savages whose emotions overrode their reason.⁵ Terms like totemism, naturism, fetishism and dynamism have been used to describe the religions of Africa. More popularly, ancestor worship was seen to be the religion of Africa, and God, if the Africans have any, is hardly mentioned. Parrinder has recently disproved them.

The old evolutionary theory, which some writers have applied to Africa in the hope that it might show the early stages of religion, in animism or animatism, finds in the belief of God no very strong support. It is just as arguable that there was an ancient monotheistic belief from which man fell away. Neither theory is provable as things are. And now come Christianity and Islam into tropical Africa, with their missionary fervor and clear theology, and the old God comes forth from his seclusion, with new attributes, but doubtless bringing some of his old features into the new religions.⁶

⁵J.N.D. Anderson (ed.) The World Religions (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 9.

⁶Geoffrey Parrinder, African Traditional Religion (London: Hutchinson House, 1954), p. 8.

Mbiti's words are representative of the African reactions:

. . . but it is wrong to interpret traditional religions simply in terms of worshipping the ancestors. . . 'worship' is the wrong word to apply in this situation; and Africans know very well that they are not worshipping the departed members of their family. It is almost blasphemous therefore to describe these acts of family relationships as worship.⁷

The earlier studies have left indelible marks on the mentality of the children of Africa who have been adopted by the colonial forces and alienated from their own culture.

The study of the African religions has not been easy. There is no writing in existence by any persons who is a faithful worshipper according to the African way. Modern writers of African religion have been more thorough in their studies than the early observers. Some are sons of Africa or have spent a considerable number of years in Africa and know the people well. The sons and daughters of Africa are perhaps the nearest we have to the traditional devotee to African religion. Perhaps the subject will never receive a fair treatment since, unlike the "book religions" (eg. Christianity and Islam), its dogma, creed and practice are written on the hearts and souls of its children.⁸

1. Characteristics of Africa Religion:

⁷John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), p. 8.

⁸The remains of what might have been writings in Africa South of the Sahara may be the few symbols retained by the diviners. A diviner is required to learn how to write and read them.

This fact has given certain characteristics to the African religion.

a. The first is that traditional religion in Nigeria (and Africa as a whole) is inseparable from life itself; there is no separation between the sacred and the secular. A person's religion constitutes a major part of the character of his personality. His religion determines how he will act in any situation in life, in his sowing, cultivating the field, the harvest of new crops and the way in which he participates in and outside his society.

b. The second characteristic is that the compound, village or clan communities are the vehicles of religion. Religion gives a distinctive slant to the customs, life style and socialization of the clan. Each normal person is expected to belong to and participate in a community including sharing and taking part in the beliefs, ceremonies and festivals of the community. ~~Since there~~ are no written creeds or dogma, the study of Nigerian belief and practice is best done by observing and participating in the activities of the people, the life cycle and ceremonies. The Ngas of the plain grow to know that Nkun are sacred by observation and participation in the respect paid to these snakes.⁹

While the European tends to differentiate the intellect mind

⁹ Nkun is a sacred snake; it is harmless and lives in people's homes and feeds on mice. Nkun and python are believed to bear the spirit counterparts of individuals in the community.

as superior to body matter, the Nigerian makes no such distinction. As will be seen below, the body as much as the mind is capable of hearing and giving messages. Perhaps that which is conceptualized and transmitted through creed and dogma may be communicated to others through the experienced practice of participation. Parrinder considers "artistic expressions as the indigenous language of the African thought."¹⁰ Simple creed may have been transmitted orally with participation in the act of worship through dance, prayers, ceremonies and acts of sacrificing. The religious sculptures that in silence speak volumes to the soul of the traditional man also keeps the force of religion alive through the generations. Segy therefore suggests that sculptures are the most important aspect in the study of religious consciousness.¹¹

c. The third characteristic is that in the traditional religion in Nigeria there are no proselytizing efforts.² Since one is born into one's religion by being born into one's own family compound, clan or village, one's religion is in the community of one's birth. The only exception seems to be in the case of slavery when individuals, uprooted from their society of birth, had to observe the religious practice of their masters. When clans split or move, they take along

¹⁰Parrinder, Religion in Africa, p. 18.

¹¹Landislas Segy, African Sculpture Speaks (New York: Hill & Wang, 1969), p. 9.

their own religious belief, its symbols and its practice. Such families or clans settling among different clans would observe their own original religion as well as the general ceremonies and festivals of the chief under whom they settle, for example the Garam and Wukkos people who have settled among the hill Ngas of Pankshin division. The Wukkos people settled at Kabwir brought their deities along but observed the "mostar" - moon festival of the Kabwir ruling clan.¹² Conquest is a way of spreading religious faith but it has not been common except in the spread of Islam which took root too slowly. The family, the compound, or the clan community are the major lines along which religion is transmitted.¹³

d. The fourth peculiar characteristic of the Nigerian, shared with the African and other primal religions, is the belief that the spiritual and the physical are closely interrelated. There is an overlapping of the invisible and the visible world; the interaction between the living and the dead is believed to continue; the roaming spirits and the spirits of the divinities and ancestors are active in the visible land; God's all seeing eye is believed in and feared.

¹²When the Wukkos clan at Kabwir accepted Christianity their original brother clan people came and took home their family deities and religious symbols.

¹³Mambula and Balami, "The Life Style of the People," in Chalmer E. Faw (ed.) Lardin Gabas (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1973), p. 42.

2. Concept of time;

With regard to the relationship of the traditional African concept of time and the religious world view, Mbiti, in New Testament Eschatology in an African Background, based mainly on the concept of time among the Akamba people, presents the generally accepted African view of time as cyclical not linear. Time is generally considered as;

a. Those chains of events that have taken place, in the immediate and the remote past. The past is what traditional Africans respect. It is full of events experienced, and it is associated with wisdom. This is actual time.

b. Those events that are taking place in the present. The immediate moment of intensive experience is most important of the three.

c. Those events that are to take place in the near future. The future is seen in terms of the cyclical rhythms of life and seasons; people rarely look beyond three to four years from the present.

The present and the near future are the potential time. To the Westerner time is a sort of material to be bought and sold; to the African time has to be created. It is the occurrence of the events that make the time; the 'tick' of the clock that makes time

noticeable. Only the days and years of memorable and important happenings are remembered; those days and years in which nothing significant happens are not considered. Thus the general traditional Nigerian way of reckoning one day begins from sunrise to sunset and back to sunrise; a year is determined according to the cycle of seasons and not the exact 12 months nor 365 days.

History moves backward from the moment of intense experience to the period beyond which nothing can go.¹⁴ As a child is born grows older it is moving from the period of vitality to old age and into the remote past.¹⁵ The popular New Testament eschatology of the expectation of the age to come is therefore new to the traditional African. The African would agree with Jesus that "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you," Luke 17:21. The importance of the past seems to be supported by the fact that the legends, myths, and folklore deal only with the past, not the future. The attention of the people is focused on the roots of the present. The non-linear idea of time helps in understanding the respect paid to elders and to the spirit world. An older person is considered wiser than younger persons. The ancestors who have passed from the present to the past are wiser still; the divinities are wiser than the ancestors; and God stands over all as the wisest. God stands outside the cycle of time.

¹⁴Mbiti, p. 22.

¹⁵John S. Mbiti, New Testament Eschatology in an African Background (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 31.

3. Major pillars of belief:

- a. God, the ultimate, the one by whom all creation is explained, is the most powerful.
- b. The divinities or the nature gods. These are believed by the Yoruba and Tiv to be created or begotten by God. They were the divine humans who founded some of the chieftancies and the tribes.
- c. The ancestors and the personal deities. Mbiti lumps the divinities and the ancestors under the same term "spirits;" it is not certain whether his lack of differentiation of the spirit world points to the difference between the east and west African concepts.¹⁶
- d. The free floating good and evil spirits, akin to the jinn in the Arabic world called "aljanu" in Hausa.
- e. Witches. With the witches we come to the world of the living human beings.

These will be taken up in the following pages one by one. It is not my intention to attempt to prove the truth of the world views, nor their scientific validity. However irrational or illogical these views may sound to a foreign ear, the people believe in these powers, as a spiritual reality with which they live and struggle. These views form part of the language which people

¹⁶Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, p. 16.

readily use.

B. THE SPIRITUAL BEINGS

1. God Almighty:

Although the Nigerian traditional religion has no systematized doctrine or even a creed to regulate belief in God, analysis shows the beliefs and attitudes toward God are closely related to those of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Concepts of God are contained in and mediated by legends, myths, proverbs; and the names for God. In my discussions with people of the traditional faith, there has never been any disagreement in the concept of God or his attributes. The Christian doctrine of God fits into place with the Nigerian's religious mentality. The only objections come when he is asked to consider leaving his own way of worshipping God and to follow the Christian way. The similarity between the Nigerian and the Biblical belief has in some way partly led to a great turning to Christianity in recent years.

In this section, therefore, it is my assumption that the picture of God perceived by the different language groups are pictures of the same "person" who is also painted by the writers of the Bible. As Paul said, "Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made," Rom. 1:20. In contending against certain Christians who lay claim to superior

knowledge of God, Idowu argues that the possession of systematized statements about God, backed by the scriptures, is not in itself a testimony to a more complete knowledge of God.¹⁷

Elsewhere Idowu asks,

. . . Whether a God who could be fitted into the category of sole possession of any people or race could in any way be the same as God whom Jesus Christ came to reveal and whom the essential Christian faith holds as the Lord. . . the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.¹⁸

Having said this let us proceed to the subject with respect to see what and how the different peoples perceive and experience God.¹⁹

a. Names of God - The more popular Yoruba name for God is Olorun, meaning "Owner or Lord of Heaven." The analysis of an older name, Orisè, means "the Very Source of Being."²⁰ The analysis of another ancient and unique name for God, Olodumare, has come to mean, "The Head of and Overlord of All in Heaven and on Earth." God is called Oba Orun, "the King Who Dwells in Heaven." God is described as Alewilese, "He who alone can speak and accomplish his words." God is judge before whom every person will give account

¹⁷E. Bolaji Idowu, African Traditional Religion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 141.

¹⁸E. Bolaji Idowu, "God" in K. Dickson and Paul Ellingworth, Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1969), p. 17.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 37.

²⁰Ibid., p. 25.

after his life.²¹ The uniqueness of God is demonstrated in the Edo Mythology: Osanobwa (the Son of God) challenged God to a fight but finally gave up as he found he could not even succeed with chameleon, the messenger of God.²²

The Igbo name for God is Chukwu a very loaded word meaning, "the immense, overflowing source of being."²³ The popular Tiv word for God is Aondo, literally "heaven" or "sky;" the Nupe is Soko, "God the Sky." Soko is used to denote the visible sky also. Everything is of God, though the sacred is more commonly regarded as "of God." Nothing definite is known of Soko, although one of the Nupe song says:

God is in front
He is in the back (behind).²⁴

The Ngas and the related language groups call God Nen or Nan, literally "spider." He/she of itself brought all things into being, is all wise and all knowing and reads the secrets of people's heart.²⁵ Nen lives up in the sky and apportions the destiny of every

²¹Ibid., p. 38 ff.

²²Idowu, African Traditional Religion p. 132.

²³Idowu, Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs p. 25.

²⁴S. F. Nadel, Nupe Religion (London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1954), p. 11.

²⁵The Ngas third person pronoun is feminine & masculine gender some people believe Nen to be female.

human being born. All the tribal groups mentioned here relate the sun and moon to God. Rain is from God as well, and thunder is generally believed to be an expression of God's wrath. The Yoruba believe Shango to be delegated with the administration of God's wrath. Mbiti and Lucas note that there is no mention of love as an attribute of God,²⁶ this may be explained by the fact that Africans generally do not talk much about love. Love is demonstrated in acts and deeds and that show concern; it is seldom expressed in words. Rain, crop yield, children are evidence of God's love.

b. Fall From Grace - Almost every tribal group has a legend or myth about times when God-human relations were like the paradise story; God was very near to the people. The Bura people believe that the State of Grace was ended when a proud woman knocked heaven with her pestle and God became angry and withdrew from the people.²⁷ The Tiv people believe that God had sons who founded every race on earth. They have stories of individuals who in different periods of their history have called on the name of God: Gbayange of Nongov, Ityevajir of Kunav, Ikeratar of Tombo and Abaverijuwa of Ukum. And God heard them.²⁸ The Tiv story about the separation of God from

²⁶ Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy p. 38.

²⁷ Mambula and Balami, pp. 42-43.

²⁸ Rupert East (trans.) Akiga's Story (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 232.

humans is similar to that of the Bura people.²⁹

The Yoruba have a story about the coming of death. God sent two messengers, one with the message of endless life and the other with the message of death. The bearer of the message of life fell asleep on the way, and the news of death reached humankind first. The Margi believed that God lived with humans and could be touched, but a certain woman left a dirty calabash which hurt one of the sons of God. God was displeased and withdrew from human beings.

God is considered now to be far from the people on earth and although he has delegated the deities and nature spirits with routine duties, he is not detached from the affairs of the earth. Like a great chief God is usually approached through mediators.

c. Worship of God - Worship tends to take the form of extemporaneous prayers of good wish or praise offered, tending to be a response to the natural phenomena that manifests God's glory. The Igbo generally do not have an altar for "Chineke," and God is worshipped indirectly. At sacrificial worship, people invoke God's help explicitly. Homage is paid to God in the worship of the lesser Gods. In cases of disputes, people call on God to arbitrate through "Amadioha," the divinity of thunder. The Yoruba, Tiv and Ngas swear by God as well as call on him to decide by an ordeal and judge the guilty. The Igbo offer the following prayers to God before the

²⁹Eugene Rubingh, Sons of Tiv (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House,) p. 91.

worship of minor deities;

God, eat kola nut
Spirit, eat kola nut
.....

and

God who created man
My life, the life of my relatives
Whoever wishes me to live, let him live also
..... 30

Among most of the traditional peoples, the name of God is used by persons when their individuality is threatened. It is important that the counselor watch for mention of the name of God; it usually points to areas of anxiety in the person's life, or a cover up defense mechanism of the guilty, as is common with the Hausa people. The traditional Nigerian may use the name of God but generally not as lightly as the Muslim Hausa does.

2. The Deities:

The terms deities or divinities here represent those spirits that have priests officiating at the shrines or temples for the clan village or chieftancy. These have been loosely termed gods or nature spirits by various writers. The deities are responsible for major functions in nature and in the society.

The concept of God among the traditional people is exalted. God has to be served by lower divinities similar to the ministering

³⁰Stephen N. Ezeanya, in Dickson and Ellingworth, p. 37f.

spirits of the Bible. (Heb. 1:14). The serving deities are permanent and have their own priests officiating at the shrine. Mbiti makes no distinction between the divinities and the ancestor spirits; they are all spirits. He sees two categories of human spirit world. The first is the spirits of those who have died and whose memory is still with some living relatives; these are the living dead. The spirit of the dead person remains in this category until all those who knew him in life have also passed away and become living dead. The second group is the community of the immortal spirits. The spirit joins this community when his memory has faded from the land of the living. Some of the spirits in this category are venerated as deities.³¹ Mbiti's view seems to agree with the Tiv, who believe that God had sons who became founders of the races of the earth and that God's assistant was God's younger brother who was also the first ancestor of human beings.³²

There seems to be a sharp distinction between the ancestors and the spirits among the other peoples of Nigeria. Idowu describes the ancestor spirits as the domesticated spirits. He points out that the deities were not created, rather they were brought "into being in the nature of things with regard to the divine ordering of the universe." "Orisanla," the arch divinity of the Yoruba hierarchy of divinities, partakes of the nature and attributes of

³¹Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy p. 83.

³²John S. Mbiti, Concepts of God in Africa (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 116.

Olodumare. The divinities are therefore, derivatives of God.³³ Ezeanya, however, writes that the Igbo believe the deities were created by God but charged with power to perform specific duties for God. Unlike God, they do fail occasionally. The most important Igbo deity is the earth deity, believed to be the daughter of God.³⁴ The Yoruba have 1700 divinities (Orisa) in their hierarchy, including Orunmila, the divinity of languages; Ogun, the divinity of iron and war; Shango, the executioner of God's wrath.³⁵ Among the Ngas, the moon festival, "Mostar," in the harvest season reflects special devotion to the moon deity.

Deities are important for the ministry of the priests, mediums, diviners and medicine persons often attached to their shrines. People with problems consult the temples, and the priests divine and prescribe the treatment which usually includes animal sacrifice. Some priests, especially of Shango, supervise over oaths sworn in disputes; and some over trial by ordeal or oracular revelations. It is not uncommon, however for individuals to disagree with the decision of the deity on certain personal matters. They would then appeal to God to vindicate them. It is usually the officials, not the deity, that are blamed for unfair ministration of their duties. God serves as the final court of appeal. God becomes

³³E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare (London: Longmans, 1970), p. 22.

³⁴Ezeanya, p. 35.

³⁵Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy p. 76.

prominent when all human and spiritual forces seem to be against the individual. God is often called upon in an oath to decide by some dreadful calamity (commonly by thunder) if the person accused is really responsible.

3. The Ancestors and Personal Spirits:

The ancestors are the soul of the society, the uniting force in the social structure. Taylor remarks that a common brotherhood and life springing from a common ancestor frequently impels the individual to treasure his community as such and ensure its continuance and growth.³⁶ The place of the ancestors in the traditional society is so strong that communities which have been converted to Islam have accommodated the religious and cultural aspects of the ancestors into the Muslim practice.³⁷

Those who are remembered as ancestors are people who had children before death, although in certain cases those who are childless but have lived upright lives are regarded as ancestors. With the Ngas, those who have been initiated are remembered as ancestors. It is generally believed that the spirits of wicked people and witches do not survive as ancestors; their families, however continue to pour libations to them, believing in their continued existence.

³⁶John V. Taylor, in "The Wholeness of Human Life," Study Encounter, IX:4 (1973) SE/52,15.

³⁷Dean S. Gilliland, "African Traditional Religion in Transition," (An unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Hartford Seminary Foundation, June 1971), p. 201.

The ancestors are guardians or superintendents of their families and households. To understand the full implications of ancestor veneration, it is important to understand the place of respect usually paid to the parents and elders in the society. Most Nigerians believe that while alive parents have power to bless or curse their children with permanent effect. The fifth commandment is in agreement with this belief: "Honour your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you," Exodus 20:12. Children are expected to respect and be on good terms with their parents, and parents are consulted before major life decisions are made. An undertaking carried out despite parental disapproval often results in failure, because the person would lack the confidence to continue.

It is believed that the dead carry on life just as when alive.

The dead share the same world with the living. Mbiti says;

This then makes the spirits men's contemporaries: they are ever with men and man would feel uncomfortable if the ontological mode of the spirit were too distant from his own. This would mean upsetting the balance of existence; and if that balance is upset then men make sacrifices, offerings and prayers to try to restore it. In effect men visualize the ontological stage in form of spirit. The world of the spirit, wherever it is situated is very much like the carbon copy of the countries they live in this life.³⁸

This means that the wishes of an influential dead parent still unconsciously controls the living children.

There is contradiction in beliefs on the subject. The

³⁸Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy p. 80.

Yoruba, Igbo and Ngas believe that at death a person's spirit crosses rivers and mountains before reaching the land of the dead. The Ngas of Pancen believe that their dead congregate on Mount Sara where they lead a life of endless joy and celebration.³⁹ The Yoruba also believe that the spirit of the dead must present his life report before God, be judged, rewarded or punished. But the tribal persons all believe that the ancestors spend their lives with their living relatives. Both East and Rubingh writing about the Tiv say that the ancestor spirits do not occupy a prominent place in the social structure of the living.

The Igbo, Ngas and Yoruba regard death as an extension of life into the supersensible world. The dead continue as spirits to be members of their families. Some Igbo are careful to leave some food in the pot for them.⁴⁰ The cult of Oro and Egungun in Yoruba land and the appearance of the "dodo" at festivals in the traditional societies emphasize the belief that the ancestors are an indispensable part of the social structure, acting as coercive factors in the society.⁴¹ During festivals young men disguise themselves and are regarded as the ancestors come back to visible form. The festivals are intended to reunite the ancestors and the living society into

³⁹ Nde Mwalwus - an expolice, story teller at Ner, Pankshin.

⁴⁰ Ezeanya, p. 44. The Yoruba pour libation at the grave, the Ngas pour a few drops of their drink on the ground before they drink it.

⁴¹ Idowu, African Traditional Religion, p. 185.

common worship.

Such worship used to proceed as follows in the Ner village of Pankshin. On the festival day the community of the whole clan gathers in the open quarter of the chief. The chief leads the community of the living; and some masqueraded young men appear to represent the ancestors.⁴² The "ancestors" gather at the opposite side of the arena. The festival starts with the chief's address to the ancestors. He gives them thanks for all the blessings received that year, rain, good harvest, new children born. He then mentions the misfortunes that have happened in the passing year and asks them to avert the misfortune and bless the forth coming year with plenty. All the people make a response in agreement with the chief. Then the spokesman of the ancestors speaks in response, usually in an unintelligible language which is interpreted to the people. He enumerates the good deeds of the people then the evil deeds that have been done in the past year. He sounds happy or angry depending on the overall record of the year. In good years the worship was concluded with songs and dance in which both the dead and the living participated. In bad years the ancestors chased away the people or beat them up. The food and drinks are shared as a Holy Communion of all the clan.

The ancestors are present at each major event in the life

⁴²The chief is the highest person in the social hierarchy and is believed to be the link between the living and the ancestors, family compound heads are believed to be closer to the ancestors by the virtue of their age.

of the people, at sowing and harvest, at birth, during the initiation; prayers are addressed to them to make marriages fruitful; and they participate in the mourning of the dead. They are inseparably linked with their own communities and can choose to reincarnate and be born into their families. Ojike says: "When sickness or accident destroys life, the indestructable spirit stays near the family visiting and helping them obtain for it a new body."⁴³

The visible manifestation of the ancestors at major festivals is the work of men. When asked closely who the ancestors are, some Ngas would say, "Are we not the ancestors?", and the common saying, ngwong ie, "the ancestor is sick," really implies the presence of disharmony in the community. The direct relationship of the ancestors to the individual is seen in the families, where they bless or curse on the basis of the individual's moral conduct towards them and other members of the society, family and clan. An upright person who performs his responsibilities towards them and fellow clan members need not fear misfortune or their displeasure; they will protect him. In sickness an individual seeks the good will of his ancestors. The treatment procedure includes prayers to them to accelerate the healing. The Igbo make daily offerings of kolanut palm wine to maintain cordial relations and fowls are offered at the annual festivals.

⁴³Mbonu Ojike, "Religious Life in Africa," in Ram Desai (ed.) Christianity in Africa As Seen by Africans (Denver: Swallow, 1962), p. 58.

There is a belief among the Igbo, Ngas and Yoruba that each person has a destiny which is given to him at birth. The Yoruba call it Ori, the Igbo call it Chi, and the Ngas call it Nen. This comes directly from God to every individual. The Nen of little children is believed to be keen and powerful. As a person gets older he starts worrying and getting anxious and as a result starts taking anxiety laden actions and neglects the presence of his Nen.

4. Antisocial Spirits:

a. The Free Floating Spirits - Unlike the deities, the benevolent nature spirits and the ancestors there are numerous evil spirits that are wild and untamable. These are referred to as free floating because they are believed to be unpredictable in their movements and behavior. Idowu refers to them as "unclearly defined" when compared to the divinities or the spirits of the ancestors.⁴⁴ They are more abstract, as shades or vapour, and are generally invisible; they can choose to inhabit any object, trees, a patch of land, brooks, caves. They are often perceived sitting in or under trees or by the roadside and road junctions in the middle of the night, chattering like birds or holding night parties.

⁴⁴Idowu, African Traditional Religion, pp. 173-174.

The Hausa have two words describing the spirits: the aljanu, similar to the Jinn. The aljanu have a chief, sarkin aljanu. The second word is Iskoki, literally, "winds." The iskoki are of two kinds, the bakin iskoki, and the Farin iskoki, the black and white spirits. The white spirit can bring good but sometimes collaborates with the black spirits, which are always hostile, in doing evil. The division between the black and white spirits is not clear, since it is also believed that they intermarry. The Ngas class the spirits under the name nzigol who tend usually to assume visible forms: the Kwi bis, literally "evil shades," is similar to the Hausa Iskoki.⁴⁵ The Igbo also have two main classes of evil spirits, the ekwensus, non-human spirits, and the akaligoli, ex-corporate human spirits from worthless people who had improper burial or died of evil diseases like smallpox or committed suicide.⁴⁶ The Yoruba have many evil spirits too. Abiku is a notorious spirit that enters into the wombs of pregnant women and is born only to die in childhood.⁴⁷ When a woman has a succession of children who die in childhood, it is often believed that the same abiku might be responsible. A diviner, medicine man, is

⁴⁵ Nzigol is the word used by the Ngas Christians for Satan, but traditionally the Ngas do not have an evil agent as powerful as the Christian Satan. For the Ngas and most Nigerian tribal groups, God reigns supreme without a rival.

⁴⁶ Francis A. Arinze, Sacrifice in Igbo Religion (Ibandan, Nigeria: Ibandan University Press, 1970), pp. 48-56.

⁴⁷ Lucas, p. 149.

often consulted to diagnose and prescribe treatments to prevent the spirit from leaving the child or ever entering the womb again. East argues, on the basis of the fact that the Tiv do not have a name for the spirits, that the Tiv belief in spirits is not strong. The nearest word that means spirit is the jijingi, shadow.

It is generally believed that when the evil spirits wish to cause harm they can assume visible forms of plants, animals or human shapes, abnormally tall or short, very fat or very thin. They can appear in various colors, such as red hot iron. When they appear visibly to a person, serious illness usually follows and if the mystical cause is not detected by a diviner, sudden death or prolonged illness follows; the person begins to waste away and eventually dies. It is almost certain that diseases attributable to the free floating spirits are psychological in nature. Their basis is often intense anxiety and fear of the unknown, characterized by the wasting away of the body. The biological causes of such diseases are usually never diagnosed by the Western medical persons. When this happens the Hausa recommends the boka or the maganin asali, the traditional diviner-medicineman and the traditional medical treatment.

b. Witches - The belief in witches and witchcraft is a subject with which a pastoral counselor has to reckon if his counseling and care ministry is to be effective among the Nigerian people. It is an important part of the African social and psychological world view. Idowu has this to say:

In Africa, it is idle to begin with the question whether witches exist or not. The observer from anywhere outside African culture may hold whatever theory appeals most to him on the subject. To Africans of every category, witchcraft is an urgent reality.⁴⁸

And Mbiti says:

Whatever reality there is concerning witchcraft in the broad and popular sense of the term, the belief in it is there in every African village, and that belief affects everyone for better or worse. It is part of the religious corpus of beliefs.⁴⁹

The common nature of the belief has made it the common language of the sick soul. When a sick person suspects being a victim of witch attacks, two facts could be surmised: first, that there is a mental basis to his illness, usually in the form of some neurotic anxiety, what Freud calls phobic anxiety,⁵⁰ or secondly, that the sick person has some unfinished business somewhere, usually a deep-seated fear resulting from some disturbance in his social and spiritual relationship.

The belief is that some wicked people can and do send out their spirits to do harm to the body or spirits of others. The witches operate individually or in groups. The groups of evil souls often hold nocturnal gatherings at which they decide who their victim should be, usually a member of their family.⁵¹ The witches travel

⁴⁸ Idowu, African Traditional Religion, p. 175.

⁴⁹ Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, p. 202.

⁵⁰ Robert A. Harper, A Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice/Salt, 1959), p. 33.

⁵¹ Francis L. K. Hsu (ed.) Psychological Anthropology (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1972), p. 104.

invisibly or in the form of fireflies, snakes, or birds, or in the form of wild cats and foxes which often assemble and make noise outside the gates.

To understand the real power of the witch, it is important to know the Tiv word Tsav and the Ngas word Sot. Tsav itself is not witchcraft but intense personal force possessed by some outstanding people. These people have the power to impose their will on the psyche of others and thus affect the other's will for good or ill. Prominent people like the chief, leaders, clan heads and household leaders are believed to have greater power of Tsav. Tsav may be used for beneficial ends for upbuilding of personal image or the welfare of the society. When a Tsav is misused against human beings the person becomes wicked and is a mbatsav, a witch.⁵²

The Ngas believe Sot to be a power that resides in the skull, the brains and in the chest.⁵³ People who are specially gifted in certain arts or are very innovative are believed to have Sot. The possession of the Sot makes the person extraordinarily alert and often able to transcend physical disabilities. Respected people who "sit at the gate" to counsel people, and medicine people, diviners, priests mediums are believed to possess the power. They are the most difficult persons to be tracked down by the witch power, for

⁵²East, pp. 236-237.

⁵³The popular use of the "Sot" implies witchcraft, but Sot is value free power shared by both the upright and the perverted people.

they not only see with ordinary eyes but with the "Third eye," - the chest.⁵⁴ They have powerful intuition and, like the witches, go out to counteract the evil witches. Like the Tsav, the antihuman use of Sot turns the person into a witch.

Belief in witches and witchcraft covers a number of other manifestations of psychic abilities.

i. Extra Sensory Perception and telepathy can be regarded as the exercise of the spirit to defy visible natural laws. It is believed that a witch has the power to affect the soul or spirit of another person by simply intensely wishing the victim evil.

ii. The intuitive ability to predict the future event is often regarded as witchpower.

iii. The belief in the chi (Igbo), ori (Yoruba), Nen (Ngas) which are believed to determine their fortune and destiny on earth. People whose lives are marked by special gifts or fortune are believed to have added power.

iv. The belief that some people have an unusually strong power of words to curse or bless effectively may be understood as witchcraft. The gift and use of hypnosis fall in this category.

v. Finally, belief in witchcraft is made alive and

⁵⁴The chest used to imply the power of intuition and extra sensory perception.

effective by its presence in the world view. Many African Christians believe God to be their "Shepherd" and, therefore, believe that witches will not harm them. In my observation, peoples whose community strongly believes in witches tend to attribute most of their misfortune to witches. Akiga's Story, well illustrates this:

The Mbatsav (usually real men) would hide by a much used path in the night to frighten people. A man so frightened would run home terrified saying:

I was going along when suddenly one of the Mbatsav rose from the ground and grew to such a height that he almost touched the sky! My hair stood on end and as I ran it seemed that my legs had grown to an unnatural length.

"Oh!" That's a bad road" says everybody. "It simply swarms with Mbatsav."⁵⁵

From that time people would be afraid to use that road in the night for a season. The story is similar to the cases of nzizi among the Ngas, usually human spirit impersonators out to frighten people. Nightmares are also interpreted as the attacks of witches;

The sleeper cries out loudly in his sleep. On being awakened he says:

It was a nightmare. I dreamt that a man pinned me to the ground with his hand round my throat, and was hitting me. I am always being visited with dreams by the Mbatsav. I go to bed, but I cannot sleep. "It is one of your relatives" says everyone. "Who else would keep on giving you bad dream?" These terrible Mbatsav! We empty chested are nothing but their slaves. They can do whatever they like with us.⁵⁶

What is important in the above dialogue is the traumatic

⁵⁵East, pp. 246-247.

⁵⁶Ibid, pp. 246-247.

experience of the bewitched and the reinforcement often received from the community. Akiga's Story reveals what is often left unsaid, that the activities of the witches are often attributable to clever people who either knowingly or unknowingly rouse fear already latent in the belief of the individual.

There is also a sociological side to belief in witches. Unresolved social conflicts, disharmonious relationships and exaggerated suspicions of being the target of jealousy make some people feel they are victims of witchcraft.

A case is that of K who lived in Bukuru:

K was a brilliant student. He had completed secondary education. His parents lived back at home in a traditional set up. The majority of their neighbors were illiterate and strongly believed in the traditional ways, in spirits. K had completed a 5-year course and had been successful in a London examination, which made him qualified for a scholarship for further studies overseas. In his position K began to feel he would be the target of witch attacks due to jealousy. One night as K was walking home, he almost stepped on a toad, and as he looked down there was a string across the road. K's fear that he might be bewitched increased, and from that time he took special care not to come home by night.

When I talked with him, he expressed the suspicion that some of his fellow students might be witches. Although he is a Christian, he believed that there would not be so many people assembled .

together in the dormitory without witches among them. He did not get ill, but he took special precautions to avoid any withh attacks.

Mbiti draws attention to the fact that Africans readily express feelings of joy, love, friendship and generosity. Their fears, pain, strain, jealousy and suspicion are verbalized easily.

And Further;

This corporate type of life makes every member of the community dangerously naked in the sight of other members. It is paradoxically, the center of love and hatred, of friendships and enmity, of trust and suspicion, of joy and sorrow, of generous tenderness and bitter jealousies. It is paradoxically the heart of security and insecurity, of building and destroying the individual and the community.⁵⁷

⁵⁷Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, pp. 209-210.

CHAPTER III

THE TRADITIONAL SOCIETY AND ITS INDIVIDUALS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine the social environment out of which a typical Nigerian traditional person comes. The traditional society has been altered by change to the extent that there are few villages today that are unaffected. The writer will assume that things are the way they were about 20-30 years ago when the society and its structure were not too disturbed by change. It may be that much more will be said about the positive effects of the environment, customs and the society; this does not indicate that the traditional person existed in a paradise. If that impression is presented here it is simply because the writer has sought to indicate to the Nigerian pastor that there is much good in the environment, life style and society of the Nigerians. As in every society on earth the Nigerians, too, have often failed to live up to the ideal expectations of their beliefs, culture and customs. It is however, necessary to study the outmoded form because both the traditional and modern person in the state of transition still hold the expectations that belonged to the past.

1. Traditional Culture

A survey of the traditional society would make it possible to know what individuals have gained or missed in the present life

that now creates freedom or stress for them. Lambo has outlined four points indicating that the study of traditional culture is necessary for the practice of mental health professions in Africa:

a. It is important for any person interested in the mental health of the people of Africa to acquaint himself not only with the social structure and socialization, but also with the effects of the environment and socialization on the well being of the individuals.

b. It is necessary to study and treat a person not as an individual on his own but in relation to his community. This is especially imperative if we understand culture to determine the behavior of the individual.¹

c. It is necessary to have a historical survey of the individual's social life to separate what forms are more permanent from those that are less permanent.

d. The study of the cultural context may enrich psychotherapy

apart from the fact that various social taboos and ethical inhibitions have had their repressive forces lessened and the individual in these cultures concurrently feels a greater freedom of his ego and enhancement of her personal power, African cultures are loaded with unique psychotherapeutic factors that have not been satisfactorily studied from the mental health

¹Margaret Mead, An Anthropologist at Work (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 206. The viewing of culture as "personality writ large" makes the study of culture and community necessary for the full perspective of behavior.

point of view.²

2. Some Values

Nigerians share with the rest of Africa certain social values:

a. The community. Sawyer writes that the acts of the African may be "personal but hardly individual" and that he lives his life first as a member of a community and then as an individual.³ To the western mind this may spell communism, but Parrinder discounts that idea as a myth.⁴ Nkrumah sees communalism rather than communism as characterizing the precolonial society.⁵ Muchabaiwa seems to agree with Nkrumah and asserts that "community approval or disapproval is more important than the private conscience that the European tends to put first."⁶ Although the role of the community is predominant, the individuality of the African is not lost. Personal name and the

²T. A. Lambo, "The Concept and Practice of Mental Health in African Cultures," East African Medical Journal, XXXVII:6 (June 1960), 465.

³Harry Sawyer, "Sin and Salvation: Soteriology Viewed from the African Situation," in H. J. Becken, Relevant Theology for Africa (Durban, South Africa: Lutheran, 1972), p. 129.

⁴Geoffrey Parrinder, Religion in Africa (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), p. 79.

⁵Kwame Nkrumah, Class Struggle in Africa (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 13-14.

⁶Alexio Muchabaiwa, "Christian Adaptation in Africa," in Church and African Values (Gaba Publications, No. 31, Kampala, Uganda, 1974), p. 7.

unique characteristics of ori and chi tend to emphasize individuality. Elaborate mourning of the dead is carried out with the greatest respect and the veneration of the spirit of the ancestor points to the individuality of persons in the community. When it comes to self protection, the Hausa say, "so duka so ne amma son kai ya fi," "love of another may be present but the love of self is greater." Most traditional people will agree with Tillich that "only in the continuous encounter with other persons does an individual grow to be a person." It is in the community that a person will find the right context for growth.⁷

b. Spontaneity, vitality, alertness and life are valued.

People who are in touch with their feelings and have the courage to verbalize them, however negative, are preferred. There is a dislike of premeditated statements, and people who brood over feelings are easily suspected of witchcraft. There is a greater preference for openness, and direct confrontation is generally less painful than dropping of hints.

c. Respect for the aged. Older people are considered wiser and in possession of a more powerful spirit. However unqualified a traditional person may be he expects respect for his age.

d. Persons. The traditional individual values people. This

⁷Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 91.

is evident in the traditional pattern of salutations in which people ask about and exchange the news of the well being or illness of their family members and friends. The collections of photographs of traditional people are usually pictures of people, especially people significant to their life experience.

B. A CONCEPT OF SELF

This concept is based largely on the Ngas understanding of a person and what they would see to be the self. Like most African language groups, the Ngas have not systematized life in different compartments; for example, into fields of studies like theology, science, politics, education and etc.⁸ Thus the vocabulary has also remained unspecialized, the professional persons use the same words that a common person would use. The same words may be used to refer to different things and to carry different meanings which can only be detected from the context. One time a word carries the literal meaning and at another time the same word carries figurative or symbolic meaning. The same usage of words applies when we look at the biological and psychic nature of human beings. The same word that literally refers to a part of the human body can often refer to the psychic constitution of the person.

⁸ Ako Adjei, "Imperialism and Spiritual Freedom: An African View," in Ram Desai (ed.) Christianity in Africa as Seen by the African (Denver: Swallows, 1962), p. 80.

1. Human Being

The Ngas use the word gurm and the Hausa mutum for the commonly used English word, human. Gurm or mutum is a living person. The words are commonly used of a man or woman who is fulfilled, complete, whole, mature and genuine. There is a sense in which every person is a mutum. Each person would think of himself as a gurm. Each person thinks of himself as precious, whatever others may think of him.⁹ When one person says of another shi mutumne or nyi gurm, "he/she is a person," one is designating that person with approval. A human being is physical and spiritual, is self-fulfilled, reliable, and sees a task to completion. A gurm may be physically whole or crippled, but would give others the full consideration that is due them, taking account of the situation. A gurm gives to others the consideration that he would want for himself. Every person is a gurm, and yet the word gurm is used as the standard to which every person is striving to reach and what each person expects of another. The word gurm does not carry a masculine or feminine gender. It is a nyi, the self, which is a pronoun indicating where accountability should lie. An individual person is often understood in terms of five spheres: (i) his head, (ii) his body or stomach, (iii) his character, (iv) his spirit and (v) the world. The self is also often understood in terms of the above categories, at times confused with

⁹ Frank Kimper, "Self and Therapy," an unpublished paper delivered in Course No. AM 346, Fall Semester, 1973/4 at the School of Theology at Claremont.

the head, stomach, and character. However, it is clear that the self as the moving power is distinct from, though intricately united with, the five spheres of a person's existence.

2. The Body

The Ngas word, but, can be literally translated "gut, belly, or heart" in English; but it is conceived as symbolically located in the center of the heart. It is the bosom of a gurm, the most intimate part of a person, the depth of the person's being as opposed to the fringes or the outermost form. It is here that the most intimate personal secrets are stored. It seems to be used at times to represent the whole live, biological, organic body. It is dark and mainly unconscious, but contains information and potentials which, if liberated, would give the gurm great powers, vitality and superhuman effectiveness. It is evidenced in people who despite physical disabilities are able to function well. The body responds to outside and inside events with appropriate positive or negative response and feelings. Like the Rolfer, the Ngas would view the human body as psychophysical organism; the psychosomatic and the somatopsychic are related. Emotional trauma is seen to result in muscular tension.¹⁰ When a person has intense negative feelings but refuses to make any response, vocally or in body movements, the response may be stored in the gut. That person is said to be denying some truths. Such denial

¹⁰Sam Keen, "Sing the Body Electric," Psychology Today (October 1970), 2.

is believed to lead to problems, "the swelling of the belly." The Ngas and the Gestalt psychologists understand repression in terms of muscular action.¹¹ It is that person's responsibility; it takes a great energy to keep such secrets, and often results in energy-consuming illness. This seems similar to Erickson's description of neurosis.¹² Self is held responsible for keeping the matter in the gut. Relief and healing would only come when confession is made or healing action taken. The gut also perceives the outside world and the situation in which the person is in. Some African languages do not have an exact word for "feel" in the English sense; they hear or perceive.¹³ The gut is considered able to speak to a person in images and dreams, and sometimes by the body getting tense, cold or uneasy, and the person later finds that something dreadful has happened to a loved one. It is common to ask what one's gut is saying to oneself. The Ngas would agree with Glasser that the stomach ulcer is a message from the body to the person suffering it.¹⁴ When a voice is heard audible or inaudible in the case of dreams, it is the real voice of the person speaking from his gut. These voices could be

¹¹Fagan & Shepherd (eds.) Gestalt Therapy Now (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 11.

¹²Erik H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), p. 116.

¹³The Hausa and Ngas use ji or fot, respectively, to mean hear or feel; gani and ni to mean perceive.

¹⁴William Glasser, Reality Therapy (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 6.

many depending on how much the person is overspreading himself in taking more responsibilities than he can handle. The gut is more intuitive and at times seemingly highly illogical and always genuine. The gut thinks as well; it is the place where ideas and plans crystallize and come to be owned by the person. The Hausa word is ciki or zuciya, the gut or heart. When a person shares the content of his zuciya he is being genuinely honest. The Yoruba talk of Iye inu as the aliveness of the stomach. They understand the stomach to be the seat of emotions; the Iye is the seat of action which needs to be stirred when it slows down. A doubting or treacherous person is said to have double Iye, zuciya biyu (Hausa), but bap (Ngas); that is, he has two guts. The body thus understood is believed to be the seat of emotion, wisdom, consciousness, memory, thought and moral responsibility.¹⁵

3. The Head

The kē or kai are words which literally mean "head"; the Ngas word kē and the Hausa word, kai, used in other senses mean the top, the uppermost part of a person or of any thing. The Ngas use the word kē to symbolically refer to the self or to the whole instrument used by the self in performing its deeds and actions, especially when that action is performed single-handedly. The Yoruba understand the

¹⁵ E. E. Adeola Adegbola, "The Theological Basis of Ethics," in Kwesi Dickson and Paul Ellingworth (eds.) Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1969), p. 126.

head as representing the whole person and his character. Ori inu, "the second head," is spoken of as residing in the visible head, and is often identified with the character.¹⁶ The Hausa call a willful person mai taurin kai, "a hard headed person."¹⁷ A brilliant person is said to "have a head." Very innovative ideas are considered to be schemed from the kɛ. The spirit of a person, especially a witch power, is said to live in the head. The content of the head is very active spirit which could be inherited by children from their mothers. It is conceived of as residing in the skull of a person even after he is dead and decomposed. This is the spirit that governs the whole gurm and is in turn governed by the person in the way he directs his innovations and scheming to tricky, manipulative and exploitative ends, as would a witch, or to human ends as would a real gurm.

In both the belly and the kɛ live the self. Understanding of the self is similar to that of Jung, as including the ego.¹⁸ In the Ngas word it is the self, nyi, that is accountable for the work of the head and the gut. Nyi is usually applied to people and things that are responsible for causing something to happen. Nyi can be understood as the moving power. Frank Kimper's definition fits nicely:

¹⁶ Adegbola, p. 124.

¹⁷ E. G. Parrinder, West African Psychology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1951), p. 23.

¹⁸ Joseph Campbell, The Portable Jung (New York: Viking Press, 1972), p. 139.

"The self is the center of dynamic activity in which the word, 'dynamic', is to be understood in the simple dictionary sense as energy in motion effecting and directing change."¹⁹

The head and gut seem to have some activities outside the jurisdiction of the "self" as well. It is considered best for a person to be "in the gut." A person who is fully in touch with himself is the person who is in touch with his gut; but it should be noted that the gut is not so simple. It is not possible for a person to be in touch with all the potentials of his gut. The person who is in sufficient touch with the gut knows what he wants right away and decides what to do readily. The self that is out of touch with the gut lives with reasons, under the influence of the past or unhappy experiences and fear of the future; he takes actions on the basis of the past or the future. When a person is under painful experience, the gut cannot be settled enough for decision making. Shame, guilt, fear, anxiety, joy, happiness and relaxation or sudden relief from extreme pressure: these have the power to prevent the self from settling down in the gut as the master of the house. Under such circumstances it is best not to press for a decision until things are settled and reflections crystalized a bit, after the event is over. A good counseling relationship in which the counselee is well accepted hastens the arrival of this peace.

Example: A young woman bereaved of her husband might, from

¹⁹Kimper, p. 1.

her head, say she is never getting married again; yet deep in her gut she may be wishing for the right man; after things have settled she would find that her heart craves for a man. It is the craving of her gut then that is her true desire. But her kē has to be convinced and be happy with it. She might, from the memory of her painful experience of the previous marriage choose never to marry again. Here the kē may seem to have made the decision. So the cravings of the gut might go unsatisfied, or by getting occupied with other employments she may succeed in drowning the voice of the gut; or the head may influence the gut enough for the decision to be real. It is common to hear a counselor say in such instances, "I have heard the voice of your head, let me hear the voice of your gut."

On the other hand the gut can accept some things that the head has not. A person goes on doing certain things compulsively which the body enjoys but the head disapproves. Until the head accepts it, the person would be inconsistent about the subject, approving and disapproving. Here the self is being active in the gut but influence of the head is strong. The gut and the head are supposed to regulate each other. The examples above are cases when the regulation of the two is not balanced. A person is said to have no head if he lives only to satisfy the desires of the gut without the reasoning of the head.

Hsu alludes to Horton's finding about the concept of personality of Kalabari Ijaw of Nigeria. Human personality has two sections: the first, biomgbo, is the agency associated with feelings,

desires and thoughts of which the individual is aware, and it corresponds to the conscious mind. The second, teme, brings about everything that happens in the biomgbo. Teme is conceived as the steersman of personality. Its activities are inaccessible to the biomgbo, and they are unconscious. Sometimes the teme and biomgbo are not united in a struggle. "A man who is attempting to succeed but is consistently failing may have a teme which refuses to attempt success for fear of failing as it has done in the previous incarnation." Only the diviner is able to listen to the voice of the teme. The diviner usually prescribes a treatment in which the individual is made to reject the wishes of the teme in a dramatic rite.²⁰

A healthy, fully integrated person lives in both the gut and the kē with psychic composition near balance. The self is found dominating and ordering every part; the gut and the kē are both influencing each other.

It seems simpler to draw the psychic picture of a person in the form of a colored liquid suspension in a beaker. The liquid is a little clearer at the top but still colored; the suspension is not quite settled yet, but thicker at the bottom. The clear top represents the kē, and the kē is also the liquid which is found in the suspension at the bottom. The particles of the suspension represent the gut. The color which permeates the suspension and the clear top

²⁰ Francis L. K. Hsu (ed.) Psychological Anthropology (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1972), p. 104.

is the self; the three are within easy reach of each other. The self is not easily confined in one corner but chooses where to be most of the time. In a healthy person the self is in control of everything. The self is the animal life, and there is more to it than animal life. It has the gurm quality about it; it is the power that keeps the body live and warm, if it is kept fully exercised and fit. The self depends on the body of the gurm, and the body of the gurm depends on the self. Nyi is a pronoun usually applied to the person who has done something--the gurm who is accountable for the action. The pronoun refers to the essence of a person that transcends good and evil. It is not to be condemned; as the Ngas common saying goes, "We do not hate nyi but we hate his work," so the nyi should always be accepted.

The unhealthy psyche is not a good suspension, there are some solid particles not permeated by the liquid or the color. This is the case with most people. The self is present just as much in the sick person but it does not move freely in the whole person. There are some places where the self does not like to be for too long, resulting in the storage of fear, anxiety, anger, shame, and guilt in these places. The self does not feel free and easy whenever there have been unhappy experiences and would prefer to go around these spots to avoid them. To overcome these troubled spots the self has to face the situation, to stay with the pain. The Ngas would usually recommend that the person stay and face the enemies and the unpleasantness unless doing so would mean annihilation.

In seriously sick persons the self recedes to an almost inaccessible corner. The person loses all the vitality that was characteristic of him. Here we say, "the person is not his usual self." "He is not his body anymore," "he does not find his body anymore." If a person loses touch with all parts of the body, death occurs, the flight of the self from the organic body. (In 1954 a relative of the writer was seriously ill; she was unconscious. A traditional medicine man was called to attend to her. When every effort failed the medicine man said that her self was not within reach. She died soon after that.)²¹

The sick person is usually understood as coming under the power of the iskoki (the evil winds or spirits), as being bewitched, poisoned, or touched by the neglected ancestors. In these cases the sickness is understood as caused by outside forces. But the Hausa and the Angas people would at the same time say that the sick person is responsible, bai sake ba, "he is not relaxed," bot shik ka, he has not let himself go. The self is seen as holding tight to some parts of the body or some things in the environment as though they are all the world. Here there is an element of distrust of the "ground," the yil, as a result of fear, anxiety, guilt or shame. All boil down to the fear that something detrimental would happen to the

²¹ T. A. Lambo, "The Importance of Cultural Factors in Treatment," Acta Psychiatrica et Neurologia Scandinavica XXXVII (1962), 189. The author says depression is experienced in terms of hypochondriachal, body pain and discomfort. "This is a matter of culturally determined tendency to think in body terms rather than emotional terms."

self. The failure to relax the body is energy consuming and, therefore, weakening. The weakness can manifest itself in different forms of sickness. Friends and relatives would ask, "Why have you not let yourself go?" or "What has happened?" These questions and similar ones are supposed to lead the person to search his own self, his environment and see whether he has committed some abnormal deeds or whether a relative or some enemy has done something contrary to the accepted custom in the culture. The Fulani prolonged system of greetings and the Ngas second greetings are not just time wasting rituals, but are aimed at providing a time of ease and opportunity to reflect on things that might possibly be hurting--an opportunity for opening up. These greetings are usually characterized by asking after the person, his friends, relatives, families, children, old and present friends, job progress or lack of progress and many other things. These greetings come close to co-counseling because it is mutually done. When two selves really meet it is warm in every sense of the word. On the other hand, if you come from hot and dry tropical regions, when two selves really meet it is cool in every sense of the word. The Ngas say, "The person is cool"; he is present when met.

4. Lebib

The lebib is perhaps what comes closest to the self. It is what survives through the time span of one's life. It is what remains as the ancestral spirit after death. The hill Angas have a ceremony

of gathering the lebib of the dead wife to her own people, her own clan. The lebib is something similar to the spirit that returns to the Maker (Ecclesiastes 12). There is a quality of uniqueness about every lebib.

5. Ēn

The Ēn is the same as the Hausa word for hali. It has many shades of meaning which are not easily rendered into English. Literally, it means character, some coherence, order and consistency in conscious awareness and behavior. The Ēn is seen in the power of a person to perceive sameness through time that may be interrupted by sleep. It is also active perception or simply perceiving what is going on in another person's experience. A person who is dead drunk is commonly said to have no Ēn. Similarly, a little baby whose reasoning is immature has no developed Ēn. A person who is in a coma has no Ēn. In sleep even when a person is talking vocally in dreams or in a state of unconsciousness the Ēn seems to be non-existent but comes back to full consciousness again when one wakes up. A gurm has a real Ēn, live and active; the Ēn rests and wakes with the person.

An animal is without Ēn. So is a seriously deranged person who is not considered fit for a civilized society. Such persons without Ēn are not held accountable for their deeds, e.g., a severely retarded person. The deaf has no hearing Ēn; the dumb has no vocal Ēn; and the blind has no visual Ēn. The Ngas talk of a person's special Ēn to mean that person's idiosyncracies, and these may be good

or bad, depending on the changing mood of the person. The ēn is affected by the environment and is changeable according to the behavior and experience in the individual's personal cosmic environment, his duniya or yil. The Hausa hali and Ngas ēn seem to be the self in its normal pattern of behavior on the basis of experience gained in its span of life history. The ēn depends on the sense organs and the self. The self takes direction from the ēn, and so can be greatly influenced. Persons do most things the way they have habitually learned to be most convenient in the past. Although the ēn is changeable, the Ngas understands it to be intimately bound up with the self which is unchangeable. A person is said to make a good or bad ēn. This seems to imply that the self can decide to change the ēn. The change can take time but, it is never completely changed; only some aspect of it can change.

6. Ram

Each gurm has a measure of ram about it; that is, the sense of awe and dread that surrounds a person and that others feel when near the person. Great trees and rocks are very deep dark and clear pools are said to radiate ram. It is at times equated with the figurative shadow marin and is believed to part from the body at death so that all except the dead witch have their shadow still lingering around their corpse so it can continue to frighten people. A living person could be said to lose or gain his own ram. It is similar to the charisma since one may be naturally richly gifted with it without much

effort. It is characterized by spontaneity and vitality in the person. One's ram could be taken from one, leaving that one suddenly weak and feeble in all respects. It is not quite clear to the writer how the self is related to the ram except that one who cares for oneself, one's body and conduct safeguards the ram from being influenced by others or the environment. The self therefore seems to own the ram.

7. Duniya or yil²²

The duniya or yil literally mean the land, the earth and the atmosphere in which a person lives. This consists of the significant persons and things in a person's life, if one has them at all. The yil for most language groups used to be smaller and narrower than it is today. Below are the main contents of the yil. Yil is the mode of relational interaction that goes on between the individual and his significant world.

a. Relatives, the family at night, the extended family and how close one is to them. The more relatives one has and the more they value one, the better for that person. One who has many loving relatives is considered blessed, and it is believed that no one grows to be a person without them.

b. Friends and acquaintances. The number of friends one has in the environment and how the friends value the person determines

²² Duniya is the Hausa word borrowed from Arabic for the world. Yil is the Ngas word for the land country and shik yil means politics.

much of a person's performance in life; the self is positively or negatively influenced.

c. The society. One's language group or community which provides a broad code of conduct. The sense of nationhood is something that is just developing among the tribal groups in Nigeria; for most people it is still remote, and the language group is more important. For those who are able to participate on a national level, their concept of the yil, omenna, or kasa, is wider.

d. One's ancestors and God. A person can call on the ancestors and God when his being is threatened or when all that he depends on fails. It is not easy for the Ngas to think of one who has neither the ancestors nor God; the dogma of life that one holds more by faith than reason is all important here when one's visible world is disturbed.

The world so described is very important in the lives of the Nigerians. No therapy is complete that ignores the fact that the individual self is acting out of the environment. The sayings, "Yaya duniya?" in Hausa or "Yil da ran ne" in Ngas, "How is the world?" are common forms of greeting which easily gain a response full of deep feelings. To the traditional person the environment is very important and one's moral behavior weakens or strengthens the person in times of stress. ~~Reasons for misfortune are sought within oneself and within the physical and spiritual environment.~~

The self lives in the head, the body, the ram, the en, and the duniya. The self is closely bound up with each of the six spheres

of human living organisms and as such it is often weighed down and limited in its effectiveness. However, it is very powerful when it decides to act; it can bring about changes within each of the sphere of its activity.²³ I would agree with Roberto Assagioli that dis-identified from any of them it is most powerful and free to act, but it is not separated from any of its areas of residence except at death.²⁴

C. COUNSELING AND CARE

1. A Traditional Definition

The phrase, "counseling and care" is English terminology. Pastoral counseling is defined by a psychiatric dictionary as a type of supportive or guidance therapy in which the clergyman, in his role of interpreter of personal and social values, attempts to relate the contributions of the behavioral sciences and the resources of religion to the needs of his parishioners.²⁵

The traditional healers, be they household elders, witch doctors, herbalists, priests, diviners or mediums, combine counseling with other professions. The Nigerian or African society has not separated the healing of physical or mental illness from religion. The African understanding of a counselor is close to a combination of

²³Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Pocket Books, 1973), p. 105.

²⁴Roberto Assagioli, Psychosynthesis (New York: Viking Press, 1973), pp. 22, 111.

²⁵L. E. Hinsie and R. J. Campbell, Psychiatric Dictionary (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 167.

the pastoral and psychiatric profession in the western society. Torrey has accepted the witch doctors as the counterpart of psychiatrists in the primitive societies.²⁶ The official counseling and therapeutic tasks may be carried out by the elders, healers, and priests; but the caring ministry is a responsibility of each member of the family, village or clan for the fellow members. A complete understanding of the traditional counseling and care is manifested in the work of the professional healers and the social relations and interaction of the people in their communities.

A brief survey of the general characteristics of the Nigerian healing practice would be of help at this point.

One characteristic of the Nigerian healing practice is that the existing structures and institutions are themselves geared to the healing and maintenance of the mental stability of their members. Powerful psychotherapeutic mechanisms of a preventive and coping nature are built into the customs governing the social structure, socialization, rites of passage, marriage, birth, illness, death, burial and mourning as well as in religious practice and devotions to the ancestors, deities and God.

A second characteristic is the variation of the context in which healing and counseling are carried out. Healing could be in the home of the sick person, often with at least one of the closest relatives or friends present. Healing could take place in the

²⁶ E. Fuller Torrey, The Mind Game (New York: Emerson Hall, 1972).

reception building. In more severe cases treatment could be at the home of the medicine person; in this case too, it is common for a relative to accompany the sick person. The presence of close relatives at the healing center applies to the hospitals as well. Although individual therapy is commonly done, it is often subject to abuse and is often surrounded with suspicions and scary stories.

A third characteristic is the idea of cause. Diseases, whether of physical or mental nature, are interpreted in terms of a spiritual or social frame of reference. Leighton and Hughes of the Cornell-Aro team in western Nigeria found that while the Yoruba and western concepts of psychiatric disorders overlap, the disorders are defined differently by the two cultures. The differences are dependent on the "ideas of cause." They admitted that more would be perceived in common if attention were limited to symptom patterns alone.²⁷

The degree in which mentally handicapped persons are accepted by the community is generally higher throughout the country if the person is not violent. A person who fulfills his family roles and carries out some social and religious obligations, as defined by own tribal or clan groups, is tolerated.²⁸

Lambo further remarks that some characteristics that would

²⁷A. H. Leighton and Jean Hughes, "Yoruba Concepts of Psychiatric Disorder," in T. A. Lambo (ed.) First Pan African Psychiatric Conference Report (Abeokuta, Nigeria: 1961), pp. 138-141.

²⁸Ibid., p. 140.

be regarded as mental illness are absorbed by some religious functions.²⁹ For example, each deity possesses distinct characteristics. The medium or officiating priests are supposed to reflect the character of the spirit possessing them. Ogun, the war deity, is energetic; Shango, the deity of thunder, is manly and happy. Orishala, the divinity of creation, is calm and serene. Sophonu, the divinity of smallpox, is restless and agitated.³⁰ Absorption of people with matching characteristics into the different orders of priesthood gives some acceptance to the abnormal characteristics.

In the traditional society, mental health implies living in harmony with one's neighbors, keeping the tribal taboo and laws of God and the clan, e.g. abstention from adultery. "And the first rule of health is not so much to care to avoid sitting in a draft or getting your feet wet, but to live at peace with your neighbor." Achieving abreaction through confession has a contagious effect, freedom and healing not only for the individual concerned but for the spouse and children also.³¹

As mentioned above the social structure, the persons, the life cycle, the rites of passage and the customs governing socialization all have inbuilt mechanisms of therapeutic value. One could say

²⁹ Lambo, p. 179.

³⁰ Pierre Verger, "Trance and Convention in Nago-Yoruba Spirit Mediumship," in John Beattie and John Middleton (eds.) Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa (New York: African Pub. Corp., 1969), p. 51.

³¹ Lambo, "The Concept and Practice . . . ," p. 465.

that counseling and care is unconsciously carried on through the social structure through the significant persons in the society and through special events marking the stages of the life cycle.

2. Through the Social Structure

The social structure consists of the tribe or the language group, the clan, and the family. To understand the patterns of socialization, the web of kinship lineages, the institutionalized friendship and the clubs must be considered.

a. The language group. The terms language group or tribe are not adequate to describe the cultural groups in Nigeria. The Igbo and the Yoruba tribes each have a population of about 12 million or more. Some, like the Ngas, are only about 140,000, and there are smaller tribal groups.

A tribe in Nigeria does not necessarily have one leader, as Kimble seems to imply. A tribe would usually speak the same language with variations in dialect; the customs also would be the same with slight variations.³² Originally, tribes were small nations with independent political systems, each within an area of land whose boundaries had to be defended or expanded according to the power of its people. A tribe would normally have a uniform pattern of conducting its religious rituals and ceremonies. Each tribe considered

³²"Units of African Society," in G. H. T. Kimble, C. D. Moore and A. Dunbar (eds.) Africa Yesterday and Today (New York: Pathfinder, 1972), pp. 38-39.

itself as the only people, its culture and way of life as the only way and all outside the cultures of a lower standard. Some tribes have a special name for all outside language groups; the Ngas call them Nlap. The Yoruba, Kogbede. All their moral ideals and humane concerns do not often extend to outside groups. The Ngas could kill the Saya with impunity but could not kill or steal within the tribe without prosecution.

In the pre-colonial days there was not much peaceful, individual communication across the tribal boundaries. Trading expeditions were carried out in groups of armed men. However some language groups were on somewhat friendlier terms with their neighbors, as evidenced in the continued intertribal trade between the Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani and Kanuri.

Today the allegiance of an individual is first to his own language group and secondly to political, religious or national organizations.³³ Tribal solidarity and the feeling of "we," the sense of identification as described by Burke, is more pronounced among some tribes although within the language groups, there are internal, sectional rivalries. Members from the same language group would present united fronts against outside people.³⁴ In a language group there may be one paramount chieftaincy which is hereditary as with

³³J. Gunther, Inside Africa (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), p. 9.

³⁴Fred G. Burke, Africa's Quest for Order (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 19.

the Jukun people, with their Aku; or the Kanuri people under the Shehu of Bornu. Some like the Hausa, Yoruba, Ngas and Fulani have several chieftaincies leading the sub-sections of the tribe almost independently of each other. The Igbo do not seem to have hereditary chieftaincies. A chief rules his people through the subordinate chiefs, village and clan heads. The village and clan heads are assisted in their job by compound heads, who are advised by their compound elders. No leader is expected to act as a dictator. Decisions are reached and actions taken after consultations with the elders.

The tribe provides the individual with a language, a culture, religion and philosophy and therefore a mental frame of reference. Sharing the same language and the same world view makes healing more meaningful within the tribe.

The tribe, for the African, is the matrix in which his religion takes shape. It is in group life that the meaning of myth is communicated, and it is in community that a man's sacramental relation to nature is experienced. Any change in society will directly affect the individual, and the individual who is disoriented from his environment, struggles for adjustment.³⁵

b. The clan. The clan in most of the traditional societies is patrilineal. The clans are often believed to be founded by a common patriarch, and being patrilineal, all those who are born in it belong to the clan.³⁶ A clan, therefore, consists of the ancestors,

³⁵ Dean S. Gilliland, "African Traditional Religion in Transition" (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Hartford Seminary Foundation, June 1971), p. 162.

³⁶ The clan of Shuwer is an exception among the Ngas. It was

the older men, including every married man; and the unmarried sons and daughters. The wives of the clan are members by adoption; each woman married into the clan belongs to an outside clan. Others who are members by adoption include people who have moved in as refugees, settled in and continued as clan members; although they can marry from among the members of the clan, they have no right to inheritance or succession to clan leadership. Children of the daughters of the clan may be members of their mother's clan but without rights of succession to leadership. A man alienated from his clan may reside with his wife's clan (This is rare, but sometimes necessary.); he may distinguish his children by giving them his own clan name. Among the Yoruba, freed slaves who have redeemed themselves may choose to settle in their master's clan.³⁷

The clan is usually headed by an older and more experienced member. Among the Igbo, Ngas and Tiv, the clan heads have to surpass the older members in witch power, ability to reason and represent the people and must be generous. The clan head mediates between his members and other clans. He helps pay fines for his members who are in trouble with the law of the land. He advises and counsels the members of the clan, reconciles and settles disputes between them. Any problem arising within the clan must be known to the head before

founded by a woman with three sons and though it has now assumed patriarchal characteristics, its head must always be a woman.

³⁷N. A. Fadipe, The Sociology of the Yoruba (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibandan University Press, 1970), p. 100.

outside help is sought. He delegates a lot of responsibility to the other elders as well. The clan head often calls the elder members of the clan together for consultation on serious deliberations, or to warn them of dangers in the society.

Apart from the clan head is the Logun (Yoruba), or Sarkin Yaki or Sarkin Noma (Hausa), the chief of war or farming. In the past, he led the men at arms into battle, but today he summons the able members of the clan whenever there is a difficult job to be done. He does not need to be an elder, but must be an able bodied man.

The women of the clan hold meetings, under their leader to discuss matters of common concern. The elder women are active in counseling and settling disputes between the women. In serious instances when the wives of the clan do not get along, it may require the return of some of the daughters of the clan to settle the disputes.

Marriage counseling may be done with two or three elder men and one or two elder women acting as counselors. Disputes are settled in the same way.

It is within the clan that an individual finds his own identity. First, the individual is initiated into adulthood or the religious societies of the clan and is taught the ideals, values and expectations of the clan. By early association and initiation, clan members may show the same behavior. For example, among the Ngas it is uncommon for the women to cry in childbirth, while among the Yoruba, the women cry and wail in childbirth. Secondly, the clan gives its members the clan name, in addition to their own names;

the mere mention of the name shows where the particular individual comes from. The male members all answer one name; for example, the Kabwir ruling house calls its sons Suwa, "who would you run from?" The sons of Tuwan are called Gofwen, "the courageous one"; their daughters are Timan. The clan names are all affirmative. Thirdly, the clan gives its members the tribal or clan marks usually on the cheek but sometimes on the back or, like the Hausa, the body. A facial mark identifies a person and his place of birth. And finally, since the clan is supposed to originate from one patriarch, it is linked together by a common ancestor cult. This implies a common form of religious belief and practice. The clan usually has its priests, mediums, diviners, counselor and medicine persons. An individual does not need to go beyond the clan with any problem unless its own specialists have failed.

c. The family or compound. The word family is understood among Nigerians not in a nuclear sense, but in the sense of people residing together in one compound of houses. The compound may be two or three brothers or friends living together,³⁸ each with his wife and if he is rich, two or more wives, their children and sometimes dependent children of deceased relatives. The grandparents usually form part of the family, and the ancestors are the unseen members of

³⁸ Laura and Paul Bohannon, The Tiv of Central Nigeria (London: International African Institute, 1962), p. 17. The Tiv compound of family does not always consist of related brothers; they could be just friends.

the family. The compound would have a special name or be called by the name of its head. A compound family is therefore a clan en embryo.

Bohannan's divisions of the Tiv domestic buildings into three types seems to apply to the compounds in other language groups.³⁹ The traditional compound is geared towards the facilitation of relationships and does not allow much privacy. As a person approaches a compound there is often a wide open area surrounded with stone fence, called pipang (Ngas) with one entry. Often the religious symbol of the compound is erected on one side of the entry to remind visitors that they are now in the domain of the guardian deity of the compound. The open space would usually have a leafy tree to give shelter in the sunny, hot days. Here is where the active socializations take place; dances, ceremonies and festivals are held in the pipan. It is also here that young people play, under the moonlight.

The first building is the zaure (Hausa) or Gantang (Ngas). The reception hut is usually a round and bigger than the other buildings. It has two doors, one leading from the pipang and the other leading into the complex of round huts. Visitors coming to the compound must first go through the zaure. Some compounds in the Tiv areas do not have a zaure, and the Fulani do not have a zaure at all but each married Tiv would have his own reception chamber.⁴⁰ The

³⁹ Ibid., p. 15.

⁴⁰ The head of the compound often has a separate chamber where individual counseling and consultations take place.

zauré is designed for socializing purposes. It is furnished with some seating around the wall so that all seating faces the center where a small fire is often kept alive. The male members of the compound often spend most of their free time here at the end of busy days. Where there is harmony, the male members eat together here. Disputes and disagreements are ironed out here, too.

The second set of buildings consists of the sleeping huts; the few valuables are kept here. The traditional Nigerians, except for the Muslim wives, are outdoor people. It is not common, except in cases of sickness, to find a person in the sleeping hut in the day time. The cooking house, also a small hut, may be shared.

The third set of buildings includes the store houses and the granary or rumbu; grain and a few precious belongings are kept here.

There is no small family unit equivalent to the western family except those recently married. If the family is polygynous, the mother usually plays a dominant role in the lives of her children; they grow up to be more attached to her rather than the father who is not always there. A grown child would take his mother's side in a dispute against his father's wives or even against his father.⁴¹

The responsibility for the support of the family unit is shared between the husband and his wife. Among the Afikpo and Igbo, the husband provides the bulk food like yams for his family in the yam season, September to January. The wife provides food from root

⁴¹William R. Bascom, The Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), p. 46.

crops from February to August.⁴² Among some Hausa the wife provides only the ingredients like salt, oil, pepper and vegetables. The Yoruba and the Ngas women who individually own a small farm may be able to feed their family most of the time, and today it is common for a Yoruba market woman to educate her children as well. In the polygynous units, responsibility is divided according to the components of the family with each wife on her own with her children. Where there is harmony, the wives band together and force the husband to take greater responsibility.

The family constitution as a compound differs greatly from the family constitution on which Freud and the transactional analysts base their theory. The compound family provides a community which, divided in groups, is coercive, accepting and sometimes restricting to individual freedom.

The first compound group consists of married male members. They are constantly socializing in the first reception building, where business meetings are also held. This is the smallest unit of political force and, among the Yoruba and most tribes, it is the primary significant group in the society.⁴³ The second group is that of the married women of the compound. They have a leader and meet occasionally to discuss matters of common concern. The third group is composed

⁴² Phoebe V. Ottenberg, "Changing Economic Positions of Women Among the Afikpo Ibo," in William R. Bascom and Melville Herskovits (eds.) Continuity and Change in African Cultures (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 207.

⁴³ Fadipe, p. 100.

of the younger unmarried members of the compound. In the traditional compound, this is usually a group of up to ten young people. They have work and dance groups and socialize with peers around the other compounds. The fourth group usually consists of children under the initiation age. A child growing in a traditional compound usually has a community of father and mother figures with elder brothers and sisters. The compound family provides for interpersonal needs, enumerated in Sullivanian terms as "need for tenderness, security and intimacy."⁴⁴ In this setting a person must aggressively assert his personal individuality.

The family is not free of conflicts and Fadipe has outlined some of the typical causes of disharmony such as failure to express sympathy to neighbors or relatives in sickness or bereavement leading to bad feelings.⁴⁵ If relations are already strained, it is best to express concern and sympathy to avoid being suspected of witchcraft. Dragging children into adult quarrels also leads to bad feelings and witchcraft suspicions, especially if one party instructs his children not to accept food from quarrelling rivals; this has serious implications, because it implies the fear that the children might be poisoned. The compound is a very supportive and caring place, where acceptance is often unquestioned but it is a place where a person could be bewitched or suspected of witchcraft. The head of the

⁴⁴ Donald H. Ford and Hugh B. Urban, Systems of Psychotherapy (New York: Wiley, 1963), p. 531.

⁴⁵ Fadipe, p. 107.

compound usually brings the quarrelling persons together and seeks to resolve differences and regain reconciliation before feelings run deep.

d. The kinship groups. These are systems by which a person may be related to several clans at the same time. The Hausa call it dangi; the Ngas say Ngomifa, literally, "the people who rekindle you." The lines of relationship run through different clans in five or six ways. The first and most important in the patrilineal system is the father's lineage. The child inherits this lineage by birth and has the right of inheritance and of succession to any leadership positions of the clan. The second kinship lineage, the mother's clan, is equally important to the welfare and individuality of a person. The clan of the mother plays an active part in the life of the individual when he is sick. The members of the mother's clan do not fail to confront the lineage of descent if they think their kinsman is neglected and would readily accuse the clan of the sick person of killing "our child" if the sickness should persist against all treatment. The Tiv say that your own clan assists you because they have to, but your mother's clan will assist "because they will like to."⁴⁶ Uchendu says a person is an honorary member of his mother's clan and enjoys special privileges in his mother's brother's house.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Bohannan, p. 24.

⁴⁷ Victor C. Uchendu, The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 66-67.

During growth a child is made aware of two other lineages of relation-- his maternal grandmother's clan and the paternal grandfather's clan. Their part in the life of a person is dependent on their social and economic standing, but they are never to be overlooked.

Marriage links a person to the fifth clan. Although the members are related to a person through the wife or husband, they could be very influential in the person's social standing. A polygynist is therefore a prominent person with webs of relationships through his wives.

The sixth line of relationship is not agnatic, but follows the Ngas common ke söt, literally the "witch-head." The mother is believed to pass on her kind of witch power to her children. This means that if the mother of one's mother has witch power, one will have the same kind of witch power. The daughter of the witch mother passes the söt on to her children and the female children would pass it on and it would run through the female line down the generations. The descendants of the woman would all have her witch power. The line of ke söt penetrates through clans and villages. In the traditional system it has a limiting effect on groundless accusation of witchcraft. Those who can trace their line matrilineally to a common female ancestor would all rise up against such accusation. The common ke söt may be a left-over of the matrilineal system that may have existed at some stages in the history of the Ngas people.

The interest of the different agnates as relates to the individual is often conflicting and may be restricting, but the agnates

are a help for the person who can use them and "play one against another in the interest of self protection and social advancement."⁴⁸

e. Institutionalized friendship. Here the individual moves out of his clan into clans unrelated to his own or only distantly related. Institutionalized friendship has a close bond as the bond of siblings. It is the "friend--no see-no-sleep"; hardly a day passes without the two seeing each other.⁴⁹ The friendship often starts with a fight and ends with a reconciliation. The reconciliation is often solemnized by a common meal. Among the Igbo, it can mean for each of the two persons letting a little blood and rubbing the blood on a bit of kola nut which is eaten by both. At some stages there may be oaths of secrecy. In some areas the two choose one common name by which they address each other. If the meal was a heart of an animal, then they call each other "my heart." Institutionalized friends allow two people a freedom of a deeper relationship. A friend would be one's first counselor. Such a friend could help choose a marriage partner for his friend. Okafor Omali writes of how Nweke from Port Harcourt sent home asking for a wife. His friend was the one who found and recommended a wife for him.⁵⁰ Such friends are often most helpful in reconciling marriage breaches. A disapproval or approval from an

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 64.

⁴⁹ Bascom, p. 47.

⁵⁰ Dilim Okafor-Omali, A Nigerian Villager in Two Worlds (London: Faber & Faber, 1965), p. 120.

institutionalized friend often carries great weight, and such friends can persuade when all others have failed.

f. Clubs and groups. A village would usually have clubs, mainly for men, which could be joined after the payment of a fee. Most of them are religious groups whose activities are often secret. New members are initiated into the religious secret societies. Monthly meetings are held, and monthly dues are paid. The groups are more common among the Yoruba and Igbo. Perhaps more commonly known are the play and work groups.

g. The play groups. These are groups which usually consist of children under the age for the initiation period.⁵¹ Little children find themselves in these groups because they are being cared for by their elder brothers and sisters while their parents are off to work. The younger children, before they are able to walk and talk, are just observers. The older ones consider them as a part of the group and talk to them as such. What they do may look funny, but is accepted as the best they can do. The little ones gradually begin to fit into the group by imitating the older ones and finally play an active part.

The group is usually large, about twenty in the large group which functions with smaller groups of about three to five within the large group. These groups change shape very easily according to the

⁵¹M. D. Gotom, "Some Groups in an African Society" (A term paper presented to H. J. Clinebell, Jr., 1973), pp. 3 and 4.

amount of interest the small group retains. The groups consist of boys and girls, but older boys who are of school age have a tendency to segregate at times for carrying out more mischievous ventures.

The groups are led by the older ones in a day long event. These groups used to take the place of schools for children who had no chance of schooling. Contracting is spontaneously done by the older members and the activity may last as long as there is interest. Those who feel hungry or tired are free to leave and come as they wish. There are usually two sessions. The day time and the after meal time before bedtime. The day groups are larger, the age group ranging from babies in the care of the older ones to children up to ten. Activities include catching grasshoppers, crickets, water and grass insects, making soft wood and corn stalk toys, making things out of clay, looking for snail's shells for a spinning game, trapping small birds, canaries for pets. Imitation of the adult world is common.⁵² While they are so occupied, they talk about anything that bothers them, their fears, aspirations, illness and death. Hostilities are easily expressed. This is the stage when swear words are learned and are freely used. There are occasional fights, too, but these do not result in lasting hatred; on the contrary, they often lead to reconciliation and friendships which can last for a lifetime. Children also meet at night after evening meals from about 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The numbers are fewer and younger children are with their

⁵² Bascom, p. 57.

parents. Time is spent in reciting and telling stories, dances with loud songs, games, joking and fun games. These activities had special forms which have been passed down through the generations. The children's groups do a great deal to create company and loosen shyness. The effect is most noticed when adopted children or those that have arrived newly to stay with their relatives easily feel accepted and become a part of the group.

h. The work groups. One thing that characterizes these groups is that the people are not gathered just for talking. They are usually doing something while they talk, drinking, playing, hairdressing, etc. Since most of the people are farmers these groups are seasonal.

In most of traditional Africa, work is done communally without pay: When each person has similar needs the others in the group get together to help him out.

The gardens in the planting and weeding seasons ring with companies of hoers. The people do not cultivate alone, but in bands that freely partake of the beer, the owner of the garden provided. Today all together, they cover this field; tomorrow, the field of another of the society.⁵³

These communal gatherings are groups by themselves; they may be too large for growth purposes. Here people learn about each other, mostly of an informational nature and do not deal with personal problems. These groups may be for the purpose of sowing, harvesting,

⁵³ Donald Fraser, The New Africa (New York: Missionary Education Movement of U.S. and Canada, 1928), p. 21.

building and occasionally hunting groups.

The most helpful groups are smaller work groups, known in most traditional tribal groups; the contracted weeding group usually has about four to six people, preferably of the same age group. This group is useful in bringing youth together. The contract is to work together on their parents' farms in a round, spending one full day's work on each farm each week. There is no contract made on the subject of their conversations. For the adolescent ages there is a lot of opportunity to share their many problems at home with their families and in their community, as well as their interests and dislikes. Such groups have a high degree of acceptance and at times do not make effort to change every idiosyncrasy of the individual members. On the farms, the group also has the opportunity to meet the parents of their friends, and the parents of one's friends can win one's confidence and may influence that young person for good where one's own parents have failed. The group continues even when the day's work is done. There are no formal times for meeting and relations can run from a superficial to a deeper level when two or three members of such groups are together. The group boundary is flexible enough to admit new members on temporary basis or reject those not wanted by keeping the interaction to a superficial level. Frankness and openness among the members of the group is the rule of the game. The degree of familiarity among the members of the group can be so great that they can read each person's thoughts by watching the facial expressions. People get to know each other so well that they can

predict what their friends would do at different encounters and circumstances. The community learns to see the group members as part of an entity, and the group may result in lifelong friendships.

Some work groups are formed by women; for example, basket making groups, pottery groups, house plastering groups. While the women work and improve their skills, they share their experiences and receive help. Information on life is exchanged and the younger mothers learn about child care from the experiences of the older women.

The work groups create great opportunities for deep meaningful relationships. There is ready acceptance, and since the relationship continues beyond actual work meetings, members in trouble have willing ears to listen to their problems. These relationships become very helpful in times of distress like death.

The weakness of the clan and family groups is that they are leaderless and although they help provide company, they were often supportive rather than confrontative. Lacking a trained leader, characteristics such as mirror reactions and projections are seldom detected and dealt with. Avoidance is common, as is rationalization; when the group interaction runs into difficulty it is not usually easily restored to normal functioning and grudges may be harbored indefinitely.

3. Through Counseling and Professional Healing

An individual seeking help would normally have enjoyed

support, confrontation and counsel from a close friend, the members of his family, the elders of the compound, and the clan elders. If the problem remains unresolved, then specialists are sought. It is not common in the traditional society for a person to seek therapeutic counsel on an individual decision, with the exception of the urbanized Hausa who find it easier to act on individual decisions. A person from a compound family and clan set up would usually seek help available from the compound and clan elders, and when the problem is beyond them, they would seek a specialist within or outside the clan. Only those specialists whose reputations are established and whose value systems agree with those of the clan would be recommended.

a. Significant persons in the society. To an individual in illness and distress, the significant people are first, the members of his own family, the compound elders and the helpers in the clan and secondly, the medicine people, the herbalists, witch doctors, the priests, diviners, the mediums and interpreters at the oracular centers and shrines. The professions of the specialists are not clearly differentiated, so that a medicine man may also be diviner and administer herbal treatments. The priest may be a medium, a diviner, a counselor and also a household or clan head.

i. The medicine people. The medicine man is called maimagani or boka in Hausa, ngoyin in Ngas or the "witchdoctor" by the European missionary. The term witchdoctor is literally correct if it refers to persons who heal bewitched persons, but he does more

than heal the bewitched. Some specialize in healing particular kinds of illnesses; some claim to heal any kind of disease. The healing medicine is often believed to be revealed to a family or clan by their ancestors and the skill and practice is passed down through the family line and is a top secret known only to the trusted members of the family or clan. The children of the medicineman learn as they help their father, but the particular secret is often revealed only to the son or daughter of the father's choosing. The chosen child continues the family profession. In some areas, there are periods of training and abstinence; methods of cures and prevention of diseases are learned; and the causes and prevention of different misfortunes are mastered, including the art of secret mysteries of magic, witchcraft and sorcery. He is taught to diagnose and detect signs of diseases, facial expressions, and above all to understand the language of the body. The medicine man or woman is greatly in demand in the traditional communities. Mbiti writes:

The medicine man has therefore to discover the cause of the sickness, find out who the criminal is, diagnose the nature of the disease, apply the right treatment and supply the means of preventing the misfortune from occurring again.⁵⁴

Since the witchdoctor attends to both the physical and spiritual treatment and confronts the sick, she/he serves both as the doctor and pastor for the community.

ii. The diviners. The Igbo use the word dibia for both

⁵⁴ John S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 169.

the medicine man and the diviner.⁵⁵ The Hausa word is maiduba which literally means "the seer." Mbiti describes them as "the agents of unveiling mysteries of human life."⁵⁶ The Ifa divination, which is popular among the Yoruba, is a spirit of a deity called orunmila, "heaven knows salvation." Legend has it that Ifa was sent by God to establish centers for divination throughout the land.⁵⁷ The Yoruba diviners, the messengers of the deity, are commonly called babalawo, "the father of mysteries."⁵⁸ The Ngas refer to divination as kis pe, "seeking what is covered." The diviners diagnose and prescribe treatment often with religious ritualistic overtones. They use their common sense, hypnosis, and their power of intuition to gain whatever secret information there is. Uchendu says they act as a network of secret intelligence, very up to date with the latest news of the latest gossips.⁵⁹ Akiga notes that sometimes the diviner's diagnosis about witch activities is confirmed by the person practicing the witchcraft, but sometimes the divination is pure guesswork.⁶⁰ People

⁵⁵ Francis A. Arinze, Sacrifice in Ibo Religion (Ibanda, Nigeria: Ibandan University Press, 1970), p. 22.

⁵⁶ Mbiti, p. 177.

⁵⁷ Geoffrey Parrinder, African Mythology (London: Hamlyn, 1969), p. 88.

⁵⁸ Raymond Prince, "Some Notes on Yoruba Native Doctors and their Management of Mental Illness," in Lambo (ed.) First Pan-African Psychiatric Conference Report, p. 180. The babalawo is an important type of native healer among the Yoruba.

⁵⁹ Uchendu, p. 100.

⁶⁰ East, p. 338.

who become diviners undergo lengthy training, during which they learn from their parents or teachers the names, signs and the language of divination.

A case of the diagnosis and prescription by diviners was witnessed by the writer in 1965. Mrs. Gocor of Bwarak had a baby boy. As the child reached four months it became uneasy and cried most of the time; it did not keep milk for long. The baby was losing weight increasingly. The parents became worried. They finally decided to consult a group of diviners. The diviners worked with seeds; one worked with the seeds, another wrote down the sacred words on the sand, and the other read the signs to the parents. Their diagnosis was that the child was a long dead relative of Gocor's family who had returned to life. They stated that the child should be treated with respect, and that all that the child was asking for was beer. After two weeks of feeding the child with beer, it not only stopped crying but gained weight. It is not clear if it was the beer alone or the exhortation to treat the child with respect that resolved the problem.

iii. The mediums. Like the diviners, the mediums are priestly personnel serving at the shrines of each deity. The mediums, like the diviners, do have and practice some medicine. In fact, mediumship is regarded as part of their treatment technique. A medium is regarded as the horse or wife of his patron spirit. They are usually called to the profession by some strange experiences and events, and a person who is called has to agree. Some are called by a decision of a group of mediums; some are dedicated to the deity or

spirit from birth by the order of the deity. Horton reports that many women claimed their mediumship was preceded by unpleasant experiences of both physical and psychological nature; ill fortunes and constant failure in business serve as signs of the call.⁶¹ Some receive training, a period characterized by fasting, abstinence from certain foods, chastity, and certain taboo. Most mediums are women.⁶² They are consulted by people seeking different kinds of information ranging from illness to simply finding one's fortune. The medium goes into a trance at festival dances or to music played at the shrine, though some do not need music at all. In a state of possession, the normal conscious awareness and personality of the medium is believed to be suspended. The person is fully possessed by the spirit who, using the vocal organ of the medium, delivers mystical information and secrets. Evil secrets are revealed, information about lost or stolen goods is obtained. Like the diviners; they reveal mystical causes of misfortunes like disease, death, barrenness, ill luck. They often speak in an entirely different language or in tones that are intelligible only to the interpreter. They sometimes prophesy and provide spiritual explanations for strange events, misfortunes and nationwide epidemics. Horton observes that they offer a loophole for the socially miscast and servè as a platform for introducing innovations into cultures that are otherwise very conservative.⁶³ In

⁶¹Robin Horton, "Types of Spirit Possession in Kalabari Region," in Beattie and Middleton (eds.), p. 34 f.

⁶²Parrinder, Religion in Africa, p. 75.

⁶³Horton, p. 23.

everyday life, the medium is a normal person reflecting some characteristic personality of her patron spirit. Among the Yoruba, Ogun, the divinity of war, is energetic; Shango, the divinity of thunder, is manly and happy. Orishala, the divinity of creation, is calm and serene; and Shophona, the divinity of smallpox, is restless and agitated.⁶⁴

b. Concept of illness and the practice of therapy. To be able to counsel effectively, the pastor has to be acquainted with those spheres of life in which a Nigerian traditional person would seek salvation. It is necessary to consider the meaning of sin as it relates to ill health and salvation-- the contention of Torrey, that the meaning of mental health and Kraft, that the concept of sin must be seen in the cultural context has to be borne in mind.⁶⁵ Mbiti seems to be echoing the general African belief when he says: "A person is not inherently 'good' or 'evil', but he acts in ways which are 'good' when they conform to the custom and regulations of his community, or 'bad' (evil) when they do not."⁶⁶

Nkrumah, on the same point says " . . . man is regarded in Africa as primarily a spiritual being, a being endowed originally with a certain inward dignity, integrity and value."⁶⁷

⁶⁴Verger, p. 51.

⁶⁵Torrey, p. 25; C. H. Kraft, Christianity and Culture (pre-publication draft; Pasadena, CA.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1974), p. 147.

⁶⁶Mbiti, p. 113.

⁶⁷Nkrumah, p. 68.

Apart from the myths which tell of the alienation from the original state of 'utopia' and the resulting separation of God from God's people, the traditional person considers evil in terms of specific deeds only. The human being as the creature of God is good and lovable. The Ngas say of an evil person, mu ta nyi ka dan muta shikcin, kini, meaning "we do not hate him, but we hate his work." The Yoruba word Ese and Ngas word Shikbis mean sin, or offence.⁶⁸ Sin, or offence, is considered in terms of wrong acts in several spheres which overlap, in the living community. Among the Igbo, the concept of social sin is explained by the principle of omenana. The root ana means earth, the soil, land, custom, tradition, law. Omenana is "a system which holds that a man's activities are limitable by what is good for all" (in the community), that is, doing things in conformity with the constitution of the land or the good of all.⁶⁹ Failure to fulfill one's obligations in the family, the household, in the clan community, or to a friend is considered an offence; these deal mainly with the interpersonal relationships.

i. Against the spiritual powers. One may be held responsible for an offense against some spirits by touching anything that has been dedicated to them.⁷⁰ Their unpredictable nature makes

⁶⁸ E. Bolaji Idowu, Olodumare (London: Longmans, 1970), p. 148. Ese and Shikbis have been adopted by Christians among both Yoruba and Ngas to bear the meaning of sin.

⁶⁹ Mbona Ojike, "Religious Life in Africa," in Desai (ed.), p. 50.

⁷⁰ Arinze, p. 35.

offense against them most difficult to understand. Most people find that they have offended an evil spirit only after a diviner has diagnosed the cause of their ill health.

ii. Offense against the ancestors. The ancestor spirits are offended whenever they are neglected, forgotten or when an oath sworn to them when living is violated or broken. The ancestors take offense too, when a member of their family neglects his duty, not only to them, but against any member of the family.

iii. Offense against the deities. These include failure to observe the regulations that relate to the deities or nature spirits, treading on their sacred grounds, or stealing fruits from any farm or orchard under their protection. One may sin against the deities by failing to keep an oath sworn by their name. Among the Yoruba, Ewo is a comprehensive word which also involves breaking of ritual laws. Je ewo means "to eat the taboo," break the taboo by committing sin, committing adultery, breaking a covenant or beating one's parent.⁷¹ The Ngas phrase se kum literally means "to eat the 'taboo,'" in covenant making to swear an oath by a particular deity. Each party involved usually calls on the deity to punish him if he fails to fulfill his side of the covenant. Since people generally worship these deities and regularly participate in the meals dedicated to them, the participants are subject to punishment whenever they commit of-

⁷¹Idowu, p. 149.

fenses contrary to the expectations of the deity. Paul seems to be implying a similar idea in I Corinthians 11:27f.

iv. Offenses against God. Offenses against one's neighbor, against the ancestors, or against the deities are in the final analysis offenses against God, since God is believed to have instituted the society with its ancestors and the nature spirits. Direct sin against God is vaguely defined, and in most cases it is one of the major deities that is said to be offended. Although thunder and smallpox are generally believed to express the wrath of God, the divinities of thunder and smallpox are held responsible.

Except for the Yoruba, it is generally believed that punishment is meted out in this life in the form of misfortunes, illness, childlessness, barrenness, unexplainable accidents and repeated individual failures and death. These are reminders that a person or the community is out of harmony.⁷² The most common indicator of personal or community disharmony is ill health, and people ask, "Why?" or "What is wrong, what evil have I done?"⁷³

v. Physical environment. Most of the diseases and misfortunes of the Nigerian and African traditional people are due to the

⁷²Mbiti, p. 161. The Yoruba believe that at death the spirit of the dead person stands before God to give account of his life.

⁷³Prince Nyabongo, "African Life and Ideals" in Desai (ed.), p. 38. It is generally believed that only wicked people get seriously ill and misfortune is often understood to be based on what the person has done knowingly or unknowingly.

harsh environment. The living standard is in itself the chief contributive factor to diseases, resulting from poor sanitation, which makes disease spread rapidly, and malnutrition. Most people farm two or three acres of land to feed themselves around the year. They tend to eat the same diet, which consists of mainly starch, the year round. The traditional person lives with disease but does not know it until it becomes serious.

Lacking a balanced diet and adequate protection against cold and damp weather and living in ignorance of the elementary principles of sanitation and out of reach of hospitals, doctors and drug stores, the average tribal African lives in thralldom and sickness. For him, sickness is the norm; it starts at birth, or even before and continues until death, and he is a lively African who is not sick of more than one thing. . . .⁷⁴

Diseases from poor sanitation and living conditions and malnutrition are given spiritual explanations. The evil spirit or the ancestors are always there to blame. The sick person often feels the sickness has come as a result of his fault somewhere in the social or spiritual relationships.⁷⁵

Simple cases of malnutrition used to be given the same explanation as affliction by evil spirits and witches. In the 1940's and 1950's many children in the village of Ner in Pankshin complained of malnutrition in a certain way. They were usually given much starchy food with little protein. Such children became weak and

⁷⁴Professor Kimble, quoted by G. C. Last, "The Geographical and Language Implications in Africa," in G. Wolstenholme and M. O'Connor (eds.) Man and Africa (Boston: Little Brown, 1965), p. 17.

⁷⁵Hsu, pp. 106-107.

tended to isolate themselves from the children's groups and were often found sitting alone and talking to themselves. When interviewed, those children often claimed to have seen spirits who appeared to them in visible human forms and gave them food, in almost every case eggs and foods containing proteins and carbohydrates. This, in my untrained observation, shows that there may be mental disease due to malnutrition. When these children were fed with the kinds of foods they claimed to have eaten, they often recovered. According to Myron Winick and Pedro Rosso of New York Hospital, Cornell Medical Center, malnutrition may be fundamental to the causes of some mental deficiencies from childhood to adulthood.⁷⁶

To do justice to the subject of salvation, it is perhaps best to consider 'sin' in its broadest meaning as the disharmony of an individual's world. Disharmony often manifests itself in the forms of misfortune and illness.

c. Healing process. Healing, understood as the restoration of health and normality in one's world, comes through prayer, divination, medicine, magic, sacrifices and rituals and finally strengthening of the biological structure of the sick person.

i. Prayer. Prayer is to be understood as the awareness of threat and a cry for help, help that is within the reach of every individual, the appeal to God. It is believed that when a person acts

⁷⁶Albert Rosenfeld (Science Editor), "Starve the Child, Famish the Future," Saturday Review/World (March 23, 1974), 59.

immediately as he feels endangered, the resulting sickness will be less serious. When a whirlwind sweeps past a person, he addresses it, assuring himself that since his conscience and life record are clear, God would not let the spirit harm him. When a neighbor looks at you with a bad eye, you are to look back at him and resolve your differences right away. The Nigerian would agree with Perl that any resentment, anxiety, or fear kept unexpressed result in an unhealthy life.⁷⁷ The Ngas say mbi cici ki wop but, meaning "denial of expressing feelings makes the swelling of the belly."

Since disease signals disharmony in a person's world, the immediate reaction to threat to one's world is first to confront the situation; second, to affirm innocence and therefore the inviolability of oneself; third, to affirm the faith that God, one's patron deity or the ancestor would not allow one to be afflicted. Prayers are offered to God before every major healing starts.

ii. Divination. The practice of divination is common among most people of Nigeria, including the Hausa, who are almost all Muslim. Among the Yoruba, the Ifa divination is most prominent; the practitioners are the babalawo. The Igbo priest-diviners are called dibia. Their main task is to disclose the spiritual or unseen causes of abnormalities in the society such as strange natural events, diseases, death, abnormal and normal births. When a case of illness

⁷⁷Frederick S. Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim (Moab, UT: Real People Press, 1969), p. 48.

reaches the diviner, it is clear that the disease is serious. The diviner counsels and diagnoses the mystical cause and prescribes the remedy for appeasing or eliminating the power causing the illness. The cause has contagious effects so that a father's wrong act brings sickness to his child or barrenness to his wife. Causes of ill health may be brought about by the witches, evil spirits, or ancestors. The Ngas say kum ye, "the deity has caught him," in the case of breaking a covenant oath or false swearing; it may come from God through the thunder or smallpox for which there is usually no remedy. The discovery of the cause is usually a great step toward recovery since much effort and money are required to consult the diviners.

iii. Medicine. The traditional Nigerian does not distinguish between diseases of physical and mental nature. A disease may have an obvious natural cause, but it must have a spiritual cause too. The chief task of the diviner is to diagnose the mystical cause and prescribe a medical cure. The medicine and its administration are supposed to deal with both causes. The double expectation from the usage of medicine may lend credence to the fact that there is unclear distinction between medicine and magic.⁷⁸ The common word for medicine and magic often found in many Nigerian languages indicates this double meaning. The Hausa word is magani; Ngas, yin; Yoruba, oogun; Igbo, ogwu; and Nupe, cigbe. Medicine is divided into "good" for beneficial uses, and "evil" for antisocial uses. The belief that there

⁷⁸ Parrinder, Religion in Africa, pp. 64-65.

is similarity between the act performed and the outcome expected governs the practice of traditional medicine. Some medicine is sympathetic; for example a wrestler may "medicine himself" by bathing a cat in water, then bathing himself in the same water, hoping that he will gain the agility of a cat. Examples of black medicine include the common practice of sticking pins into an effigy of an enemy or poisoning a bit of his clothing, hair or spittle with the hope that he might die.

The medicine becomes effective in healing the sick only as the healer and the patient follow the exact procedure of the healing ritual as set down by the ancestors. The medicine is consecrated by invoking the help of God, the deities or the ancestors.⁷⁹ The ceremonies that accompany treatment and taboo to be observed have the important function of strengthening the mind of the patient. Some traditional Muslim healers often prescribe involved taboo that aim at changing the value systems of the patient.⁸⁰ Some clans, especially among the Ngas, would not freely consult outside healers unless they knew their value standards.

Medicine in the form of amulets and charms is used in warding off misfortune and immunizing a person from attacks of witches and

⁷⁹ E. Bolaji Idowu, African Traditional Religion (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Urbis Books, 1973), p. 188. Traditional medicine is often believed to be revealed to the medicine people by the ancestors of their clan. Medicine is administered by priests, diviners, medicine men, herbalists and witch doctors who are religious personalities of their clans.

⁸⁰ Gilliland, pp. 117, 120.

sorcerers. Potions of medicine power are issued in tiny leather bags by the mystical healers: Babies, pregnant women and those who feel insecure in life carry protective charms around the waist or neck. The medicine may be very ordinary, but the potent words of blessing from the traditional healer may do half the job of healing. People travel far to seek the medicine with potent words.

The Ngas generally consider excessive reliance on and use of charms and amulets to be a sign of weakness, believing that an upright person need not greatly fear misfortune and witches. Idowu expresses the same thought:

On the whole, it is the general admission of African traditional religion that while magical elements often intrude themselves into the practice of religion, magic in the sense of "fetish" is not really necessary for those who are upright. In the strict sense, the aid of magic is sought by those who are not sure of their character or are positively wicked.⁸¹

Evil medicine is believed to be employed by witches, sorcerers and wizards for antisocial ends. Trimingham points out that in West African Muslim belief the use of black magic is allowed against enemies and people considered wicked; the boundary between black and white magic is vague.⁸²

The exact way in which medicine works is not clear. One would guess that most medicine helps tone up the body and mind of the sick person to resist illness and gain health. Medicine is often prescribed

⁸¹Idowu, African Traditional Religion, p. 197.

⁸²J. Spencer Trimingham, Islam in West Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 116.

to be taken at certain times accompanied by certain acts and behaviors so that one does not know what has brought the cure. The fact that some get well and some die makes efficacy difficult to determine.

Dr. Boer exactly echoed the Christian and traditional belief when he said:

. . . there is only one source of healing, it is the God of life. Without his blessing, neither medicine nor faith will effect healing. All healing is healing in the power of God. That men often do not recognize this and believe that healing arises out of the inherent skill of the practitioner or inherent efficacy of the medicine does not change the fact that the source of healing is one, however unusual and necessary the medical means may be.⁸³

In the final analysis, most Nigerian people see God as the great healer. They see an element of the miraculous in every healing. It is a miracle brought about, partly, by the attitudes of the healer, the patient and the significant persons in his life.

iv. Sacrifices. Raymond Prince⁸⁴ considers the sacrifice to be the cornerstone of Yoruba therapy. This is true of the other tribes as well. Sacrifices of goats, chickens and bulls and offerings of foodstuff are made often at the prescription of the diviner in addition to medicinal and herbal treatment. Sacrifices and/or offerings may also be made without medicinal and herbal treatment in cases where the problem is that of a known guilt

⁸³ Harry R. Boer, "The Medical Task in Nigeria as a Christian Challenge," A paper presented at the Fellowship of Christian Doctors, Nigeria, February, 1973, p. 15.

⁸⁴ Raymond Prince, "Some Notes on Yoruba Native Doctors and their Management of Mental Illness," in Lambo (ed.) First Pan African Psychiatric Conference Report, p. 258.

against the deities, ancestors and the society. Substitutionary sacrifices are made in cases of guilt and are referred to by the Yoruba as "that which bears punishment for me." These are offered by people believed to be under the wrath of a deity. The substituting animal is rubbed against the body of the suppliant; often his head is gently touched against the head of the sheep to ensure the transfer of his destiny as far as the illness and immediate death is concerned.⁸⁵

A whole community may offer sacrifices of animals (in olden days human sacrifice) to ward off calamities and epidemic diseases. Some tribes of the Benue Plateau states would throw the offerings at road junctions outside the village, thus symbolically sending off the disease. Individuals are known to offer cocks alive to spirits by simply letting the cock free in the wild.

Arinze writes of the "joyless sacrifice" often made to evil spirits. These sacrifices differ from the others in that the suppliant feels no obligation to the spirit. He simply is asking to be left alone.⁸⁶ Joyless sacrifices are often made of the most inferior quality while the other sacrifices and offerings are made of the best animals, those of one color, completely white or brown or black.

In the case of physical illness, sacrifices alone usually do not easily effect the cure, especially if the illness is diagnosed as caused by evil spirits. Here perhaps is the weakness of traditional healing when it relies on only one approach to healing.

v. Mbibut--dieting. Mbibut is the favorite food for the

⁸⁵ Idowu, Olodumare, pp. 123-124.

⁸⁶ Arinze, p. 57.

sick person. The Ngas and many of the Plateau tribes make sure that the sick person has been fully cured. When they are convinced of his health, a small feast is made for the building of the body. Mbibut differs from person to person according to taste and it is usually meat, in plenty. It is believed that ill health may return if the Mbibut is not made.

d. Some healing factors in the traditional therapy. There are three main factors that often stand out in a treatment session that may have some healing power in the mind of the patient: suggestion, ritual, and the alteration of the socio-physical and religious environment of the patient.

i. Suggestion. The healer, whether a diviner, medium, priest, medicine person or all combined, is believed to have clear knowledge of, and contact with, the spirit world. His gifts of intuition, hypnosis, word power, and his claim to "omnipotence" often serve to strengthen the faith and expectations of the patient. At the same time, his outlandish garments, his personality and strange behavior often raise the anxiety of the patient.⁸⁷ The patient is usually assured of the efficacy of the treatment and is warned of the woeful consequences that would follow should the patient fail to follow the taboo and procedures governing the administration of the treatment.

⁸⁷Ari Kiev, "Primitive Religious Rites and Behavior: Clinical Considerations," in E. M. Pattison (ed.) Clinical Psychiatry and Religion (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 122.

Suggestions in the form of commands to the patient or the oppressing spirit are made. The patient may be told to stop being afraid. The evil spirit may be rebuked and commanded to leave or face serious consequences. Appropriate proverbs may be quoted to strengthen the ego and the faith of the patient.⁸⁸

ii. Ritual act. An act supposed to have magical effect is usually carried out before or during the therapy session to ward off the oppressing spirits or break their power completely. The act may be carried out by the healer accompanied by the patient. Prince records a typical therapeutic ritual:

A neurotic with somatic complaint and "bad luck" with his wives consulted a babalawo and was required among other things to carry out the following ritual; he prayed to a cowrie shell that had been specially energized with medicine and incantations that his illness "would go back from him." He then took the cowrie into the bush and recited a prayer saying, "I am paying the money of sickness (cowries were formally used as currency by the Yoruba), I am paying the money of misfortune, I am paying the money of misery, I am paying money of death." He then made a circle around his head with the cowrie and flung it as far as possible into the bush.⁸⁹

The following quotation is from Shimang about a community ritual of sending off spirits that cause epidemic disease:

Once there is an epidemic, treatment is administered for a period of two to three weeks. If there is a slight improvement then the

⁸⁸ Healers in the African Independent Churches quote the Bible extensively in their healing ministries. "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for thou art with me," Psalms 23:4 and similar texts are extensively used.

⁸⁹ Raymond Prince, "Indigenous Yoruba Psychiatry," in Ari Kiev (ed.) Magic, Faith, and Healing (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1964), p. 112.

general members of the particular compound are informed. This information requests for a general dismissal of the disease. In this all equipment used in the treatment of the disease are gathered, including beddings of the affected persons. Then, at about mid-night the head of the compound wakes up everybody, and all the belongings and equipment used for the treatment of the disease are carried out of the compound. The affected person leads the way with the load of treatment equipment on his head followed by the head of the compound. At an agreed spot, usually the road junction, these things are deposited there. Some few words are chanted, saying how bad the disease is and how they hate it. It should therefore depart from them and their children for good. Each member throws some pebbles at the site, where affected property are gathered and then all, old and young turn their face homeward and advance in perfect silence. Other useful items may be left behind as a sign of gifts to the departing disease. These gifts are usually believed to have come in with the disease as gifts from other people so the gifts are sent back with the disease. Usually the disease goes, but in some cases is reappears, often of less intensity.⁹⁰

Associated with rituals are certain parts of the patient's body, the head, the palm or finger tips and the feet. In the head resides the spirit and the power of coherent judgment and reason; here also the evil spirit resides. When a person has serious mental illness the Hausa say kai ya juye meaning "the head has turned." Touching of the head and laying on of hands are symbolic of imparting power or blessing. The medicine person often shaves the head of the patient clean and ties a string around it to symbolize the presence of a more powerful spirit. The tips of the fingers are important because it is believed that some spirits and diseases are received with the hand. A person uses the hands to return or send off the troublesome spirits.

⁹⁰ Gogwin Shimang, "Angas Norms and Customs" (Unpublished manuscript, August 1974), p. 2.

iii. Alteration of the socio-physical and religious environment. The therapist may consider that the spirits and witches at the residence of the patient are too powerful, in which case an alternative residence may be suggested, and the patient may be advised to go away and stay with some relatives.⁹¹

The traditional therapist may consider that a change of religion or social philosophy is necessary for the patient to survive an illness. He may then advise the patient to join socio-religious groups and observe religious duties. Muslim healers often recommend activities that amount to a change to accept Islam.⁹² However, a change of religious affiliation (conversion) often worsens the emotional condition of the patient if he has already been initiated into secret religious societies of contrary value expectation.

As far as this writer knows, insight in the sense of western therapy, understood as "the reworking of the past," leading to "the discovery of new facts," is absent in the traditional healing.⁹³ The traditional healer conducts his healing in such a way that he holds all the information from the sick person. Except for the diviner's diagnosis and treatment, the patient does not gain insight into his own responsibility for the illness. The insight, if it is present in the Nigerian treatment, is the knowledge of the spiritual

⁹¹Prince, p. 113.

⁹²Gilliland, p. 120.

⁹³Jerome D. Frank, Persuasion and Healing (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 221.

and social causes of emotional problems. Since personal responsibility is least stressed, the patient finds good excuses for projecting his own responsibility onto others who may or may not be directly linked with his misfortune. The patient's responsibility may be seen in his asking for help, paying the fee and carrying out the prescriptions of the medicine person or diviner.

e. The main weakness of the traditional healing. Seeing the mystical cause and focusing on the elimination of spiritual cause while ignoring the physical cause has led to many untimely deaths when the medicine man claims power to heal the disease by magical means and prevents the patient from coming into the modern hospitals until too late.

i. Overdose. Some herbalists administer medicine too strong to their patients, doing more harm than good.

ii. Claim of omnipotence. Some healers claim they can do almost anything from making the sick well, to making a person politically and materially prosperous, to making a student pass all his examinations with a minimum amount of work.

f. A case of treatment of spirit possession. The following is a case of the treatment of a woman possessed by an evil spirit through the agency of a witch sorcerer. The Ngas call it nezi, literally, "see the fool." The writer has been an acquaintance of the patient and members of her clan and was present throughout the

treatment of the patient. The writer has witnessed similar incidents among the Ngas and one case of an Igbo woman. Nezi may be similar to cases of hysteria in western societies. It is believed that men who are attacked by the Nezi spirit usually die in silence without any hysteric manifestation, but if treated in women, the spirit would become hysteric and talk. The case of Nezi spirit possession is similar to the spirit possession of priestly mediums, except that Nezi is a hostile spirit whose aim is to kill the possessed person.

A was married and had one child who was away at a boarding school. She had been separated from her husband. A was a "liberated woman," cheerful, sociable, verbally and physically aggressive, gifted in handicrafts like pottery, basket making and weaving. Very independent, she traded in oil and salt and competed successfully with the male traders of her village, for which she was admired by the women and her relatives. She was now staying with her elderly mother in a Christian family compound.⁹⁴ In the family compound was her married elder brother with a 9-year-old son.

i. History of illness. A had been complaining of occasional attacks of chest pain and general dizziness which often interrupted her business life. She went to Pankshin General Hospital and received medical treatment for about a month; the treatment had no effect. She continued to lose weight and vitality. Finally she

⁹⁴ Although the members of the family compound of A were Christians, they lived in a traditional pattern.

went back to live with her mother where she continued her business intermittently.

After about six months, she was violently attacked. One day in the late afternoon, she became wholly paralyzed and stiff, like a stump of wood. The spirit started to kill her.⁹⁵ It looked as if there was an invisible person taking her up and slamming her hard against the wall, stones and the furniture in the house. It took three men to hold her still. It became evident to her brother and the elders that this was a nezi spirit. A was dumb and unconscious of all that was happening to her. When she regained consciousness she felt pain from bruises all over her body, but had to be told what had happened. The mother and brother of A consulted with the head of the family and they decided to call in a medicine man who specialized in the treatment of nezi. Having agreed on the fee, the medicine man came armed with a mixture of herbs and roots beaten into fine powder. The instruction was that each afternoon A should mix a bit of the potion with her bathing water. She was to be bathed and her body well massaged. The herb was supposed to trouble the spirit enough that he would talk.

The first afternoon of the treatment A became paralyzed again, this time with hysteric shrieks and screaming, but the spirit would not talk. The third day of the treatment the spirit began to talk from her mouth. The head of the clan and A's brother carried on a

⁹⁵The spirit later confessed that he intended to kill her then..

dialogue, a sort of free association during which the spirit talked endlessly, referring to A in the third person.⁹⁶ The spirit consistently refused to speak to the mother of A.

Conversation with the spirit later revealed the spirit to be G, a member of the compound family into which A was married. His reason for wishing to kill A was that she did well in trade and was successful in every errand. He was jealous and could not stand the sight of her. He decided to give her the deathly spirit in some beer. He gave the beer to her in a bowl through a window. Since he was in her, he had blocked her womb so she would not have any more children. As the spirit spoke, it moved from one part of the body to another, indicating its presence with a bodily swelling. The spirit revealed much mysterious information including the exploits of witchcraft, naming many that had bewitched or been bewitched.

After every session A would resume consciousness. Her brother's child would feed back to her what the spirit had said, and A's mother would fill in the details. After each session the head of the compound with his elders and A's brother would discuss the information and decide what further information they wanted to elicit from the spirit in the next session. A confirmed the statements of the spirit that G did indeed give her some beer in a bowl through the window. Her relationship with G had neither been strained nor cordial. A was unaware of the mysterious information revealed by the

⁹⁶ S. Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (New York: Norton, 1965), pp. 10-14.

spirit.

ii. Departure of the spirit. The relatives of A sent to G asking him of the matter, and he confirmed everything. They then told him to receive back his spirit or they would kill him. A day and a meeting place was set midway between A's and G's places of residence. On the set day some beer was provided which was returned to G.⁹⁷ At the appointed place, A's relatives waited with A in an unconscious state. When G arrived he extended his hands and touched A's hand. As soon as that happened, A came to consciousness and ran all the way home. From that day A was completely rid of her physical and spiritual ailment.

The process of this therapy has many dimensions. The roles of the household elders and the medicine man; the dialogue with the feedback of the information of the spirits and finally the rituals of the return of the beer and symbolic receiving back of the spirit by G.⁹⁸

4. Through the Life Cycle

The major stages of the life cycle are birth and child care;

⁹⁷ Without the return of the beer, the spirit would still consider A a debtor and would not leave.

⁹⁸ The writer has seen and heard about instances of similar human-evil-spirit possession. The spirits often confess great fear of the Bible and prayers, and their attacks on devout Christians are rare. It is of interest to note that the head of the compound, the brother and mother of A were disciplined by the church because they believed the nezi spirit to be real.

childhood and initiation; betrothal and marriages; old age; and finally death, burial and mourning and ancestorhood. Reincarnation of the spirits of the ancestors into their clan or families is widely believed, making this existence part of a cyclical pattern. During the different stages mentioned above, the caring, supporting and confronting facets of the traditional community mold the life of the individual.

a. Birth and child care. Life in this visible world is believed to begin with conception. It is generally believed that one of the ancestors is seeking to come back to life. The Kuteb believe that iya-watikwu, "god-mother," creates and molds the embryo in the womb.⁹⁹ With the Igbo, the consent of the deities and the willingness of the spirits of the dead is necessary.¹⁰⁰ The Yoruba believe that the spirit of each person coming into the visible earth appears before God to receive its destiny in life. The Hausa calls the pregnant woman mai juna biyu, "a person with two selves," and the mother receives a double share of everything divided among the members of the household. The pregnant woman receives special attention from her relatives. The people on her husband's side now begin to accept her as a full member of the clan. It is believed that opinion against the mother must not be extended to the child. The joy for impending

⁹⁹ A. Addi, "The Kuteb Tribal Religion," (a research paper). Addi is a member of the Kuteb tribe of the Benue Plateau and ex-student of the Theological College of North Nigeria.

¹⁰⁰ Uchendu, p. 57.

delivery is not openly shown, and pregnancy is not publicized for fear that witches might become jealous and interfere. Among the Hausa, Fulani and some Ngas people, the pregnant woman returns to her own mother, who would best take care of her. Protective measures are taken to ensure safe development and delivery of the child. Charms and amulets may be worn.¹⁰¹ The expectant mother observes taboo and regulations of the tribe. She generally takes hot baths in herbal solution. She must not look at a dead body, the deformed, mentally retarded persons or ugly things.¹⁰² She must not be outdoors after dark. She should not sit with her legs crossed. She should not eat very rich food until the child is delivered. Sexual contact with men would make delivery difficult. It is recommended that the expectant mother not be too lazy, unless she has a weak constitution, or delivery would be difficult.

At birth the expectant mother is attended by older women, midwives. No man is permitted to be present, not even the husband.¹⁰³ When the expectant mother returns to her people, her own mother or those who knew her in childhood would help as midwives. The midwives usually have long experience and have been educated by the women of

¹⁰¹Ronald Cohen, The Kanuri of Bornu (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 53. Herbal medicine may be taken as well.

¹⁰²Shimang, p. 1; Ngwobia Uka, Growing Up in Nigerian Culture (Ibandan, Nigeria: Institute of Education, University of Ibandan, 1966), p. 3.

¹⁰³According to Amos Addi, the midwife could be a man in the Kuteb tribe.

the society. The right kinds of exercises to aid delivery are undertaken; herbal medicine may be administered. As the child is being pushed out, the group of midwives encourages the mother, reminding her of the joy of motherhood and the blessings of children. The medicine man may be called only in cases of difficulty. The larger family is usually aware of the birth when they hear the cry. The proud father is informed when the baby is brought indoors. The new mother is usually free from most of the restrictions and taboo of pregnancy. The husband makes sure that she eats the best. The baby is often breastfed for two to three years. Interviews with the Ngas women reveal that male babies stay longer on the breast than female babies.

The major event in the life of the baby is the naming ceremony, which is commonly practiced by the Hausa and Yoruba. Relatives and the members of the family and their friends are invited to a feast in honor of the baby and presents are brought for the baby. By this time a diviner would have been consulted to determine which of the family ancestors has returned. The diviner on the basis of his finding may give a name to the baby. The father or grandparents may each name the child. Each of the names are very personal to the child. The Yoruba do not readily reveal the real names of their children; a child may be commonly called by a nickname.¹⁰⁴ When a person dies among the Ngas, the name dies also; when a person becomes a chief, his

¹⁰⁴C. Carothers, "Further Thoughts on the African Mind," East African Medical Journal, XXXVII:6 (June 1960), 460. It is generally believed that the knowledge of a person's name makes it easier to break his power.

name is no longer used. The occasion for naming children is similar to the cases in patriarchal stories of the Bible. A name denotes some special characteristics of the child or the general experience of people at the time of the birth or special family experience.

Next to the mother is the "baby-nurse," usually a girl of about eight to ten years who may be an elder sister or some close relative.¹⁰⁵ The baby-nurse takes care of the baby while the mother is at work. The child is carried on the back, and the backs of little girls are smaller and much preferred by the babies. The Dakarkari, Hausa, Nupe and some Fulani forbid either parent from carrying a first child. A baby-nurse usually carries the baby, and it is breastfed on demand.¹⁰⁶ The baby-nurse remains a very significant person to the baby throughout his adult days. The baby-nurse is in fact a "second mother" to the child, and since she is younger, in later years she is more likely to share confidential matters with the child she helped nurse than is the mother. The baby-nurse is of particular importance at weaning, when the next baby arrives.

During the early days of the baby, friends of the family would, jokingly, call the baby "my wife" if it is a girl and female friends call him "my husband" if it is a boy; thus during the Oedipal stage the child is provided with "a marriage partner." These friends

¹⁰⁵ Okafor-Omali, p. 55.

¹⁰⁶ H. D. Gunn and F. P. Conant, People of the Middle Niger Region Northern Nigeria (London: International African Institute, 1960), p. 42.

are usually such constant visitors to the house that the child grows to know them, too. The child in its early years grows in a community of fathers and mothers and children. The polygynous compound family surrounds the child with many people.

Infancy in the traditional society has minimum frustrations. The extended period of breast feeding eliminates any serious emotional problems at weaning. Toilet training is most permissive and is usually done by the baby-nurse. There are not many restrictions, and the simple living environment provides greater freedom than in the western society. Staewen and Schonberg write after their studies among the Yoruba:

The world of the Yoruba shows extremely positive attitude towards children and for this reason babies and small children grow up in an atmosphere which can be described in no other term but paradise-like. It is characterized by the lack of any form of frustration, the immediate and interminable satisfying of every wish and desire and the permanent overshadowed affection shown not only by the parents, but also by a large number of relatives. The weaning of infants from breast feeding and the setting down of the child from its mother's back after being so carried is affected with extreme care, as later education to cleanliness is likewise interwoven with friendly indulgence and endless patience.¹⁰⁷

As a result of the easy and happy childhood, Lambo has observed that Nigerian people recall their early childhood easily. Neurosis based on childhood experiences is almost absent. The child grows to play its role in the society with great ease. The tendency to identify with others and groups, however, intensifies transference

¹⁰⁷C. Staewen and F. Schonberg, Kulterwandel und Angstentwicklung bei den Yoruba Westafrikas (München: Weltforum, 1970), pp. 419-420.

situations in therapy.¹⁰⁸

b. Later childhood and initiation. At about the age of five or earlier, children start imitating the adult world among themselves. They make their own toys and playthings. They are also encouraged early in life to participate in the adult world along with their parents and elder siblings; no pressure is put on them to reach standards of perfection. They, therefore, live in the world of children and adults.¹⁰⁹ Education emphasizes the practical over the theoretical and aims at "economic and psychological independence but not social independence."¹¹⁰ It is at this stage that children are taught, repeatedly, the myths, riddles, folklore, proverbs, legends and the traditions of their own people. The use of myths to convey important lessons is preferred over the literal.

Each tribe has its own way of initiating its children into adulthood. Some, like the Ngas and Kuteb, tend to practice pre-adolescent initiation, while others, like the Yoruba, Kilba, Tiv and Igbo seem to have adolescent or post-adolescent initiations. Most of the initiation rites follow Van Gennep's common steps, separation, segregation and aggregation.¹¹¹ The initiation rites of only two will

¹⁰⁸T. A. Lambo, "Early Childhood Experience and Adult Personality," in S. H. Irvine and J. N. Sanders (eds.) Cultural Adaptation Within Modern Africa (New York: Teacher's College Press, Columbia University, 1972), p. 121.

¹⁰⁹Uchendu, pp. 61-63.

¹¹⁰Bascom, p. 58.

¹¹¹T. D. Verryin, "Christian Initiation and Tribal Rites of

be presented here, those of the Ngas and the Kilba.

The Ngas call initiation Wwang, meaning "cleansing."¹¹²

It is the responsibility of all the men of the clan, not just father-son or family rites. The rite is held every seven years for boys ages six to fourteen. It, therefore, comes for some at the beginning of Erickson's stage of industry versus inferiority or Freud's latency period.¹¹³ The elders and talented men of the clan are usually fully employed; they are assisted by the njungkurum, literally, "veterans" or those who had been through the rite. It is believed that a boy has to pass through the rite or his sex identity will be confused.

The initiates are herded off early in the morning to a secluded place, usually on a hillside away from the villages. They are circumcized and the wounds bound with leaves. The young boys are to spend their time naked until they are presented to their clan after two months. They must not be seen by a woman.

Life at the initiation camp is usually full of rigorous activities. Aggression, rebellion from peer domination, and the use of profanity are encouraged. Virtues of secrecy are learned. They are well fed and taken on daily walks when they sing sex songs to warn any woman that they are about. It is now that sex education is given, and

Passage," Ghana Bulletin of Theology, IV:5 (December 1973), 50.

¹¹² The writer was participating observer at one of the rites.

¹¹³ E. H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 258 and S. Freud, Moses and Monotheism (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 96f.

the sacred language is learned. Each child is told something about his forefathers and encouraged to follow their steps. When the wounds of the circumcision heal, there is a lot of wrestling among the boys. Sometimes a couple may combine on a njungkurum and be praised if they defeat him.

The final stage comes when they are said to be swallowed up by "the great mother ancestor." A boy has to be not only physically aggressive but wise to come out; those that are not persistent and aggressive would get "stuck," and that means death. What actually happens here is not revealed; it is the secret that the initiates have to keep to themselves alone. Early in the morning while it is still dark and the boys are asleep, their huts are set on fire and they have to get out fast to escape the flame. It is part of their training to be alert and act on the spur of the moment. They are led away from the camp on an uncharted route to the forest where their dead are buried. At this time all of the men of the clan are there ready to meet them with ancestral horn music; but since it is dark, the men are not visible until morning. Then each boy is shown the grave of his father or forefathers. The skulls of their enemies are shown to them; they are reminded that life is a constant battle in which they conquer or are defeated. The secret of life is never to give up. From their ancestral shrines they move to the most sacred central shrine of the clan where for the first time they participate in the cult of their people. By this time it would be morning. They are dressed with tiim, kid skin, around their loin. From now on there is

no exposure of their nakedness. Each has a small satchel woven by his mother or aunt. From here they go on to the chief's reception chamber. After a lecture from the chief on their new status in the community, each initiate is presented with a gift from the chief.

Meanwhile, the common arena is full of people. The near and distant relatives of each initiate must be there to receive the young man of their family. They too come with presents, such as bow and arrow, spear, knife and sometimes a sheep or goat. The young man now begins the collection of his adult possessions. The chief with a spear in hand leads them to the crowd outside. Before the crowd he would say to the young men, "If our fathers were killed they were killed with a spear stuck in their chests but never in their backs." Then he throws the spear and the young men race after it. The first to take it becomes the leader of the group initiated that year, which becomes a life-long reference group. They then dance from compound to compound.

After this the young man, even though he may only be six years old, has certain privileges to participate in the general cult with the elders and learn step by step the secrets of the clan practice worship. His mother is now careful to respect his rights as a man. (The Kuteb mother ceases from this time to put her hand on his head.) He has lost his childhood freedom, although the expectations of a fully grown man are not strictly placed on him. He keeps the taboo of the clan and sleeps in the common chamber with the other young men.

The girls do not have an extended initiation like the boys.

They have a yearly one-day rite called mbwa, literally, "the whip." That day is usually a woman's day. Girls of eight to thirteen years who have not menstruated run all over the highways chanting that the men should hide. It is believed that a man who sees them will become impotent unless he performs the appropriate penitential rites. The Ngas have no clitoridectomy. A girl is usually educated by her mother and is under her custody most of the time. Until recently, some of them remained naked until pubic hairs started to appear.¹¹⁴

Among the Kilba the male initiation rite is called mba which means "now feed yourself." It takes place at the age of seventeen, and its express purpose is to prepare the young man for a life independent from his parents. Ayuba Ulea writes about an initiate:

He was given a fresh ram fleece as a loincloth and placed on a mat which was marked with a red cross. A little girl about four to twelve years was placed on the mat beside him. The youth would be addressed by his father, who chewing hemels of guinea corn and blowing them over the youth, would say, "I thank Hyell (God) who has brought us to this day when you join the ranks of men. You have not always obeyed me as you ought but today I forgive you from the bottom of my heart. May Hyell bless you." All the people watching respond, "Amen!" Then taking the red earth he mixed it with oil, he would make the sign of the cross on his son's forehead. The mother then followed repeating the same words and acts of the father with more praise than blame for the son. Other older members of the family follow repeating the words of forgiveness with the sign of the cross. If the boy has a sister who is at the age of marriage but had not stood beside a boy or a would-be husband, she can stand by her brother but she would never marry

¹¹⁴ The details of the female initiation rites are kept secret from men. The writer can only speculate on the purpose which may perhaps be linked with a fertility cult. It is here that the young girls learn of the superior nature of their own sex, superior in that a woman is able to produce another human while a man cannot. They are made to understand that the society cannot continue without women.

him. After a good meal, the young man would join with fellow initiates from the village and go to stay at a nearby mountain. There they spend about twenty days. At the end of the period of retreat the young man is given a spear and a shield and he is trained in warfare.¹¹⁵

Initiation rites do not seem to be popular among the Tiv, although there is an age-set system. Usually an older man calls together young men of about 18-20 years old and informs them they are of the same age-set. The older man becomes their advisor. Since the relationship develops intimate interpersonal understanding, an age-set member plays an active role when another member has emotional problems.¹¹⁶ Among the Igbo and Yoruba there are different kinds of initiations into religious secret societies, like the oro and ogungun. The equivalent of female initiation among the Igbo girls is the period spent at the fattening house around the beginning of the adolescent stage.

Initiation as a rite of passage into adulthood usually removes the psychological responsibility of the parents having to train their children alone. The society takes over the responsibility from the parents. The psychic hostility of the child against his father or mother is reduced by the intervention of other adults and generally the possibility of inhibition in sexual development is lessened.

¹¹⁵ A. J. Ulea, "Kilba Tribe" (A research paper, Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru, 1974). The custom of having a little girl by the initiate is reported as common among the Margi. A. H. M. Kirk-Greene, Adamawa Past and Present (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 214f.

¹¹⁶ Bohannan, p. 46f.

Initiation, in defining and stressing the appropriate role to the child and stressing the virtue of the child's sexual identity, may help in resolving any mother or father fixation that may have taken place. The pre-adolescent rites, with the emphasis on aggression and rebellion, do not leave much time-space for the development of the latency period. The anxieties and the physical pain undertaken prepare the child for the difficult times ahead, and initiation provides an individual with a significant group throughout life.

The initiation is often a dramatic beginning of a long process of the journey into adulthood. It assures the young that they are already there, but it is also recognized that the young persons have to learn their roles with time.

c. Betrothal and marriage. Entry into adulthood is usually gradual with the strains of adolescent identity crises very much reduced. The simple life of the village farmer makes the economic expectations of adulthood simpler to achieve. Since riches are mainly counted in farm produce, in most tribes an able bodied young adult in his late teens is already producing as much as older persons and sometimes more. At this stage a young man is economically independent of his father. Women's development into adulthood is usually easier than men's; they do not have to prove their worth by hard work, although most mothers desire that their daughters be hard working. Experienced men and women of the community talk to the young persons on the rules of etiquette and sexual expectations and roles of the growing persons in the society and the family. In the late teens the young men have

accumulated secret information on the cults of their family, clan and tribe.

The final proof of one's identity in the society is in marriage. Only the severely retarded and persons of very abnormal character remain unmarried. Turnbull has this to say:

Marriage, of course, is the real point of entry into the adult world. Probably nothing is more important in an African's life, for marriage is not only the founding of one's own family but the continuation of the wider, tribal family. Every tribe has its own rules, and many of them have such complicated ones that months are spent discussing each proposed marriage to see if it will be legal or not! There are many different kinds of marriages, some with customs that seem strange, such as polygamy and the payment of bride wealth.¹¹⁷

Marriage does not just involve the young man and woman concerned. The relation of a man to a woman is a relation of their respective clans and their associated agnatic relatives; one's peers and friends are actively interested in one's marriage.¹¹⁸ The making or breaking of a marriage is therefore deeply rooted in the interest of the society. Betrothal for girls as early as two years was common in some tribes, but certainly before puberty. The parents are careful to shape the affection of their daughter to the man she will marry, and the man or young man seeks to win her interest, but those girls betrothed in childhood are free to change their minds as they grow. The most common contacts leading to serious betrothal are often started

¹¹⁷ Colin M. Turnbull, Tradition and Change in African Tribal Life (Chicago: Avon Books, 1971), p. 123.

¹¹⁸ Thomas Price, African Marriage (London: SCM Press, 1954), p. 12.

at social dances when young people take an interest in each other. The man does not approach the girl or the parents directly but through an intermediary. Among the Hausa, when a young man likes a girl, he sends a witty older woman with kolanuts. She takes them to the girl's house and says, "So and so has sent me." If the people of the house like the young man they would not discourage the woman.¹¹⁹ Among the Ngas the young man sends a large roll of tobacco to the girl's fathers (brothers of the girl's natural father) by an intermediary.¹²⁰ The parents of both the young man and young woman take time to investigate the background of their would-be in-law. The parents on each side decide together on the information they get, whether the young people are not related, or in the case of the Igbo, whether the marriage partner is from a forbidden cult clan. Any history of witchcraft on either side usually means opposition to the proposed marriage. Inquiries are made into the character and health of the parents. Finally, it depends on whether the clans of the couple have been on good terms. The older people "whose memories go back further," have a powerful say in the final decision.¹²¹ In the case of Ngas, when

¹¹⁹R. S. Rattray, Hausa Folk-Lore Customs Proverbs (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), II, 150.

¹²⁰The intermediary, who could be a man or woman, is usually a very diplomatic, persuasive person and is often related to neither the man nor the woman. From the position of neutrality, the intermediary sees that the rule of fair play is conducted throughout the courtship and is confrontative of both sides. The intermediary is a friend of the young man and soon becomes a friend of the woman, and, if the two marry, becomes their counselor.

¹²¹Turnbull, p. 126.

the parents of the girl know that there is no obstacle that would prevent the possibility of the marriage, they would call the girl and say to her, "So and so has sent this tobacco for you. Shall we smoke it or return it?" If she likes the man, she would give her consent, and all the elders of the clan would smoke the tobacco together.

The young man then becomes officially accepted as the suitor of the girl. The Yoruba follow a similar process through an intermediary, and if the offer is accepted the first of three installments of the gifts are presented. The Tiv used to practice exchange of sisters. If one's sister or relative married into a clan, then that clan would owe the other a wife, but that practice has been outlawed under the colonial rule.

Before a girl is given in marriage, the total bride gift has to be presented either in the form of heads of animals or material gifts or work done for the father of the girl.¹²² The recipients of the bride gifts are usually the brothers of the father, and, although most of the wealth finally falls to him, the actual father usually does not negotiate with his in-laws individually. The paying of the bride wealth is considered necessary for the husband to value the wife. It is common to hear a quarreling husband ask his wife, "How much were you worth?" or "How much did I pay for you?" meaning that he was not asked much for her because she was not worth much anyway.

¹²² D. Forde and G. I. Jones, The Ibo and Ibibio-Speaking Peoples of South-Eastern Nigeria (London: International African Institute, 1962), p. 77.

Marriages do not necessarily follow the accepted tradition of betrothal leading gradually to marriage. There are cases of falling in love leading to elopement, "wife stealing," and simply living together before marriage, as is common with some Muslim communities.¹²³ In all the uncustomary cases, the bride wealth has to be paid eventually to validate the marriage.

After the bride wealth has been paid, the young woman is escorted by a retinue of dancers with loads of household gifts to the family compound of the bridegroom in the patrilineal clan. Among the Tiv, payment may sometimes be given only when each child arrives. Virginity is honored in a number of tribes, and a girl not found to be a virgin may be divorced. However, in some tribes which seek prior proof of fertility in the form of pregnancy, virginity is of little importance.

The bride is usually taken to the chamber of the senior wife, who is the head of the women in the clan. This woman becomes a second mother to her, giving her advice on the life of the clan. The young couple usually has only a hut to themselves until the wife becomes pregnant; with the addition of children, they build more huts.

It is the children that create parents and cement a lasting marriage. Without them neither the couple nor their respective clans are happy. Every effort is made to see that marriage is productive in terms of children. Among the Tiv a barren or sick wife may be

¹²³Cohen, p. 40.

taken back to her father's compound. The same happens with the Ngas, and her own clan would try whatever medicinal treatment that is available.¹²⁴ They would consult the diviners to find the cause of the barrenness. Writing on the importance of children in marriage, Uchendu argues that "the romantic aspect of husband-wife relation" may not last as long as "the child-mother bond. Children are a great social insurance agency, a protection against dependence in old age."¹²⁵ One of the old wives says:

Even though my husband died about three years ago, and my relatives died leaving very few, yet I still describe my life as a happy one as God has given me children. . . . Though I have many responsibilities as a widow, yet with the help of my children, I can still manage life.¹²⁶

And another:

I cannot say anyone was kind to me except my children who are the lot I had in this world.¹²⁷

From my observation, many men have taken second wives because the first one is barren. Sometimes a wife has extramarital sexual relations because she has not had children with her husband. There are many women whose marriages would disintegrate were it not for the children. A mother would prefer to raise her children than to leave them with

¹²⁴ D. R. Price-Williams, "A Case Study of Ideas Concerning Disease Among the Tiv," in Elliott P. Skinner (ed.) Peoples and Cultures of Africa (New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 364.

¹²⁵ Uchendu, p. 57.

¹²⁶ Iris Andreski, Old Wives' Tales (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 105, 173.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

their father to be brought up by another woman. When the children grow up and gain some influence, they do not want their parents to separate. The writer has witnessed instances when the grown-up children of separated homes call their mothers to return home. In most cases an old mother is taken care of by her married sons, for it is when she has given birth to a child that a woman is accepted by her husband's people.¹²⁸ A marriage that may appear good and happy may be full of sorrow because of childlessness. It is common for some barren women, like Sarah of old, to provide their husband with a wife or help him find a second wife.¹²⁹ The importance of children in Gikuyu marriage is like that of many Nigerians. Marriage "is based on mutual love and gratification of the sexual instinct" of the married couple, but sexual gratification without children is not enough. It is expected of a marriage to produce children.¹³⁰ Erikson's concept of generativity is seen primarily in terms of children; other professional achievements come second. The life of a barren wife is a sad one in the Nigerian family and sadder if the family is polygynous. The barren wife would not only be taunted but would also be the culprit

¹²⁸ Denise Paulme (ed.) Women of Tropical Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 14, 72.

¹²⁹ Andreski, p. 117; Genesis 16:2f; "Wife" marriage is common among the wealthy Igbo women and such women can choose to give their "wife" to their husband. The writer has witnessed an instance when a barren wife played the role of the intermediary for her husband in the search for a second wife:

¹³⁰ Jomo Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 157.

designated for the explanation of any misfortune that happened to her co-wives and their children.¹³¹ A barren woman is stagnated, and Lambo says she experiences much mental stress for that.¹³²

Monogamy is the commonest form of marriage in Nigeria. In the traditional society, a man would take a second or third wife only if he is economically able to maintain them. While polygyny may be frowned upon by the western society, the traditional Nigerian sees it as a sign of prestige, fit for the chiefs and the very rich. The first wife is usually the one married to a man with the help of his fathers and clan members. The additional wives are usually added as a result of his prestige. The first wife, who is called uwargida, Hausa for "the mother of the house," is in charge of the household affairs and demands respect from the younger wives. A polygynous house tends to encourage jealousy and witch activity, but there are some harmonious polygynous houses as this old wife relates:

As a senior wife, I am always given due respect. We do everything in common and each of us is kind to one another. Any of us can open her mate's door and take anything she likes without minding whether the owner of the house is there or not. If the owner of the house comes back to be informed of such, she could not become annoyed because she takes her mate as herself. Of course, where more than one woman marries one man, there is always jealousy between them. In this case there is jealousy but not much because if our husband wants to give us dresses he must buy the same color for four of us. As a senior wife, I always advise my husband to

¹³¹Erikson, p. 266. The Ngas have a saying, Le mut del le ka, meaning, "It is better to give birth to a child that dies than remain barren." Among some tribes like the Bura and Higi people, a girl has to prove her virginity before marriage.

¹³²T. Adeoye Lambo, "Characteristic Features of the Psychology of the Nigerian," West African Medical Journal, IX (1960), 97.

share anything among his wives in order of seniority. As for dresses, I arrange with my husband to suit everyone so that none of us may complain that her own is inferior to another.¹³³

The principle that a group reflects the character of the leader is applicable to a polygynous family. In a family where co-wives are constantly competing for the favor of the husband, jealousy among wives and children reflects the problem of the head of the house. In such cases it is found that the husband has been inconsistent and has often related to each member as if he or she alone matters for him. When a polygynous husband has a favorite wife, he usually shows greater affection to her children and is insensitive to the needs and demands of the other wives and their children. The favorite attitude often creates a stronger bond among the unfavored wives and their children. It is a bond of resistance based on a common opponent, the husband or against the favorite wife and her children. Such bonds, continuously reinforced by each wife's relatives, are the basis of strife and jealousy which often result in witchcraft activities and accusations in a Nigerian family compound. But where the husband is consistent, alert and openly confrontative, such jealousy often decreases.

The husband or a senior wife settle problems within the family. When this cannot be done, a friend of the family, the intermediary, or the head of the compound family settle disputes within the family. If it becomes serious and it concerns one wife, the

¹³³ Andreski, p. 86.

elders of her clan and the husband's clan bring them together. The sisters of the husband often help reconcile the wives, too; but they and the respective clan relatives often aggravate conflicts.

Divorces are common, and when they happen in a patriarchal home the children stay with the father or his clan. Uka outlines the causes of divorce as follows:

- (a) the woman becoming insubordinate
- (b) infidelity on the wife's part but not always on the husband's part
- (c) prolonged illness or mental disorder
- (d) barrenness or impotence
- (e) interference of the relatives on both sides
- (f) religious disagreement
- (g) harshness on the husband's part
- (h) disagreement over conjugal rights
- (i) failure to pay all the bride wealth¹³⁴
- (j) The fundamental reason for divorce is usually lack of love or affection. For this any reason would suffice, and often feeble reasons are offered for such divorce.

Divorce comes when the efforts of the significant persons on both sides fail. When divorce occurs and there is a remarriage, the bride wealth is returned. Much depends on who initiates the divorce. Sometimes the amount is lessened if the wife has one or more children. Among the Muslim, the husband has the sole right to divorce, but the

¹³⁴ Uka, p. 17.

wife who wants a divorce would push him to do so by outrageous demands and behavior. In the traditional communities where the wife may exercise her right to leave, the husband would rather take a second wife than risk disharmony with her clan.

d. Old age. Life expectancy is not high for the traditional people. Those who are fortunate to live long are respected. To be spared death and to see one's grandchildren and great grandchildren is a symbol of great blessing. The individuals in the society treat their old folks with great respect and gentleness. The age of generativity is determinant of happiness in old age; those without children have no one to care for them in old age.

Since the number who reach old age are few and since old age is a time of withdrawal from full participation in the society, old people are very lonely persons.¹³⁵ Most of their peers and their spouses are dead. Some of the elderly, especially the women, take care of their grandchildren. Their general appreciation of being visited shows the extent of their loneliness. The generation gap is another problem, but if they are not senile, their influence is great. The lack of a retirement age keeps them active according to their waning abilities. For them to share in the lives and achievements of their children is comforting and gratifying and adds meaning to existence.

¹³⁵Ledford J. Bischof, Adult Psychology (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. 234.

e. Death, burial and mourning. The high infant mortality and the short life expectancy in the traditional society make death a common experience in each family. The extended family, the agnatic relations and the close community make death not just a small family matter but a community concern.

When a person is seriously sick the medicine people and the diviners are actively involved. They seek to diagnose the cause and the hindrance to recovery. Sometimes the head of the compound family publicly addresses all the members of the compound, calling on any one aggravating the illness to desist. The patient's relatives outside the clan would be informed, and they would be present. If the maternal kin (the mother's brothers) perceive neglect or foul play, they would confront the paternal kin and tell them to stop bewitching their kinsman.¹³⁶ When all hope of recovery is vanished and death seems certain, those closely related, especially the elders, the spouse and responsible children are present. They would watch to see if the dying person could talk or have any last messages to deliver. The will is usually spoken at this time. It is unthinkable to leave a dying person alone, except when the person falls sick in a foreign land. The group at the bedside of the dying person is usually very supportive and caring. Many of the elders have watched many close relatives die in the past.

When death occurs the female members cannot contain their

¹³⁶ Robert McC. Netting, Hill Farmers of Nigeria (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), p. 151.

feelings; they start to cry quietly. It is common among many tribes to herald the death with a drum or a horn. Word of the death spreads quietly round the village. Messengers are quickly sent to any of the close relatives or friends that might not have heard of the sickness. At death the whole constitution and life of the community are disrupted. Even today most people who knew the deceased would seek permission to leave their jobs to go to the scene of the death.¹³⁷ It takes time to heal the gap left by the dead. In most societies it is common to take the body back to the town or clan of birth for burial.

Although death is disruptive to the life and shape of the society, it has a unifying force. The adult members of the community make their way to the house or scene of the death. Often most of the task of preparing the body for burial is carried out by the supportive neighbors and friends. Death is considered the most painful form of separation, but to most Nigerians it is a transition from one stage of existence to another in the same contextual world. Burial and mourning are carried out with rituals aimed at the welfare of the departing spirit and well being of the surviving relatives. Bascom reports that among the Yoruba burial seeks to ensure that the deceased will be reborn, to protect other members of the clan from following him to the grave, and to prevent the soul from troubling the living members.¹³⁸ If the person dies away from home, the Yoruba

¹³⁷Rev. Dr. Hans Haselbarth, "The Concept of Death in African and Western Societies" (paper delivered at the West African Association of Theological Institutions, Ibandan, September 4-10, 1974).

¹³⁸Bascom, p. 69; E. Adamson Hoebel, Anthropology (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), p. 387.

place some chicken feathers at each road junction leading home so that the spirit may find its way home. At the burial they sprinkle some blood of a chicken in the grave to cut off the ties with living members of the clan.

It is usually hoped that the closest relatives will see the corpse before it is bathed and dressed for burial. The hair of the corpse is shaved, and the body is dressed in the best clothes. While this is happening, the sad news is spreading and more people are gathering. All who knew the person and the acquaintances of the relatives would want to be there. The departure of the corpse from the home is most painful. The Yoruba take the dead body or its coffin around the village to bid farewell to all. The procession to the grave is usually a long one with the body or coffin carried on the shoulders of some strong men. The wailing reaches a high peak; the women call the name of the dead person for the last time, wishing him safe journey to the world of the dead. They talk to the body as though it were still alive. They tell the corpse how they feel in the person's absence, and how things will never be the same.

After the body is laid in the grave, the burial ritual begins with the closest relatives each throwing a handful of earth in the grave; the close acquaintances do the same and the burial is hurriedly completed. The first mourning has officially begun. The people return to console the bereaved family. Some shake hands in silence. Some women dance and/or sing dirges. Words akin to the following are said as they weep:

Would that I had died and you remain.
Because you are too good and kind to me
People do not want you.
You have put us into trouble; where shall we
go for help now? Now the world has become
wider for us.
Oh! Brother/sister; where are you going?¹³⁹

If the dead person was an important figure, the mourning is danced to giant drums and lasts longer. For an elderly person, mourning ceremonies involve enjoyment mixed with sorrow. For a younger person the sorrow is great, and greater still if the person had no children.

A group of women who, through repeated experience, are acquainted with grief remain with the bereaved family and see to it that they cry. Crying for a dead relative or a friend is considered the last deed of affection one can pay. To shed tears for a dead person reveals the degree of love that had existed for the dead.

"Jesus wept, so the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!'" (John 11:35-36). It is the duty of the experienced women to facilitate the expression of grief into tears, then to comfort the crying persons and assure them that this loss is worth crying for. Mourning is facilitated as the closest relatives are made to repeat the account of the illness leading to the death. Whenever a close friend or relative arrives, the story is repeated. The experienced women share also from their different incidences of loss. The authenticity of the experienced women has a contagious effect on the grief work; persons who do not cry easily cannot keep from shedding tears. Dialogue with

¹³⁹ Addi.

the deceased is common, and some women would respond on behalf of the deceased. It is common for women who have had repeated loss of children to address complaints against God for singling them out for greater sorrow. Orphaned children are given the same attention but most often by their peers.

Mourning is like a marathon group work on grief. It runs day and night. The group of mourners sit in small groups all over the house, sleeping and talking or crying at intervals. The subject of their conversations is allowed to run from heavier to lighter subjects, resulting in weeping or laughter. Plans for the future, adjustment and rehabilitation of dependent persons and the possibilities of re-marriage are discussed.

Visitors to the house of mourning never come empty handed; they bring some food along. So much eating goes on at mourning that at times it looks as if some people are there more for the food than because of the grief and loss. Most first mournings take three days among the Ngas; seven days among the Kuteb; a week to a month in some of the Adamawa and Bornu tribes. On the last day of the first mourning, the house is cleaned, including the outside and the paths leading to the house. Most of the used perishable belongings of the deceased are burned. Meanwhile the diviners, medicine men and the priests try to diagnose the cause of the death and by ritualistic acts try to ensure the safe travel of the spirit across the various rivers to the nether world and to prevent the spirit from coming back to trouble the people.

The second mourning comes after some months. Some tribes wait until after six months or a year. The ancestors often join in with the people in the act of mourning (see Chapter One). Although some unfinished grief is worked on, this is a period for celebrating the safe departure of the deceased. Among the Yoruba it is the children of the deceased that shoulder the expense; among the Ngas the expense is shouldered by all the relatives and friends. Whatever animals are slaughtered are believed to accompany the dead person to the world of the dead. The celebration is a time of joy and dances. The cult of the ancestor usually dispells whatever is left of the grief. In most cases the grief work is completed after the second mourning ceremony in which the bereaved persons play the central role.

5. Summary

Counseling of the sick and the emotionally disturbed is done in a group within the context of the community. It is common to have two to four elders working simultaneously as counselors with an individual or a group of patients.¹⁴⁰ The social structure seems constructed to facilitate care and early action on emotional problems. The care of the community as a whole is manifest in a preventive way in childhood, initiation, marriage and mourning. The traditional healers may work in groups or as individuals but often in the context

¹⁴⁰ Kiev, p. 451.

of the group or community. The healers who are in touch with the spirit world approach their task in a multi-dimensional way: diagnosis of the mystical/spiritual cause, treatment of the spiritual cause, treatment of the physical cause and aiding the ego of the patient by rituals which symbolically emancipate the patient from the disease.

The cause of diseases is often sought in the realm of the spirit forces and in the society, but although there are evidences of belief in individual responsibility this is often overshadowed by witchcraft accusations. Since both salvation and disease have their roots in the societies, the traditional person finds that he cannot trust everybody. This suspicious behavior cripples his life from full self-actualization.

PART II

CULTURAL CHANGE

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPACT OF CULTURE CHANGE

A. ON THE SOCIETY AND ITS MEMBERS

- In the pre-colonial days, each tribe existed within areas circumscribed by forests, rivers and hills. The tribal settlement was like a small independent nation with its system of government, customs and laws that were respected only within the tribe. The tribes and clans had to be alert to counteract attacks by invaders.

The major tribal groups, such as the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri in the North, have for centuries been influenced by the Arabic Islamic culture. Long before the arrival of the colonialists, the Hausa used Arabic script, and the Hausa language has a great number of words borrowed from Arabic. The Yoruba and the Igbo are the dominant tribes in the South bordering the coast. Western civilization first touched them and the minority coastal tribes, and the impact of western culture in Nigeria is greater in the South than in the North. Except for the introduction of Islam with the conquest of Usman dan-Fodio in the Yoruba area, the South predominantly adhered to the traditional religion from before contact with the Europeans. Between the major tribes of the South and the major northern Muslim tribes are hundreds of smaller tribal groups whose world view was the traditional.

With colonization, the unrelated tribes were forced into common territories for the convenience of the colonial ruler. In 1914

the British protectorates of South and North Nigeria were amalgamated under Lord Lugard. That marked the beginning of intense western influence and rapid changes in every tribal group.¹ The first administrative divisions and provinces virtually ignored the tribal groupings in some areas. In the Igbo area the traditional system of government was overlooked. In his little book, A Nigerian Villager in Two Worlds, Okafor-Omali devotes a chapter to the collapse of local institutions as a result of the new administration. The titled men who had authority in the traditional courts of justice were "robbed" of their power. The new rulers were assisted in the courts by men (the warrant chiefs) who had no authority or respect in the traditional communities. In some instances the titled men were arrested and humiliated.² Similar stories of the humiliation of the traditional leaders could be recounted from many tribal areas. That was the beginning of the trend of change in the administrative field. The white ruler and his literate assistant became the new elite to be emulated by the common people. The downfall of the elders and the ancestors had begun.

As the colonial rule provided the united tribes with a new structure of government the Christian missionary provided the societies with a new philosophy of unification. The Christian mission was first

¹Eric Agume Opia, Why Biafra? (San Rafael, CA: Leswing Press, 1972), p. 27.

²Dilim Okafor-Omali, A Nigerian Villager in Two Worlds (London: Faber & Faber, 1957), p. 89f.

built in the South with freed or purchased slaves; the early converts were mostly common people.³ They were often made to break all ties with their cultural and traditional heritage. The new converts were relocated in new village settlements over which the missionary and his followers acted as the new head and elders. Converts were stripped of kinship association with unbelieving members of the family and thus of meaningful participation in common customs. Clark's statements on the attitude of the Holy Ghost Fathers could apply to many early mission fields:

Excommunications were flung about in the style of a medieval pope. This method of Christianizing is indicative of the fact that the missionary, no doubt sincerely, believed they had to 'root up and pull down' in order to build. It was not a question of perfecting something in itself of value but of imposing values where they were non-existent.⁴

Although the missionary came from afar to Nigeria, he changed little, while the villagers changed much, not only in accepting the new faith but in imitation of his westernized Christianity. With the gospel, the good that the missionary brought was the powerful white man's medicine (more on this below) and his schools. The colonialists were, primarily interested in trade and exploitation of the land and not in educating the Nigerian. The missionary educated in order to further the gospel; some of the education centers were started as small

³P.B. Clarke, "The Methods and Ideology of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Eastern Nigeria," Journal of Religion in Africa, VI (1974), 81.

⁴Ibid., p. 104.

vernacular Bible Schools.⁵ As the education centers developed and received some government grants, they were upgraded, and part of the curriculum was designed for the sole service of the rulers. It steered away from the traditional model of education of learning by participation to learning and theorizing out of context and putting the theory into practice later. Those who went into the white man's schools were weaned from appreciation of their traditional heritage and values to the appreciation of western values. Nkrumah clearly describes the education under the colonial rule:

Such education as we were all given put before us right from our infancy ideals of the metropolitan countries, ideals which could seldom be seen as representing the scheme, the harmony and progress of the African society. The scale and type of economic activity, the idea of accountability and the individual conscience introduced by the Christian religion, countless other silent influences, these have all made an indelible impression upon the African society.⁶

Although the educational curriculum has been greatly altered to include some African and indigenous studies, the method remains the same; the emphasis remains on the theoretical and not the practical application, and on learning things that would help one to live in Europe or America and not in Africa.

Apart from changes respecting historical roots, there are certain factors that will continue to change the Nigerian societies. These are what may be called common services, that is, those areas of

⁵L.J. Maxwell, Half a Century of Grace (London: Sudan United Mission, 1954), p. 181.

⁶Kwame Nkrumah, Consciencism (New York: Modern Reader, 1970), p. 70.

general concern which bring together individuals from different tribal and religious backgrounds. With colonization and the subsequent granting of independence to the country, common services abound.

The country has to be maintained and law and order kept by the army and the police force. The military takeover of the government from the civilians in 1966 and the resulting intertribal clashes and civil wars show that even in the army and the police tribal loyalty is very much alive. There is an effort, in the government, army, police and in the administration from the local to federal level to minimize manifestations of the tribal interests which overlook the general interest. Common services in medicine, higher education, industry and religious organizations tend to have some influence in toning down tribal sentiment; how successfully remains a question. When disputes occur in any of these services, splits are very easily created along tribal lines, e.g., the politics of the pre-military civilian government, dominated by sectional and tribal interest.

Major corporations like the railways, postal services and telegraph, industries and developmental constructions and mines draw their workers from every tribe. These live and work together in the same towns or temporary settlements.

Another factor increasing intertribal intercourse is the communication system. Places that were once considered remote or impenetrable are now accessible by road or train lines. Travel is relatively easy and fast on the new highways that are being built. No traditional village is today unaware of the fact of its difference from other tribes.

The common services may not destroy tribal consciousness at once, but they are certainly shaping the behavior of the people in them; this blunts the extremities of individual tribal behavior and weakens the particular fears of individual clan or tribal taboo.

The use of English as the official language helps communication between the over 500 language groups. As the main medium of communication and education, it may make technical assistance easier to obtain from the outside countries and may lend "access to the world store of information" and "world bank of human knowledge."⁷ It seems clear that Nigerian people will continue to be inundated by outside innovations. Most people in the traditional minority tribes use one of the major languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, or pidgin English to communicate with other tribes. Language may be a problem because a person may not always be able to express feelings as he would in the more familiar mother tongue.

1. Rural and Urban Set Up

Change has affected the society in two areas, the rural and the urban settlements.

In almost every village one notices rectangular pan-roofed houses surrounded by the more traditional round, grass-roofed mud huts. The common chamber (Zaure) has disappeared in many instances. One

⁷Jack Goody, "Tribal, Racial, Religious and Language Problems in Africa," in G. Wolstenholme and M. O'Connor, Man and Africa (Boston: Little Brown, 1965), pp. 101-102.

notices that the communal family constitution has changed. The family compounds are smaller in population, in some areas the size is only a half or a third of what it was thirty years ago.⁸ Their population is reduced by migration in search of new farm land or a "better life in the cities and towns or work camps." Able bodied people and gifted members of apparently sound judgment in touch with the realities of change have moved in search of paid jobs. Some of the villages and families are under the leadership of old men and women who are out of pace with the modern trend of thought. Their words, often based on misconceived ideas of the world and life, are often ignored by the young. The customary laws are not often closely followed; the force of traditional belief and the threat of the deities have been greatly weakened by the fact that so many who violate the laws of loyalty and morality are seen to be living well. Responsibility for communal support has been narrowed to the immediate family due to rising the standard of living. In some extended families the members have been scattered because of migration and only come together occasionally for consultation on major questions of common concern.

Persons who are still at the traditional standard of living often enjoy greater community support than the urbanized or educated people. There is, however, a great feeling of being left behind, the feeling that the urban life is definitely better. The traditional person lives with prescientific misconceptions, often in poorer living

⁸Okafor-Omali, p. 111.

conditions: poor housing, poor sanitation and poor water supply. He is often far from modern medical facilities.

Urbanization is not a completely new phenomenon to the Hausa or Yoruba.⁹ However, for most Nigerian people, it is relatively new, and many cities and former centers of administration and trade have now grown. The political composition of the cities is complex. Cities situated in the major tribal areas like Ibadan, Enugu, Kano, Katsina, and Maiduguri have a high proportion of the dominant tribes of the respective areas. Cities like Lagos, Kaduna, Jos, Zaria, because of their administrative importance or their location in a minority tribe, have less emphasis on the characteristic features of any one tribe.

Even though people like Goody may foresee a quick detribalization as a result of the transfer of tribal allegiance to the nation due to the changing social, political and economic conditions, there does not seem to be clear evidence that this will happen soon.¹⁰ The concept of tribal assimilation cannot be applied to the tribal development taking place in some Nigerian cities like Kano, Jos, Kaduna, Ibadan and Enugu. Some of these cities may have the Hausa, the Yoruba or the Igbo as the dominant groups, but other tribal groups settling among them have not often been assimilated because of differences in religious and socio-cultural background. Cohen and Middleton describe Nigerian cities as "plural cities," that is, they are places where

⁹G.J. Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Culture (London: University of London Press, 1966), pp. 104-105.

¹⁰Goody, p. 104.

individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds interact in some continuing fashion.¹¹ The Christian Yoruba, Igbo, and Efik in a northern city, for example, may have certain difficulties in being readily accepted into the Hausa (Muslim) way of life. The Hausa and Yoruba settling in Enugu each tend to stick to their own people. Even though they are Muslim, the Hausa at Sabo in Ibadan have managed to successfully keep their own identity through adherence to the Tijaniyya Muslim sect.¹² When one ethnic group is represented in a city by a large number, it tends to retain its identity through clan or tribal unions. If these unions continue, the trend will be a type of re-tribalization, and detribalization may take some time.

With the exceptions of the Muslim Hausa, settler housing is usually relatively mixed. The individuals are uprooted from their corporate community environment of the villages. They now live not in round compounds where everybody knows everybody but in blocks of buildings set up in regimented rows. Persons live next door to neighbors who speak different languages; they are related only by virtue of sharing the same block of buildings and street. Relations may be maintained superficially. The life of the city dwellers alienates them from their traditional life, but to a large extent they

¹¹ Ronald Cohen and John Middleton (eds.) From Tribe to Nation in Africa (Scranton, PA: Chandler, 1970), p. 8-9.

¹² Abner Cohen, Customs and Politics in Urban Africa (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 9. In the North a Muslim man may marry women from outside the faith, but no Muslim woman is allowed to marry outside the faith.

view and plan life on outmoded standards familiar to them from the village.

Most people leave home for the cities or work camp to make money and then to return home as prosperous persons. Since city life is unfamiliar most are still emotionally tied to their areas of birth, and bonds with clans people, families and relatives are not broken but treasured. Plotnicov's findings in his research interviews with strangers to the city of Jos seem to indicate the general mentality of the Nigerian city dweller. Most are in the city in search of better fortune, and, with the exception of the Hausa, most of them plan to retire to their homes of birth. Most of them never make the fortune they had envisioned when they left home and feel ashamed to return.¹³ However, experiences like the massacre of the Igbo in the northern towns in 1966, the repatriation of the survivors to their land of birth and the repatriation of the northern tribal people out of the Igbo land have made most people mistrustful of the urban settlement. The ethnic groups settling in the cities are easily frightened by rumors and have to be constantly reassured.¹⁴ Those who can afford it build a small house at the birthplace in case of necessity. For many there is no housing for them at home. The only advantage is that there are familiar faces there.

¹³ Leonard Plotnicov, Strangers to the City (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1967), p. 59. Similar observations appear in Fred G. Burke, Africa's Quest for Order (Englewood Cliffs; Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 44.

¹⁴ Tajudeen Ajibade, "Sequel to dangerous rumors circulating," New Nigerian (September 1974), 16.

2. Social Classes (en embryo)

Another way that change has affected Nigerian society is the beginning of stratification into "classes." At the moment there is the traditional person, the prosperous business persons or the educated and "westernized" elite, and the barely literate or illiterate, uprooted person.

The traditional person has been described in the second chapter.¹⁵

The second group of people is the prosperous business people and the educated people holding top jobs in the firms and the government offices. Some of the people started business as early as the colonial days and are now economically well off. Most of them have the same outlook as the traditional person. The educated persons are those who have been trained in higher institutions within the country or in Europe or America. They fill the positions vacated by the outgoing colonial rulers and business persons. Such higher officials are called bature, "European" by the Hausa because they are carrying on the white man's work. The educated live in two worlds and selectively combine the most comfortable aspects of both the African and the western world. They speak English at the office, the common language outside, and their own tribal languages in their homes. Contrary to the expectation of some anthropologists, the old and the new "co-exist."¹⁶ The elite

¹⁵The effect of change on his environment has been mentioned on page .

¹⁶Victor C. Uchendu, "The Passing of Tribal Man: A West

can be seen one day in a European suit and the next in the traditional regalia. The elite, be they business persons or western educated, share a common experience of an economically easier life. They live in big European style houses; they can afford a gas or electric stove, a refrigerator and car. Their more stable incomes make their lives easier. Because of their elevated status they socialize with people of their own economic circles at clubs where peculiarly tribal behavior is dropped and European manners are imitated; this is facilitated by use of the English language. Though the extent of the imitation has been reduced greatly since independence, the Nigerian bature can only be his real self in his home and at tribal or clan meetings where he uses his mother tongue. The elite are not dissociated from their extended families and relatives in the country villages, and they are often called upon to return to their clan of birth for consultation and decision making.¹⁷

The third group consists mainly of younger people, teachers in primary school, office secretaries, and all who have some qualifications and hold some paying jobs. Although their living standard is not as good as that of the elite, it is not the worst. This group may form the working middle class of the future.

African Experience," in P.C.W. Gutkind (ed.) The Passing of Tribal Man (Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 63.

¹⁷ Robert A. Levine, "Personality and Change," in John N. Paden and E.W. Soja (eds.) The African Experience (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), I, 300.

The fourth class is that of those who have left primary and secondary school and the illiterate migrants to the cities. Their experience is similar in that they have no permanent jobs or are paid very low wages. They cannot afford good living quarters because of the high cost. They are the sick families in transition and are often located in the poorer sections of the towns, which are characterized by cultural conflicts and lack of religious or social consensus due to aggregates of never-do-wells from different tribal groups. Crime is high. Prostitution, which was unknown in the traditional Nigeria, is becoming common.¹⁸ These people are rootless and their future is unpredictable.

The Nigerian of all categories lives in two worlds, the traditional and western. He cannot be completely western or traditional. The conflicting demands of the old and the new are a source of constant distress in the experience of the people.¹⁹

3. The Reference Groups in the Towns

The main reference communities in the towns are the clan or tribal unions and religious communities. The clan or tribal ties

¹⁸The fact that many languages use Karuwa, the Hausa word for prostitute, may mean that the practice was unknown among most of pre-colonial Nigeria. People can still remember that venereal disease came with the soldiers who returned from World Wars I and II.

¹⁹Leonard W. Doob, "Biculturalism as a Source of Personality Conflict in Africa," in S.H. Irvine and J.T. Saunders (eds.) Cultural Adaptation within Modern Africa (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1972), p. 136.

become very important.²⁰ Especially among the minority tribes who may be few in a particular town, the members tend to move closer than they would have in their tribal or clan areas. The revitalizing effect of being able to express one's feelings in one's mother tongue makes contact of the members of a tribal group frequent; they meet on a monthly or weekly basis. Some set up common funds for emergency assistance. It is here that individuals with job or financial difficulties find support. Achebe's novel, No Longer at Ease, well illustrates the conduct of tribal unions. In the novel, the president of a clan union (like the clan head) uses his influence to overrule objections against helping another clan member who is in trouble, saying, "A kinsman in trouble had to be saved, not blamed, anger against a brother was felt in the flesh, not in the bones."²¹ The Igbo clan and tribal unions in the past have been the best organized throughout Nigeria. The bond that exists between people of the same clan or tribe is not always as strong as that of the Igbo in the cities. The Igbo provide a network of tribal and clan union organizations in every city. Immigrants to the city from the country villages find ready communities with leaders and elders to advise them of the perils and deceptions of that particular city. The elders help provide jobs for the new arrivals and find new jobs for those who are

²⁰Plotnicov, p. 64.

²¹Chinua Achebe, No Longer at Ease (Greenwich, CN: Fawcett, 1969), p. 13. Achebe depicts the problem of a young British educated Nigerian man in Lagos.

out of jobs. Lambo has observed that maladjustment and emotional problems due to urban stress are least among the migrant Igbo because of the support provided by their unions.²²

The tribal unions may be a case of retribalization in the cities and towns. The Hausa (Muslim) quarters in almost every town and city where they are found comprise another form of retribalization. The Hausa quarter at Sabo in Ibadan has been mentioned. Abner Cohen defines Hausa as a generic term for people who speak Hausa as their first language.²³ It should be added that the full members of Hausa quarters are Muslims, and their quarters are governed by Muslim customs and law. They have their chief, the Sarkin Hausawa. Their clergymen, who are specialized in divination, counseling and healing, are kept busy by the members of the quarters as well as by people of different tribal backgrounds. Similar but weaker attempts at religious-tribal urban regrouping are becoming common. The Igbo, Tiv, and Yoruba tribes have often shown a preference for having church services in their own separate languages, which encourages tribal separatism, but provides greater emotional support for the people. The Igbo in the Anglican churches in Zaria and Jos were formerly united with the other tribes but pulled out and built separate churches for their own people. Here the tribal security may be enjoyed by the members of these churches.

²²T.A. Lambo, "Socio-economic Changes in Africa and Their Implications for Mental Health" in Wolstenholme and O'Connor, p. 126.

²³Abner Cohen, p. 49.

4. Change in the Traditional Life Cycle

The effect of change on the human life cycle has posed problems in personal development. Change has brought about the suspension of a great number of the major rites of passage, but no adequate substitute rites or preventive measures have been instituted. The individual grows and has to face life without adequate emotional preparation.

a. Birth and early childhood. In the rural areas birth is still carried on under the supervision of the traditional midwives. In the urban areas and places near the hospitals or medical clinics, trained midwives have taken over the responsibilities. Nigerian women continue to see delivery of children as a matter strictly for women. The naming ceremony is elaborate. Breast feeding lasts for only six months; then the child is left with the milk bottle, which breeds more disease than health. As a result of this prevalence of disease, the Nigerian government has reacted by controlling the production of tinned milk.²⁴ The place of the baby nurse in the towns and cities is often filled by a hired maid whose chief concern is the money she makes. Improved sanitation and medical care have largely reduced the high infant mortality of the traditional family. Early weaning may create some increase of trauma for the child. Smaller families with nuclear

²⁴"Kicking the Bottle," New Internationalist, No. 25 (March 1975), p. 14.

parents may result in the children having an intense Oedipal conflict leading to a higher incidence of father and mother fixations.

The stage of pre-adolescence to post-adolescence has been greatly altered. Youths from families in transition do not enjoy the benefits of the guidance provided by the traditional societies. The pre-adolescent and post-adolescent initiations have been abandoned and replaced by schooling which stresses "head knowledge" rather than practical education relevant to the needs of the society,²⁵ for example, farming and food production. Some of the education usually imparted by the traditional elders, such as sex and marriage education, respect for the elders and the virtues of living to build up the community are absent. Children usually attend the primary schools while living in their parents' homes. Post primary education which comes during the adolescent stage usually is at boarding schools. Although this form of education may have merit in building national identity and widening the intertribal consciousness of the student, its defects are numerous when compared with some aspects of the traditional form of initiations and education. First, the teachers usually lack blood or clan relationship to the child, and religious education is sometimes conveyed through impersonal and uninterested agents who lack the concern of the family and clans through which traditional religion was taught. Secondly, the value standards of the

²⁵"Head Knowledge" is the colonial method of education which often teaches children with a different social context in mind. Piece of paper qualification is all that matters.

educators often clashes with those in the background of the student. Complaints against teachers who drink heavily after school are mounting. Thirdly, boarding education separates children from their parents. Since they are home only briefly during the holidays, the parent-child relationship is weakened and the gap widened. Education that emphasizes the theoretical over the practical leaves no room for independent enterprise. The pace of industrial development is far behind the number of children passing through the primary and the secondary schools. Many flock to the cities in search of jobs only to be disappointed.²⁶ Grindal's description of the dilemma of the young and intergenerational conflict among the Sisala of northern Ghana is the same experience of many village "school leavers" in Nigeria.²⁷ For the adolescents in this age of transition, identity is made difficult by the shift in collective ego-space-time and the collective life plan.²⁸ Failure to find jobs in the towns and cities may result in disillusionment of the adolescent and make for a problem of identity diffusion. The kind of education received makes them look

²⁶ Lambo, p. 122 and Victor C. Uchendu, "The Impact of Changing Agricultural Technology on African Land Tenure," Journal of Developing Areas, IV (July 1970), 478.

²⁷ B. Grindal, "Conflict and Sociocultural Changes" in his book Growing up in Two Worlds (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 92.

²⁸ E.H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle (New York: International Universities Press, 1959), p. 18. Erickson states that "men who share an ethnic era, or a historical era or an economic pursuit are guided by common images of good and evil." In the case of the Nigerian society the ethnic era and the historical era are the new and the old living together side by side.

down on their traditional heritage and life style so that any thought of returning to the old forms is seldom entertained. They are the bearers of the contradictory values of the traditional and of the education they now have, and they must suffer the societal malaise.

b. Marriages. These events are characterized by the following points which differ from the traditional.

i. Marriages are becoming more and more the individual concern of the marriage partners; the consent of the two families may come later. Superficial romantic love based on the inspiration of the movies is slowly taking the place of the traditional purpose of marriage; that is, the establishment of a home for the good of the clan. Communication by letter not only eliminates the intermediary but reduces the possibility of close contact between the marriage partners and the parents and relatives of both sides.

ii. Bride wealth is rapidly losing its original African meaning, that is, the demonstration of good will. In some cases it has been commercialized.

iii. Marriages are now more frequently intertribal, interracial or interreligious; and marriages could still be polygamous. Although Bascom observes that the educated women among the Yoruba (and other tribes also) are refusing marriage into polygamous homes, Fadipe reveals that this form of marriage has actually become more widespread than it was before the colonial rule.²⁹ This is due to the money

²⁹ William R. Bascom, The Yoruba of South Western Nigeria (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), p. 65; and N.A. Fadipe, The

economy, the higher standard of living and the exercise of freedom without the restraint of the clan community.

iv. Little or no sex education is given by the modern educational system.

v. Marriage counseling is largely done by friends who may or may not have experience. Divorce is increasing, and the mediation of the elders from the country village often comes too late. Broken homes often result in maladjusted children at school.³⁰

vi. Widows and their children may or may not be inherited by the next of kin. The children of the deceased are often not well cared for.

vii. Children still belong to the clan, either of the man or of the woman. There are increased numbers of children without acknowledged fathers, and the aging maternal grandparents' home becomes the dumping ground for such children. There is going to be a problem of parents without partners when because of the unstable character of the villages today some of the country villages cease to be supportive.

viii. The value of children remains the decisive factor for the survival of marriages, but the survey of Ibadan women by Okediji

Sociology of the Yoruba (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1970), p. 315.

³⁰T. Asuni, "Maladjustment and Delinquency: A Comparison of Two Samples," Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry, IV (1963), 227. Although this study was done in a western country, split families and delinquency is beginning to characterise the Nigerian family in transition.

reflects some changes in the number of children wanted, differing according to the educational standards. The elite women, the highest in socioeconomic status, marry late and reported average mean birth of 4.5 to 4.6. The least educated reported a mean birth of 4.5 to 6.2.³¹

The situation of the aged in the transitional society in the urban setup is difficult if no money has been laid aside. The plight of those of lower class and without children is unbearable. There are no social provisions for the old or disabled, since relatives are still considered responsible.

Mourning for the dead in some respects has changed very little, although the urban setup is not ideal for traditional mourning. Usually only clan members stay with the bereaved; the neighbors and tribal mates call briefly. Job routine forbids too much "waste of time." Most people take the dead to the village, and the burial and mourning take place in the traditional fashion.

The case of G., a former school mate of the writer, may be illustrative of bereavement in the city. While at Kano, he received news from his home of birth that his parents had died. A few years later both of his younger brothers died of snake bite. One was bitten and while the other was carrying him home to receive help, he too was bitten by another snake. The recurrence of unusual events of mis-

³¹F.O. Okediji, "Socioeconomic Status Differential Fertility in an African City," Journal of Developing Areas, III (April 1969), 347, 350.

fortune tends to shatter the morale of the city dweller. Being far from home he has fewer sympathizers and certainly no close tribal person with experience in grief work. G. carried his problems with him until he was reported mad.

B. ON THE TRADITIONAL WORLD VIEWS

The basis of the traditional religion is the family, the clan and the tribal location. The effect of change on the social structure altering the tribal clan and family compounds has affected the traditional world view greatly.

Urbanization and the Christian preaching of one man-one wife means smaller households and families, and western education has dealt a death blow to the ancestors and their cult with the observance of the cults even in the traditional villages being greatly reduced. Most of the secrets are already known. The member of the family away from home has severed relations with the ancestors, at least in practice. However, this does not mean that the concept is totally lost with most people; except for those born in the cities and in Christianity away from the traditional villages which are the strongholds of the practices, the idea is there in the unconscious. The obituaries and pictures of dead relatives often put in the daily newspapers during the yearly anniversaries may be a holdover from ancestor veneration. The infliction of punishment by the ancestors and their constant demands for food and gifts have been reduced.

The deities have also suffered in the process of change. The different understanding of the working of nature has weakened the

Yoruba belief in Shopona, the deity of smallpox and in Shango, the deity of thunder. Ifa, the deity of divination, is still consulted but by a smaller number. In many of the traditional environments, the adherents of the deities have either been converted to Christianity or Islam or have just abandoned their faith.

Through Christian and Islamic evangelism, the place of God has become more emphasized than it was in the traditional religion. The name of God is much used in worship and prayer, but often in a defensive way or as a cover for dishonesty. The use of the name of God in the traditional society was restrained and used in solemn vows.

The witches are still active among the people, more in the rural village life than in the urban situation. Free floating spirits are more active, and what used to be ascribed to witches may now be attributed to the spirits. A policeman who falls sick on duty at night due to cold weather is often believed to be under the influence of spirits. The traditional and Muslim diviners, who minister to all classes of people, still hold the traditional world view as their form of interpretation of diseases. Bascom, Gilliland and Plotnicov have observed that conversion into Christianity and Islam does not always mean the abandonment of all the traditional beliefs and practices.³²

³²William R. Bascom and Meliville Herskovits, Continuity and Change in African Cultures (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 3; and Plotnicov, p. 76.

It would be wrong to say that the traditional religion is dead or will die; rather like its children, it is living on in new garb. Some enlightened and educated Nigerians have organized resistance to the new faiths (Christianity and Islam), giving rise to a "neo-primal" religious movement (not to be confused with the African churches like Orunmilaism, which has attempted to make the Yoruba oracle of divination, Orunmila, into the equivalent of what Jesus Christ is to the white race). The Aruosa cult of Benin is a modernized version of the traditional religious beliefs and practices of the Edo people, and the group known as the National Churches of Nigeria seeks to worship the "God of Africa" in direct opposition to Christianity.³³ The writer attended a worship service of the NCN at Bukuru in 1965. While the form of worship was similar to that of the free Christian churches, the content was different. It was the traditional African belief, codified, taught and practiced. God and the ancestors are prominent as pillars of faith. The use of the Bible was limited to the Old Testament pentateuch with emphasis on the Ten Commandments. Like the Christian denominations, they downgrade all other religious movements except their own. Moses' Egyptian education and Jesus' visit to Egypt in infancy are considered evidence that these great protagonists claimed by the Judaism and Christian faiths were enlightened in Africa. They view Christianity as an effort of the colonial European

³³"The Wholeness of Human Life," Study Encounter, IX:4 (1973), SE/52, 19. A report on the consultation held at the Institute of Church and Society, Ibadan, Nigeria, September, 1973.

to pacify the African into endless submission to their dominance.

How long such survival of the traditional religion will continue is a question that cannot be answered. Its adherents are certainly fewer than the adherents of Christianity or Islam. The popularity enjoyed by the African Independent Church today and the growing nostalgia and appreciation of the traditional will perhaps mean that the traditional world view will reincarnate itself in its grandchildren in the Christian Church.³⁴

C. ON THE CONCEPT OF ILLNESS AND THERAPY

The traditional concept of the causes of disease and misfortune has changed only slightly. Western scientific education, hygienic and health enlightenment programs and the high rate of success of western medical treatment has shown the Nigerian that diseases may be caused by germs and parasites. People are becoming more aware of their personal responsibility in reducing physical diseases. Preaching by some missionary Christians against belief in the activities of witches and stress on the presence of the Holy Spirit among believers has strengthened the ego in some people (more on this in the next chapter). The people who are still of traditional attitude have not changed much. To them the success of the western medical treatment simply means superior power behind the western medicine people and their methods of treatment. Much depends on the

³⁴ E. Bolaji Idowu, African Traditional Religion (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 203-204.

general attitudes that dominate the community in which a person lives. The writer's observation is that where the close relatives and friends of the sick person hold traditional views about the causes of disease, the sick person is more prone to think that way. The "enlightened" person would not readily admit in the circle of his colleagues that the causes of disease are spiritual, social or moral. When a disease persists against every reasonable treatment, the question, "Why?" is asked, and the answer is very often spiritual, social or moral. Cases of psychosomatic diseases and emotional depressions and problems are more likely to revive the latent traditional explanations.

Continued belief in bewitchment and evil machinations of enemies is observed in 90 percent of Nigerian students who had mental breakdowns in Britain. Lambo reports that 60 percent of the patients in a Nigerian hospital simultaneously receive traditional treatment from native healers. The writer has observed this to be more common in the government general hospitals than in the Christian mission hospitals. "Sanctified medicine" has a powerful influence on the confidence of the Nigerian. In places like the Vom Christian Hospital, where treatment is preceded by prayer and where there is a high degree of loving care by the medical staff, cases of patients receiving outside help are less frequent. The prayer satisfies the Nigerian that the high spirit has been called on to intervene within the medicine. It seems that under intense emotional stress, when the Nigerian feels threatened by non-being, the newly acquired social attitudes and faith tend to give way to the patient's feeling that he is a target of witch

or social attack or that he is suffering for past moral failure.³⁵

The few hospitals that are in Nigeria are located in the urban areas, and only a few medical clinics are found in the rural areas. This means that a large percentage of the population still consults the traditional native healers.

In the urban areas, individual and marriage counseling on the traditional model is continued by friends and the leaders of the clan or tribal unions. Plotnicov's interview with strangers to the Jos city, some of whom have received western education, reveal that they use western medical services but do not hesitate to consult the traditional diviners and medical people. One of his interviewees, Isaac, reported that his wife had lost her children twenty-four hours after birth. After a medical test a doctor found him and his wife healthy. Isaac was puzzled that they should still lose their children in infancy. He consulted a Fulani diviner who told him that a spirit seeking reincarnation in his children caused their death. Isaac consulted three diviners from three tribes, an Igbo, an Ibibio and an Ijaw, who independently confirmed the revelation of the Fulani diviner. The treatment prescribed was that the spirit had to be misled by a ritual of crossroad sacrifice. When Isaac carried out the ritual sacrifice, his child was suffering from severe fever and hallucinations. He sacrificed a white chicken at midnight at the

³⁵T. Adeoye Lambo, "Patterns of Psychiatric Care in Developing African Countries," in Ari Kiev (ed.) Magic, Faith and Healing (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1964), pp. 445-446.

crossroads near the Jos cemetery, and his sick child was saved.³⁶

In this writer's observation, the diviners have not substantially altered their practice nor the mode of their interpretations. In the cities the Muslim malam, the equivalent of the Christian pastor,³⁷ is consulted by the educated, Muslims and non-Muslims and the traditionally minded. In the cities one may find untrained people posing as itinerant diviners and medicine people. Money doublers are kept busy and they too can promise anything, provided money is paid.³⁸ Honest traditional practitioners are popular not always because of their publicity but because of the success of their treatment. In the cities consultation with traditional practitioners is resulting more from individual decision than community recommendations.

The decision making process takes the form of a general consultation and then a decision. A person who is unsure of the right action may consult leaders and specialists individually or as a group and then decide on the basis of their sometimes conflicting advice.³⁹

A recent way of dealing with emotional disturbance due to the stress of change and urbanization is the increasing use of drugs. In

³⁶Plotnicov, p. 127.

³⁷Malams: special meaning refers to the Muslim clergy who are often trained in and practice divination and therapeutic counseling. The malams also write potent medicine to be worn as charms as well as teach the words of the Quran.

³⁸Money doublers are charlatans who claim the power to double money. When given the amount to double they produce its double in counterfeit money.

³⁹Plotnicov, p. 196.

their articles, Asuni and Boroffka indicate that drug addiction and problems from the use of Indian hemp are more common in the southern states than in the northern states.⁴⁰ It seems as if the recent prosperity in Nigeria has also meant an increase in drug abuse. The abusive use of Indian hemp and other drugs is becoming common in the northern states as well.⁴¹ Indian hemp was probably not known in Nigeria, since there is no name for it in any Nigerian languages.⁴²

Boroffka's survey in Lagos may reflect on the rest of the country:

93% are under the age of 35; 45% are under 25 years old. About 70% claim to be Christians and about 28% Muslim. Due to the young ages of the people a high percentage are literate; only 5% are illiterate. The student percentage is high.

The reasons usually given for the use of drugs are the desire to gain peace, sexual vitality, happiness, and certain states of experience that are not readily within reach by normal natural efforts. The patients questioned replied, "it makes me feel better, stronger, happier, and bigger; it allows me to do anything; it gives me a bold

⁴⁰A. Boroffka, "Mental Illness and Indian Hemp in Lagos," East African Medical Journal, XLIII (September 1966), 377 ff; T. Asuni, "Socio-psychiatric problems of Cannabis in Nigeria," Bulletin of Narcotics (United Nations), XVI:2 (1964), 17, 19.

⁴¹"Alarming rate of drug abuse in N. Western State," New Nigerian (October 5, 1974), 5. The Northern States is one of the most traditional areas of Nigeria.

⁴²Boroffka, p. 377 ff.

mind to talk to big men; . . . it makes my brain work better."⁴³

Boroffka concludes:

Nigerians are traditionally closely knit into very intensive groups and communities and may suffer from loneliness after advancing into the western way of life and becoming urbanized and industrialized. Thus one could theorize, they turn to Indian hemp in order to forget their homesickness and the good old times.⁴⁴

There are very few psychiatric hospitals in Nigeria, but Aro-Lantoro Village complex has combined the western and the traditional ways of healing with remarkable success. A brief survey of the history and functioning of the hospital might help show how the western and the traditional methods and values can be blended with the good results for Nigeria.⁴⁵

The Aro-Lantoro Village complex was first started partly as an experiment to deal with psychiatric problems unique to the developing countries. Before the completion of the structural development, arrangements were made with the inhabitants of two neighboring villages to provide residence for the patients and their relatives during the treatment period. These villages are more typical of the Nigerian village life than the previous mental hospitals and provide a natural and familiar atmosphere for patients during their treatment and rehabilitation. The psychiatrists work with the milder patients as they reside in the village and in the hospitals as out-patients. The

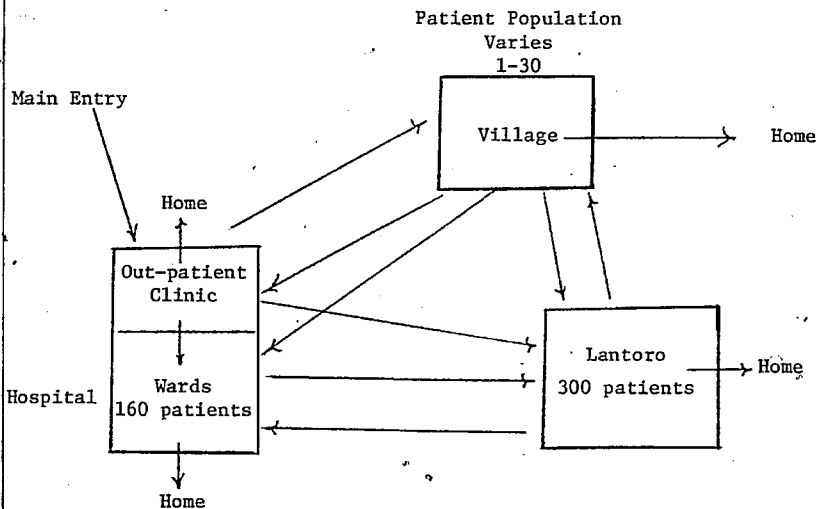
⁴³ Ibid., p. 381.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ T. Asuni, "Aro Hospital in Perspective," in the American Journal of Psychiatry, CXXIV:6 (December 1967), 763-770.

serious cases are referred to Lantoro, which is a closed unit. The main entry to the psychiatric complex is the out-patient clinic. Here it is decided whether the patient is a case mild enough for the village, to be treated on an out-patient basis, to be in the open wards or to go on to Lantoro closed units. The village serves as a half-way house as well as a treatment place for milder cases. Urbanized or westernized patients are not included in the village setup, as that environment might add to their strain.

ARO - LANTORO VILLAGE COMPLEX



The Aro Hospital complex insists that as a condition for admission relatives stay with the patient. When the patient is hospitalized, frequent visits to the hospital by the relatives are

required. The first outing of the patient is usually with the relatives who are staying in the village.

Patients are interviewed and treated in the presence of the relatives. In the services for the in-patients and out-patients, it is believed that the interest and participation of the relatives is a major factor in reducing the frequency of relapse.⁴⁶ There is, furthermore, a reluctance to interview patients without their relatives because relatives provide more objective data and the relatives help the patient take their medicinal prescriptions regularly. Apart from serious cases, the patients are encouraged to participate in the normal activities of the village and are made aware of reality situations. The villages have developed increased understanding and tolerance of mental illness.

Occupational therapy, including basket making, weaving, knitting and poultry tending and cooking, is done. Experiments in group psychotherapy for the English speaking patients and the Yoruba speakers has proved a success. Patients who benefited from the groups expressed the need for a group in Ibadan and Lagos.⁴⁷

The success of the hospital-village complex is outstanding. Therapy is reduced to about one-seventh the time that hospital

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 767.

⁴⁷T. Asuni, "Nigerian Experiment in Group Psychotherapy" in the American Journal of Psychotherapy (1967), 95-104.

patients take at one-twelfth of the cost.⁴⁸ To reduce the fear that usually goes with the psychiatric hospitals, school children and the people of the neighborhood are treated for common medical needs on an out-patient basis. The Aro-Lantoro village complex has combined the services of the western trained psychiatrists, the native doctors and the village elders to achieve this success. The hospital is becoming a model for other African countries.⁴⁹

Although the pastoral counseling model for Nigeria may not be able to allow as much time, trained personnel and money, some traditional and western aspects would not be out of place in the church pastoral counseling models and programs. The presence in Nigerian society of both the new and the old and the selective use of both on the basis of their practical effect and value seems to indicate that the model of pastoral counseling also must be a selection of the useful and effective in the old and the new, the traditional and the western.

D. SUMMARY

The traditional Nigerian has been exposed to the cultures of the other tribes and the western civilization and life style. Although the Nigerian knows that there are other explanations for diseases, he often explains them in terms of the spiritual when the

⁴⁸ James P. Breetveld, in "A Brief Conversation with Thomas Lambo," Psychology Today, VII (February 1972), 65.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

disease is serious. The western medicine has been effective, but when it fails the Muslim and traditional healers are there to be consulted.

CHAPTER V

RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH TO CULTURE CHANGE

A. INTRODUCTION

The Christian Church is itself an agent of change. Through its personnel and expansion it has brought change to the culture and altered the social and religious outlook of many. The Christian Church has effectively confronted the evils that dominated the precolonial Nigerian tribes, e.g., slavery, tribalism, the killing of twins in some tribes. In these days of transition, the church has provided the confused Nigerian with a new philosophy and a living faith. The church has sought to expand the concept of brotherhood and clan relation to national and universal understanding. Almost all the major western church denominations had missionary work in some regions of the country. The national churches they founded have become established and in most cases receive only specialized personnel from the sister churches overseas. These national churches come together in general fellowship or association to discuss and carry out projects of common concern. The Christian Council of Nigeria, the national council, was very active in the post-civil war rehabilitation and reconciliation. The Christian Council has an educational institute where church seminars are held.

The churches have contributed to the mental and spiritual health of the individual members and the wider society through their

structure, theology and healing ministry. There are two kinds of Christian churches in Nigeria. The first is the "Missionary Christian" church, in Hausa Yan Mishan, "the children of the missionary." These are the missionary Christians; they are largely dependent on the founder denominations for assistance and are sometimes an exact replica of the western founding denomination. The early missionaries came to preach Christ as the savior of the world. There has often been competition among them, and the average Nigerian wonders if their aim was to preach the same Christ or Christs according to their home denominations. Each was concerned with making of the Nigerian convert the best Anglican, the best Methodist, the best Baptist, the best Lutheran according to the different home denominational affiliations. The ethnocentrism that ruled the West in the days of the pioneer missionary and the lack of understanding of the traditional Nigerian made them feel that Nigerian converts must be reborn not only spiritually, but culturally and socially. In the mind of the pioneer missionary, Christianity was not distinct from his own culture and philosophy. The missionaries physically left their homes and traveled land and sea to come to Africa but had not parted from their own culture. Rather, the African converts had to part with their own people, their society, ancestors and customs.¹ The African was taught the faith as though it were something

¹C.G. Baeta (ed.) Christianity in Tropical Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 16.

completely new. In some cases, he was not listened to when he expressed a different conviction. The Nigerians most affected by change are those converted to missionary Christianity.

The second group of Christians is the independent churches, either having been split from the main missionary denominations or started by the initiative of African leadership.² The contribution of the independent churches will be treated separately.

B. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCHES

The different missionary societies each had work in a certain area of Nigeria, some working exclusively with one or a group of tribes. The Anglicans have more work among the Yoruba; the Baptists also work among the Yoruba and some smaller tribes with some success. The Roman Catholics have been most successful among the Igbo, and their work is found throughout the country.

1. Care in the Structure of the Churches

The governing structure of the churches is a reproduction of the western church structure. The patron denomination makes sure that the hierarchy of the official leadership is of its own members, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist. The few inter-denominational churches structure their leadership after the pattern of some free churches in the West. Denominations with hierarchical

²D.B. Barrett, Schism & Renewal in Africa (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 3.

leadership have bishops, deans, canons, vicar curates. In a local church there may be elders and deacons. The free churches have either a general secretary or a president. Over each large local church is a pastor or a priest; a number of evangelists or catechists help lead the smaller church congregations. From the pastoral counselor's point of view, the personnel in the church leadership in Nigeria is limited and usually overworked.

The composition of the church makes mutual community care rather difficult. One reason is that due to the rapid growth of the churches, a congregation may be so large that members tend to lose the sense of personal involvement experienced in the clan or compound family traditional religious worship. The large church is usually not the place for the individual with emotional problems to feel at home. Churches, like that of Jos EKAS with a weekly attendance of 1,500, do not possess the caring power that a village church of 100 would provide. Most of the care and emotional support provided by city church members is derived from their clan or tribal unions and friends outside the church. Meaningful participation by individuals in the life of the church is often restricted to the few specialized members, and the rest have to bury their less specialized talents. Membership in a church may only mean attendance at worship once a week.

The second reason is that there is often no family feeling or feelings of relatedness equal to that experienced in the traditional society. The emphasis on personal decision in some of the churches leads to individualistic attitudes. Membership drawn from the various

clan or tribes makes it difficult for people to open up. The bond of clan or tribal relationship due to a common language and blood relatedness may continue to be stronger than the bond of the new spiritual clan. The disputes that sometimes split the churches often follow tribal or clan differences. Most of the church controversies that this writer has observed have seldom been on doctrinal or theological questions but on political questions. The burning issues involve lack of proper representation of one tribal or clan group at the administrative center. Participation, not abstract theology, seems to be the main interest of the Nigerian Christians.

Thirdly, since the church rejected almost all that is traditional, it lacks the preventive measures that are built into the traditional society and customs governing the different stages of human development throughout the life cycle. Some of the Christian practices like child baptism or dedication and acceptance into the church membership are done so summarily and mechanically that the meaning is not well impressed into the lives of the people. A comparison of the expression of community concern during the tribal reception of the young initiates into adulthood and that of the Church community during the baptism or dedication of new members is revealing. While the traditional joy and appreciation lasts for days and months, the church's concern is brief, and the new initiate soon could be the loneliest person in the church community. The church also needs to educate its members in marriage as a developmental stage of life. There is confusion because the traditional customs still are observed along with the westernized Christian tradition. For the

young people, it means satisfying the old customs and the new, and the compliance with two traditions often makes church weddings burdensome. For the church, sex is a touchy subject, and sex education is not as freely given as in the traditional society. In the stage of death and mourning, the missionary churches have often tended to discourage mourning with wailing and dancing in the traditional way. It is argued that since the dead in Christ are only asleep the believers ought not to sorrow a great deal (I Thessalonians 4:13ff). It is in fact recommended by some that the Christians should sing songs of praise at that time. In this the church recommendation has not been followed. The unbelieving relatives of the believers consider the recommended Christian practice as outrageous to the spirit of the dead person; they mourn the dead Christian relatives with cries and wailing and omit only the traditional religious aspect. The result is that even in the churches the actual grief work continues to be based on the traditional model with the experienced women playing a vital part.

The churches have not emphasized socializing for their members, with the exception of the few youth centers and the YMCA or YWCA in some cities.

2. The Power of Christian Theology and Church Life

The traditional life and world view of the African is much closer to that of the Hebrew Old Testament and the Jewish lifestyle of the New Testament gospels than the world view of the missionary. The Old Testament literature (with the exception of the futuristic apocalyptic literature) and those New Testament writings addressed to

a Jewish audience more easily touch the soul of the Nigerian than the Pauline writings addressed to the Greek world. The doctrine of God, the archangels and God's ministering spirits fit well into the previous framework of the traditional Nigerian world view. God is served by the angels who, like the nature deities, carry out God's orders. The belief that some of the angels protect the believers against the evils of life is a powerful source of spiritual strength to the indigenous Christian.

The world of the Bible is as infested with evil spirits and powers as in the traditional world view. The role and work of Jesus in the Gospels appeals to the indigenous Christian. His healing of the sick and ordering of evil spirits and demons to stop molesting the people is what the traditional person has been longing for. Jesus' method of viewing and healing the spirit possessed is close to the method used by the diviner native doctors. The word power of Jesus is another gift with which the traditional healers are only partially endowed. The general picture of Jesus as the gentle friend of the common people and the oppressed is attractive in a culture that has largely known nothing but poverty. The doctrine of Christ as the son of God is not out of place. His death and resurrection, appearance to the closest of his disciples, and his final ascension are not strange concepts among many tribes. The belief that some people who die untimely deaths may continue to live a normal life in different societies where they are unknown is common. The resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ takes the place of the ancestor in the "new clan," the church.

The doctrine of the presence of the Holy Spirit serves as a source of strength to many Christians and helps immunize them against the fear of evil spirits and the witches. For those who take the biblical world view seriously and believe in God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the angels and ministering spirits, there is a stronghold for their souls in times of emotional stress. People who still believe in and fear the traditional spirit world often tend to explain their emotional stress and physical sickness in terms of witches and evil spirits. It is not easy for the individual to dismiss the traditional world of evil spirits and witches, because the belief is reinforced by the significant members of the society.

The new teaching that the Bible and especially the New Testament have added to the traditional belief is the belief in a powerful Satan who popularly seems to rank on the same level with God, because he is often said to oppose God's work. In the traditional belief, the chief of the demons, Sarkin Aljanu does not rank as high as God. The second new belief that differs from the traditional is the expectation of a future life of bliss with the return of Jesus Christ. This is a revolutionary change in the traditional concept of time. Traditionally, this life is the peak, and the dead seek reincarnation into their living families. The proclamation of the second coming of Jesus seems to have dominated the early preaching of the pioneer missionary³ with the result that their converts did not take

³E.A. Ayandele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914 (London: Longmans, Green, 1966), p. 128.

an interest in business life. In the northern territories the Muslims dominate commerce, and it is only recently that some Christians are beginning to take part in active business. The Christian religion as introduced by the missionaries differs clearly from the traditional religions in separating itself from the secular life.

3. Weakness of the Missionary Theology

The early missionary came to teach an entirely new faith and did not take time to find out points of common belief or the problems of the traditional person. His theology and ways of interpreting the scriptures was imposed on the Nigerian, thus creating a theology outside the context of the Nigerian culture. The intellectual exercises of western Christian theology are lifeless to the Nigerian, not only because the doctrine taught was meant to answer the questions raised in Europe and America, but also because the Nigerian generally prefers the concrete and the practical. Christianity is therefore identified with European culture.⁴

Theology outside the context of the Nigerian culture has resulted in two problems. The first is the misunderstanding of the Pauline doctrine of the justification by faith to mean cheap grace.⁵

⁴C.H. Kraft, Christianity and Culture (Pre-Publication draft. Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1974), p. 140. T. Ayandele, p. 245.

⁵John C. Messenger, "The Christian Concept of Forgiveness and Anang Morality," in W.A. Smalley (ed.) Readings in Missionary Anthropology (Tarrytown, N.Y.: Practical Anthropology, 1967), p. 184.

The second is that some church members have fallen into living a double life, getting what they can out of the Christian church, and what the church fails to provide in the area of emotional security they find elsewhere. Ojo writes of the Yoruba that "the people realize that since the forces to be curbed or controlled are innumerable, as many solutions as possible from sources without number would be welcome."⁶ Plotnicov writes of the Jos city that "church goers" participate in religious practices like ancestor worship and consult the traditional healers.⁷ Idowu, writing on the "Results of Prefabricated Theology and Traditions" of contemporary church people says:

Christianity to them is a fashionable religion which has the habit of beginning and ending within the walks of the church building; it does not reach those vital areas of the personal needs of Africans. Thus, it is possible for an African to sing lustily in church, 'other refuge have I none' while still carrying an amulet somewhere on his person, or being able to go out of church straight to his diviner, without feeling that he is betraying any principle.⁸

In response to a need for a culturally relevant theology for Africa, there have been discussions and writings on the form it should take. It is the feeling of many African church people, that to find a theology relevant to African's existence within their own culture,

⁶G.J. Afolabi Ojo, Yoruba Culture (London: University of London Press, 1966), p. 188.

⁷Leonard Plotnicov, Strangers in the City (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1967), p. 76.

⁸E. Bolaji Idowu, "The Predicament of the Church in Africa," in Baeta, p. 433.

there needs be a return to the Bible to speak to the African directly and not through the interpretations of the western culture.⁹

4. Pastoral Counseling in the Church

To the English speaking church people in Nigeria the word counseling quickly brings to mind a newly converted person who is receiving further information on the new faith. Compared with the traditional religion, the missionary Christian has largely officially abandoned many forms of the traditional therapeutic counseling. From the writer's observation, church members with emotional problems do not readily go to the pastor for the following reasons:

a. The pastor in the Nigerian church is overworked. Many pastors hardly have time for paying their rounds of pastoral visitations to the homes of the church members. A pastor usually is in charge of a large congregation and oversees a number of the smaller congregations run by catechists or evangelists. The pastor has therefore assumed the status of a paramount chief.¹⁰ He is often consulted on administrative matters and is rarely consulted by individuals with emotional problems.

⁹C. Nyamiti, African Theology, (Kampala, Uganda: Gaba Publications, 1969), p. 2; and D.M.B. Tutu, "Whither Theological Education? An African Perspective," Theological Education, IX:4 (Summer 1973), 27, "Theological education in Africa must seek to engage in a dialogue with its own particular context and not that of others."

¹⁰Tutu, pp. 270-271. Ordination has been to some ministers a pass to the status of an elite. In the TEKAS minutes, Jan. 9-14, 1974 N. 792/74, the Secretary warned some church leaders against running the church as their personal property.

b. Church sermons are largely moralistic, aimed at heightening the feeling of guilt in the members with the hope that they will repent. Most people with guilt feelings know that they are a disappointment to the pastor, and the pastor is the last person they would turn to. Many wait until their problem is beyond the pastor's help before they come to him, e.g., a woman would seek the help of a pastor when her husband had walked out on her or a husband would want the pastor to intervene between him and his insubordinate wife.¹¹

c. The general attitude of the church tends to oppose open expression of emotions like anger, aggression and resentment. The traditional mode of expressing good will and joy through dances is condemned. The traditional society allows free talk about the sexual organs, although it is opposed to the extramarital use of sex. In the Christian church, the mere mention of sex is considered to be as bad as an extramarital sexual affair itself. Most people would sooner consult the Hausa malam or a native doctor than the pastor about their sex problems.

d. The western missionary and the Nigerian pastor have not often taken the spirit infested world view of the traditional person seriously. A person who feels truly bewitched knows well enough that he would receive nothing but a homily against the belief in and the fear of evil spirits and witchcraft.

¹¹Malcolm Brown, A Helping Hand (Achimota, Ghana: African Christian Press, 1969), p. 61f.

The church has usually ministered to and counseled mainly its own members. The traditional persons and the Muslims take their problems to their religious specialists. The Roman Catholic practice of confession has been a great help to its members, to the exclusion of all outsiders, unlike open policy of the traditional and Islamic priests.

The church position favors monogamous marriages as the ideal. In most of the Missionary Christian churches, monogamy is a condition of membership; polygamists, respected in traditional African eyes, are regarded as living in adultery. The disapproving attitude to polygamous homes often makes the pastor the least understanding person in instances of problems. Thus the limited counseling ministry to families is confined to the homes of monogamous church members.

An area in which the missionary churches are far advanced is medical service proffered through their hospitals. Here is the combination of the treatment of the physical and the spiritual. All over Nigeria the Christian hospitals are popular for their treatment with prayer and a high degree of care by the hospital staff. The hospital chaplains are active, and they too are overworked. At places like the Vom and Mkar Christian hospitals, the chaplain cares not only for the patients but also for the hospital staff and the relatives of the patient. Many of the Christian hospitals need the ministry of more than one trained chaplain. Special prayers are said asking God to

guide and bless the work of the medical staff.¹² The traditional person would see a proof of the answer to prayer in the high degree of healing of very serious diseases accomplished in the Christian hospitals.

Since counseling as a recognized ministry of the church has not been given a central place, it is difficult to find a common model of counseling. Many of the pastors, assisted by the elders, take the approach used by clan heads and their elders. Sometimes it works more like a council of elders to which the persons needing help are called. The same council functions as a sort of church discipline committee. Quotation of scriptural verses to emphasize the gravity of people's sins is common. The atmosphere is often tense for the person consulting some of these councils.

The following illustrates methods of counseling often practiced in the churches that are based on the traditional counseling structure. The counselors usually consist of two or three male elders and a female elder from the church. The counselee may be alone, or the man and wife may come together for marriage counseling. The setting would be the church office.

Procedure. One of the elders is usually more active in directing the counseling process in a reality therapy approach. The other elders watch and listen, interrupting occasionally. The woman elder is

¹²T.A. Beetham, Christianity and the New Africa (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 58.

important; chosen for her sharp intuitive gift, she counsels as well as supports the wife.

Each partner is in turn usually allowed to voice wishes, discontent and complaint. Where there is a conflict, the elders focus attention on that point and allow each a chance to voice his or her own feelings. Where there are many conflict points, it may mean that the problem needs several counseling sessions. At the end of each session, the elders each feed in their observations and recommend things the two have to work on before the next session. There is an effort to reconcile marriage breaches, rather than encouraging individual freedom that may lead to separation.

The following is a case of pre-marital counseling conducted by the late Pastor Musa of the ECWA Church Bukuru.¹³ The writer was an observer at the sessions which took place in the summer of 1965.

Pastor Musa, an innovative person, practiced pre-marital counseling, which was not customary in the whole of ECWA churches. He insisted on a one day pre-marriage counseling group which consisted of not only the couple to be married but also of representatives from their families. His prime intention was to bring together the two families. He wished to avoid the consequences of the modern marriages which are usually contracted between the couples concerned and which leave out the inlaws. He explained that Christian marriages should differ from the traditional marriages in that there should always be a

¹³ECWA stands for the fellowship of churches called Evangelical Churches of West Africa, founded by the Sudan Interior Mission.

good rapport between the two families that are being related in marriage. He also felt that as the pastor of one of the partners to be married that he personally wanted to know the family she was marrying into.

The members of the group.

a. From the young man's family were the mother and elder sister of the young man, who was represented by his younger brother since he was in Lagos at the time working at the Ministry of External Affairs.

b. From the girl's side were her father and mother. The young woman was present.

Setting. The meeting place was in the church sanctuary.

Procedure. The pastor himself was a directive facilitator of the conversation. There was a good relationship between the pastor and the family representatives. He identified with the parents of the two families due to his age and commented on the fact that the modern life has become more complicated than the past. The session was started with a prayer.

He asked the girl to briefly relate her background, childhood, and school experiences up to the time of her present employment. He asked what led her to believe that the young man in Lagos was to be her marriage partner. He checked for information at each interval with her parents.

The pastor had already asked the young man to write a brief autobiographical report stating what led to his interest in marrying this woman. The pastor himself read the lengthy letter and checked with the mother and sister of the young man.

The pastor then asked in turn the parents of the woman and the mother of the young man to relate the different customs under which they were married and what differences they presently saw through their Christian experience. Noting with humor the difference between the old and the modern ways, he stressed the central concern of the Christian ways that the two start and continue in love.

The pastor having thus facilitated the opening session, the group started to interact freely. The pastor remarked that it was necessary for easy communication to continue between the two families if the marriage was to be a happy one.

In the ritual at the end the pastor took the engagement ring and a copy of the Bible. He presented them to the woman, explaining that the action symbolized the belief that friendship and eventual marriage is based on the will of God.

The premarital group had three sessions. The last session was concluded with a prayer. The actual marriage took place in London at All Souls Church, Langham Place.

There is no uniform mode of approach to problem solving; each pastor and his group of elders use their discretion in dealing with problems brought to them. Most often the problems reach the pastor and elders too late, because the church member feels he would be

publicizing his secrets by going to them.¹⁴ Such people have to be reassured before they open up, indicating that the ordinary church member has not seen the church leadership as reconciler-counselors.

The church on the local, regional and national levels is very aware of changes and issues evidenced by occasional statements like that below. Each church is left to carry out the recommendations in its own way, and in some churches such recommendations are never carried out but left only on record.

The following recommendations were made at a recent conference on "The Church and Family Change," held at the Institute of Church and Society.

(1) The conference urges the Churches to promote more counselling of young people by those in contact with them in schools, colleges and congregations. Where there is little contact with young people then youth clubs and organizations could be started.

(2) Letters of introduction should be sent and received by pastors when young people move into cities. Pastors in urban areas are urged to take special care in welcoming and getting to know new members.

(3) It is commonly believed that church weddings have to be expensive and crowded. This is not the Christian viewpoint and Churches are urged to communicate the right teaching effectively.

(4) Much emphasis has been laid at the conference on the fact that marriage in Africa is between two families, not just two individuals. The Christian Church must therefore take an interest in the two families of an intending couple right from the start. This has important implications for counselling and for the evolution of a new social ethos in the Church. As it is a couple intending to get married often come to a clergyman right at the last moment when there is a little chance of meeting the families.

¹⁴ A personal letter from Pastor Ezekiel Makama, the pastor of Chwelnyp Church, Jos, dated August 25, 1974.

So it is important for the clergyman and his lay leaders (e.g., youth leaders or leaders of church societies) to be in touch with their young people so that they can know when they are thinking of getting married and be on hand to give advice.

Church elders in each congregation should be encouraged to discover what implications this emphasis on marriage between families has on the life of the Christian and the Church. Out of this new practices might emerge for instance like the Gage in some areas.¹⁵

C. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AFRICAN CHURCHES

Missionary Christianity has planted a westernized church in Nigeria. In the African churches, commonly called the African independent churches, there is an Africanized Christianity. The African churches have sprung up, independently of each other, all over Africa, each with unique characteristics. The first, the Native African Church in Nigeria was established in 1891. It was founded by a group of African Christians who felt that God could be worshipped in an African way; it did not secede from a larger established missionary church. This church used the Bible as its basis and was zealously evangelistic with the result that it has 246 congregations spread over Nigeria and Dahomey with a total of 35,200 adherents.¹⁶ Other African churches, such as the Bethel Church, broke away from larger denominations over disagreements on administrative and cultural differences.¹⁷ Others

¹⁵"The Church and Family Change," Nigerian Christian, IX:4 (April 1975), 10.

¹⁶"The United Native African Church in Nigeria," Nigerian Christian, IX:7 (July 1974), 14-15.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 15.

include the Christ Apostolic Church, Faith Tabernacle, the Cherubim and Seraphim, and the Apostolic Church. Because these churches were independent and not recognized by the missionary churches, they received no financial assistance from outside the country. They used those indigenous means within their reach. Some church congregations are led by people who could barely read and write, but because of their traditional wisdom were able to command the respect of their members. They did not have the self righteousness of the western Christian, and thus their world view is a blend of the biblical and the African. With the exceptions of the ancestors and belief in the deities, the African world view is retained or accommodated within the Biblical world view. Satan and the evil spirits are taken seriously. These churches generally have a pentecostal leaning: the presence of the Holy Spirit is prominent in their lives, and their members are possessed by it just as the traditional mediums are possessed. The Holy Spirit is believed to guide them through their prophets and teachers, giving special prophetic revelations, guiding them to various places of worship. It is in the power of the Holy Spirit that they overpower and cast out evil spirits. Visions are popular with them, and belief in the angels of God is strong.

1. The Community

Due to their smaller numbers and their lower standard of living, they form communities with very strong relationships. They are creating a new kinship system based on the spiritual relationship in Christ. It is a place "where hospitality is extended without

reluctance, where business advice is given freely" and a place where a person feels secure.¹⁸ The church provides social and economic security. Plotnicov writes of some of these churches in Jos:

The pastor and the members of the Assembly of God Church visit the sick and bereaved, give them financial assistance and help in assuming burial expenses. The church, besides being a force of social control, through moral exhortations and sanctions, settles disputes between members and offers counseling and advice through its pastor and other officials. This church is tight knit with a high degree of solidarity; members prepare to trade among themselves. One told me, "we love all men, but we love our brothers best."¹⁹

An African who becomes a member does not suffer the cultural dislocation of the missionary church members. The fact that they can sing and clap their hands to the African rhythm and even dance makes their services look like some parts of the traditional worship with the only difference being in content. Here there is a meaningful participation by all as equals. Although the churches have hierarchical leadership, it is usually not as complex as that in the older denominations, where leadership clearly marks a person as different. The place of the elders is very important. The churches that the writer observed in Bukuru and Jos have leaders who carry on business as well as care for the church. This means that the leader depends on his elders. These churches emphasize not only the often abstract salvation of the soul, but they bring salvation to real life daily. Although they are not rich enough to put up medical clinics, they lay stress on the ministry

¹⁸"Independent churches in Africa," Pastoral Institute News Letter, No. 72 (March 31, 1975), p. 5.

¹⁹Plotnicov, p. 80.

of mental health among their members. Some of the churches pattern responsibility of leadership after the New Testament; they have apostles, prophets, teachers, healers, helpers and speakers in tongues (I Corinthians 12:28f). Leadership is recognized in some groups by the presence of a particular gift in the person. Thus, gifted women can be found in prominent leadership positions in these churches.²⁰ The African churches have not often attracted to their membership the educated elite Nigerian, who considers belonging to the African church a regression and a social embarrassment.²¹ In places like Ibadan, however, some of the drummers in the churches are graduate students. Often, when the elite Nigerian or members of the missionary church are threatened by the stresses of life, they secretly seek the help of the African Church healers. Here is a place that a person is not turned away because of believing in the traditional concept of illness.

With the independence of the country and the growing appreciation of the traditional cultural heritage, the African churches are becoming recognized by the missionary churches. An example is the interdenominational evangelistic outreach of the sixties, in which both the missionary and the African churches worked together. The African churches are growing fast, and it is predicted by Barret and

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Messenger, p. 182.

Shorter that they may even equal the missionary churches in membership by 2,000 A.D.²²

The African churches give central place to community worship, confession, prayer and exorcism of the spirit possessed.²³ These activities are geared towards therapeutic healing.

2. Worship

Some of the churches follow with alterations the order of the mother churches from which they broke away. Some follow the free church order of worship. What characterizes the worship is freedom and absence of premeditated plan, usually consisting of prayers and songs, often to the rhythm of drums and hand clapping, confessions and a sermon.²⁴ There could be an interjection of prophetic utterances and speaking in tongues at any point. The services are long, but time passes quickly for the members who are allowed to clap their hands. Some dance in the church. The effect of the free worship is emotional catharsis; deep feelings are verbalized, and confessions may be made publicly or privately before an elder.

²²Barret, p. 278; and A. Shorter, African Culture and the Christian Church (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 211.

²³The Yoruba name for many of the native churches is Aladura meaning "praying churches."

²⁴C.Y. Olumide, "The Priests and the Prophets," Nigerian Christian, VIII:11 (November 1974), 13.

Some of the worship takes place in the homes of the members or at a church building. The churches are often very plain buildings when compared with some of the missionary churches. The Aladura churches, like the traditional people are not concerned about elegant places of worship. While worship may sometimes be in the church building, at other times the spirit may direct the prophets to inform the people that they should worship in the countryside, seaside, riverside or mountaintop in the open air. Responding to the needs of the people and the direction of the Holy Spirit makes Sunday only one of the days of worship. The community of the Cherubim and Seraphim at Bukuru may be found worshipping outside before dawn. Some members may be called to prayer and worship at the bedside of a sick member.

3. Sacraments

The outstanding sacraments in the native churches are baptism, marriage, ordination, penance and communion. Baptism for the native churches is considered not as saving the individual, but rather as an introduction of the initiates into the earthly as well as the spiritual community.²⁵ Some of these churches, therefore, rebaptize Christian members who join them. Baptism is usually by immersion in water, although other forms may be found. The act of baptism is usually preceded by a statement from the initiate swearing to renounce past unchristian habits. Prayer and the laying on of hands is common.

²⁵M.P. Jassy, Basic Community in the African Churches (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 181.

People who demonstrate special gifts are ordained into the different offices as outlined by Paul.²⁶ Confessions are common in the normal church worship, often coming as a request for prayer. The elders are open for consultation by their members. The holy communion meal is popular with some and not practiced by others. Where it is practiced, emphasis is laid on participation without hidden grudges.

Engaged members of the church inform their elders right away. Some of the elders may play the role of intermediary where there is none. Bride wealth is paid according to the different traditions. Monogamy is preferred by most, although polygamists are accepted as members. Some churches do not give polygamists positions of leadership. The recognition of polygamist homes extends the marriage and family counseling ministry to these homes. My observation is that their polygamist homes are more consciously responsible and peaceful than those of polygamists loosely affiliated with the missionary churches who consequently suffer great guilt.

4. Prayer for the Sick and Exorcism

While the missionary Christians minimize the existence of evil spirits and witches to the point of denying it, the native churches accept their presence as real. With Paul, they would see life as a battle against principalities and powers and "spiritual hosts of wickedness" (Ephesians 6:12). Evil is not an occasional event but is

²⁶ I Corinthians 12:28f.

believed to be present within the world, disturbing the harmony of life and community relations. The ancestors, the deities, and diviners are not often consulted by them for salvation from evil forces, since they trust that God has given his children the power to protect themselves against evil attacks through his Son, the angels and the Holy Spirit. Wearing of charms, smoking tobacco, drinking alcoholic beverages and abstention from adultery are the new taboo. Satan is believed to be busy seeking not only to tempt but to cause believers to sin. Sin is an act by which a person allows evil into his life or the life of the group of which he is a member.²⁷ The involvement of the evil spirits is so common in every misfortune that every disease and misfortune is perceived as part of the general concerted effort of Satan and his hosts to frustrate the work of God. This belief makes the native Christians active in visiting and praying for the sick in hospitals or at home. A group of church elders and members may offer prayers for the sick at the church or in the home of the sick person. In cases of serious mental disturbance, prayers may be continued through the night. The sick may be anointed with oil by the elders, who may lay their hands on his head before the observing community. Members are encouraged to live a life of prayer.

Some groups like the Faith Tabernacle of Bukuru do not use medicine, relying entirely on faith and prayer. Purity of life is emphasized, including honesty in individual and social life. One of

²⁷ Jassy, p. 198.

their elders, a prosperous business man, is a polygamist. He told the writer about one of the young men staying with him. This young man had serious dysentery and was bleeding severely. When the elder learned of it, he called him and all the household, and they prayed for most of the night. The bleeding stopped, and the young man was healed without medical help. The younger members of this church find it difficult when they are away and sick at boarding schools.

The native churches claim and make use of the power promised by Jesus over sickness and evil spirits (Mark 16:15-18). Mental disease is seen in the Biblical and traditional sense as a possession by evil spirits. Procedure in exorcism in the Cherubim and Seraphim at Bukuru is as follows. After fasting and prayer, the church healers and elders with the family of the sick person determine what properties of the sick person belong to the evil spirit. These are either destroyed or buried. Then the sick person is surrounded by a praying community. The possessed person may go into an unconscious state with the spirit taking over. The healers may carry on a conversation with the evil spirit, if it speaks. They would tell the spirit to leave the child of Christ. Scripture verses about the power of Jesus may be read. The cross and the Bible may be used to touch the head of the possessed. Sometimes the person gets well. If the spirit returns, further investigation is made to find out what other property of the spirit the patient has in his possession. A spirit possessed person may be advised to join groups in the church who pray together against evil powers. At times the person may be advised to seek a new home.

The weakness of the native church is in the lack of training in the Bible and theology. Its autonomy makes most of the congregations exist in isolation from the sister churches. Some are often run like a household group. Their strengths may be in their seeming weakness. They have used what is traditional, and their world view is traditional. Their retention of the indigenous culture may continue to the missionary churches, especially with the growing recognition of each other. Native church leaders generally are less educated than the missionary churches personnel, but their understanding of the traditional people uneducated in western ways may be greater, and these are in the majority in Nigeria.

D. SUMMARY

Apart from hospital ministry, the Christian church has largely followed the counseling model of the traditional clan. Since the elders that do the counseling are often found in the discipline committees, most people do not consult them unless it is absolutely necessary. The native churches have continued the practice of mental healing on a model similar to that of the native traditional healers. The Holy Spirit is the new spiritual power that fights against Satan and evil forces.

PART III

COUNSELING MODEL

CHAPTER VI

SUGGESTED MODEL FOR PASTORAL COUNSELING AND CARE

A. THEOLOGY OF PASTORAL COUNSELING AND CARE

1. Salvation

The basis for pastoral counseling and care is found in the universal struggle for salvation. Many peoples or ethnic groups in Africa have stories which tell of an original perfect state of existence, a life without problems or hardship because God was very close to the people. Then some unfortunate thing happened because of the evil action of human beings, or, in the case of the Yoruba, because the messenger with the news of death reached the people on earth before the bearer of the good news of endless life. The Bible story of the fall paints a detailed picture. Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and were driven out of the garden to a life of toil and suffering. The different versions of the stories agree that humans have fallen from grace because of alienation from God, thus exchanging their communion with God for the present state of estrangement.

From the psychotherapeutic counselor's viewpoint, the sense of original grace may be derived from interpersonal relationships in childhood between a baby and the parents. This is the stage of basic

trust and basic mistrust.¹ The sense of original grace may be derived at the subsequent stages of life development when a person is accepted by the members of the community, family or friends. It seems then that the disruption of the existing emotionally satisfying relationship typifies the estrangements portrayed in the Bible and the folklore of the tribal groups in Nigeria.

Both Christians and traditional people see this life as a state of estrangement because of the state of unity and harmony that is often desired but rarely achieved within the community and the individual spirit. Paul Tillich sees this state of existence as the state of existential estrangement, estrangement from the ground of our being, characterized by anxieties, both universal and pathological.² There is a tension between being and non-being, a tension from which a living person cannot completely escape. To exist is to be consumed by old age into final non-existence; it is to pass through the different stages of the life cycle and face the identity crises resulting from the transition from one stage to another. An individual every day seeks to maintain harmony in his life and that of the significant environment. The different healing systems, medical or religious, are aimed at alleviating the stress caused by existential estrangement and at restoring the original state of harmony.

¹E.H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 247.

²Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), II, 39-44.

Different ways of self salvation have been put forward. Legalism in the form of tribal taboo or the moral standards of the Christian and Islamic communities has not restored a lasting harmony. Asceticism, as the attempt to curb the force of the libido (concupiscence), mystical experience, and knowledge of the sacraments and ceremonial, or doctrinal ways have not permanently "saved" people from the frustrations of existential estrangement.³ The use of drugs, alcohol and narcotics gives only a temporary relief from the threat of disharmony. The wearing of charms and the offering of sacrifices is only a stopgap solution to the problem.

Pastoral counseling and care should see the person with sickness or under emotional stress as undergoing the frustration of living. This is more so since the physical ailment touches the spirit of the sick, and psychological problems affect the physical as well. The missionary church in Nigeria has actualized this only in the hospital setting, where there is a greater emphasis on treating the physical than the emotional. The native African churches, like the traditional religions, have often sought to approach disease with the aim of healing the spirit and the body. Pastoral counseling comes under the general ministry of the church in pastoral care. Oates understands it as the "pastor's combined fortification of persons as persons" in times of both emergency and developmental crisis.⁴

³Ibid., II, 80ff.

⁴Wayne E. Oates, New Dimensions in Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 3.

Pastoral care is, therefore, concerned with the broad question of existential estrangement of persons as well as individual feelings of estrangement.

A person becomes aware of or starts searching for help only when he is aware of three things. First, the seriousness of his estrangement, whether as individual from his community, as individual from his body through physical disease or as an individual who is spiritually distant from his God or his ancestors. Secondly, when all efforts have failed to restore the original state of harmony. Thirdly, when he has heard of a savior in the form of a person, the pastor, a priest diviner, a medicine man or a doctor whose guidance leads to harmony.

Salvation in religion as in therapy is often expressed cross culturally as a rebirth. The traditional religion sees initiation as a rebirth into a new life. John's gospel says, "Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The experience of a rebirth, especially for the adult, is a dreaded thing. It involves giving up of the past mechanisms and beginning to relearn a new way of living and perceiving life. Salvation has been seen also as a death and a resurrection. The African traditional religion ritualizes this idea by the offering of a cock, a goat or a bull. In the Christian faith, identification with the life and death of Jesus Christ, leads to a new being (Romans 6:3f; Colossians 2:12f). Perl seems to be expressing a similar idea in stressing the necessity of the experience of the "impasse" layer, "implosive" layer and finally the "explosive" layer which in therapy finally results in the release of unused

potential.⁵ The practice of religion and therapy indicates that God's salvation to human beings is best mediated by human beings, preferably persons who are most aware of the facts of existential estrangement and who have experienced the reality of a death and resurrection into a new life (Hebrews 4:14f). Ideally, the bearer of salvation (the counselor) needs to be a member of the tribe or language group in which the work of therapy is conducted. The counselor's chief concern lies with the needy and disabled. Thus, when Jesus came to "his own," he spent most of his time with the sick, the poor, the outcasts and people needing to hear his word.

2. The Biblical Picture of the Church

The church, understood as the body of believers, is parallel to the African religious community in that its members have passed through some common religious rites.

The Old Testament people of the Hebrews who later became the children of Israel originated from a common family. Though they later became numerous and divided, they shared their common descent from the same patriarch and matriarch and the promise that through their house all the families of the earth would be blessed. When the larger house of Israel was incapacitated through becoming estranged from God, the responsibility for bearing the mission of Israel fell on the remnant (Isiah 6:13).

⁵J. Fagan and I.L. Shepherd (eds.) Gestalt Therapy Now (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 4-5.

The New Testament has several pictures of the church; the vine and its branches (John 15), a human body with different parts under one head (I Corinthians 12), a temple based on Jesus Christ as its foundation (Ephesians 2:20; Peter 2:4-8). In each picture, the emphasis is on the horizontal human brotherhood/sisterhood as well as on the vertical relationship of the individual and of the church to God in Jesus Christ. Since the spirit of the risen Lord plays a unifying role in the church, it is consistent with the African traditional view to call the church the "Christ clan."⁶ In the Christian clans, the members are commissioned first to propagate "agape-love," beginning among those that are under the divine ancestor Jesus Christ and spreading to the wider worlds of human relationship. The expression of agape love in acceptance and constructive confrontation is the gift for which Paul exhorts every Christian to strive (I Corinthians 13). The principle of love lays on the corporate church community, as well as the individual members, the responsibility to care for each other as persons. Pastoral care as well as counseling should be seen in the context of concern for the physical and mental health of each member of the church. The importance of the caring and

⁶Louis J. Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures (Techny, IL: Divine Word, 1970), pp. 166-7. Luzbetak suggests that "Christ clan" is more expressive of the meaning of the Church in cultures where the group is central. Study Encounter, SE/52, p. 14 - "In a primal world view the spirit of the common ancestor of the clan continues to govern the destiny of the tribe. Christ may be seen as the divine ancestor who continues to govern all members of his family" - "holding all things in unity" (Colossians 1:17), "the head that adds strength and holds the whole body together."

counseling responsibility of the church is emphasized if an emotionally disturbed person is understood as "unable to establish mutually need-satisfying relationships."⁷ It is through the ministry of care and counseling that the church can become aware and responsive to the individual and corporate needs of the people. The concern of the church should be focused on the emotional needs of the present as well as on future wholeness. The ministry of counseling and care seeks to make the unlimited benefits of the new life available for people in this life, despite the fact that the frustrations of existential estrangement are ever with us.

3. Qualifications of the Counselor of the "Christ Clan"

This writer favors the order of the priesthood of all believers (I Peter 2). Although the term pastor is used, it must be understood as a title conferred by the community upon some of its members, thus singling them out for special duties in the name of the community. The term elder may be used to bear the same meaning. Following the traditional model of the counseling, the persons delegated with the duty of counseling in the church could be male or female. However, if the rest of the church members have no task to carry out, the meaning of the priesthood of all believers is changed. The elder, or pastor, who is called upon to carry out special duties

⁷Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 45.

needs the personal support and assistance of the members. Both the elder and the church members have to realize that the task cannot be effectively carried out without mutual care and concern expressed in action. The use of the term pastoral counselor is not intended to mark off the counselor from the rest of the church members in a divisive way.

a. Personal qualifications. The pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus outline the personal characteristics of the pastor as follows: (1) The pastor must be "above reproach (I Timothy 3:7); (2) A person who is not a new convert (I Timothy 6:4-5); (3) A person who is "monogamous" and who manages his family well (I Timothy 3:5); (4) A person who is mentally whole and a teacher who works not under constraint, but willingly. The writer of the letters was addressing a culture where the system and the form of marriage was different. In Nigeria, the traditional person considers the polygamist as a person of higher class and, therefore, an elite who is a model to be emulated. Although some polygamists today often fail to reach the traditional standard of respectability, a polygamist is not necessarily a leader of inferior qualification.

The best counselor is a member of the clan, who has personally passed through the major initiation rites of the clan and who has been let into the very secret principles of the spirit governing the clan and its people. The counselor must be a baptized member of the church and aware of the fact of his/her salvation and justification in spite of himself/herself. She/he needs to be a "societary" person who

is aware of and shares in the existential strivings and frustrations of the social and cultural milieu. Thus, she/he not only is able to understand the language of socialization but is able to hear and understand the language of the sick souls of the culture. The counselor is essentially a human being who is fully "involved in the complexities of a vibrant, evolving organism—the universe."⁸ Being so involved in the joys, strivings and frustrations of his/her people, the counselor is not condemning but accepting.

The counselor as the mai duba, "the seer of old" (I Samuel 9:9) is a representative of God.⁹ Convinced that the task is God's, the counselor would approach it with trust in the power of God and with freedom from worry and over concern, remembering that the task is not "his private affair" but "the ministry of Christ."¹⁰ Like Jesus Christ, who bore the image of God in his person, the counselor is dependent on the leading of the Holy Spirit in whose power she/he operates.

Finally, the personal quality of the pastoral counselor is, in the fact, that she/he is the bearer of God's love to all humanity in and outside the clan of Christ. Kimper writes, clarifying the meaning

⁸ Frank Kimper, My Pastoral Identity as a Counselor (paper presented at the Pastoral Counseling Center, Claremont, Fall Semester, 1973/4), p. 1.

⁹ Wayne E. Oates, The Christian Pastor (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), p. 46f. Mai duba is the Hausa name for "seer" in a sense close to Samuel's days. Mai duba is a diviner prophet with clairvoyant power.

¹⁰ Carroll A. Wise, The Meaning of Pastoral Care (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 7.

of Christian love as seen in a therapeutic relationship:

One task in this is to clarify what "loving" means since, in our culture, it is confused with "agreeing with ideas," "approving behavior," "responding to an 'attractive personality,'" and even with "having sexual intercourse." Understanding loving as seeing a "neighbor" as precious simply because, and only because he is a human being orients "loving" toward satisfying the most elemental spiritual need of every person. This is true because (as I see it) every person has an innate sense of HIS OWN infinite worth, and so demands recognition and appreciation of his infinite worth on an absolutely unconditional basis. When this demand is met, he/she feels loved. When this demand is not met, he/she feels hurt (rejected), and reacts reflexively-spontaneously with fear or anger. Both these reflexive reactions serve to reaffirm HIS OWN priceless nature, and to energize his need to protect it by fleeing or fighting. And both seek either to eliminate the "enemy," or to coerce him to change his attitude. The way a person handles this hurt, and the way he chooses to handle the fear or anger associated with it, determines his life-style. Whatever life-style he may choose to adopt, however, the message is the same: "I'm precious, but you're not recognizing it; and I demand that you do." Only love will satisfy that demand—the neighbor's love and ultimately God's love.¹¹

b. Professional qualifications. The pastoral counselor is a person who has received professional training in the nature and development of human beings and who can distinguish between normal problems and pathological crises. The counselor is an authority figure, not only by reason of training, but one's standing in the society and the courage to speak one's mind. She/he is a person who is respected within as well as outside the community. The Nigerian generally prefers an authority figure due to age or social standing. A counselor then must not be too protective of that power or use it in

¹¹ Kimper, p. 1.

a repressive way. The pastor must be a person who listens to and responds to feelings.¹²

The counselor must be ready to deal with persons or lifestyles different from one's own, namely the poor, the social outcast and the uprooted. This means that the counselor needs to accept the traditional person as well as the elite, the urban or "moral" persons, dealing with each as a human being before God, being thereby also a shepherd to the non-Christian.¹³

The pastor, as the traditional clan or compound family head, is a representative of religious community to the other communities. This means that she/he represents and carried out the social and religious principles that govern the clan, not as a slave under the law, but as a free person who values persons above the law.

4. Limitations of the Pastoral Counselor

The responsibilities of an ordained minister in Nigeria are great because of the rapid development and growth of the church. Actual regular church attendance is often higher than the registered membership. This means that there are more people seeking shelter under the Christ clan than the clan elders can handle. Statistics of the TEKAS church growth from 1957-1967 have been presented by Smith.

¹² Clinebell, p. 83 and R.G. Nichols and L.A. Stevens, Are You Listening? (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), p. 36.

¹³ Oates, The Christian Pastor, p. 68.

It should be understood that statistics are not accurately kept by all the churches; some churches only give round numbers, while others never release their numbers at all. The number of places of worship in the TEKAS has increased in the period 1957-1967 from 1,275 to 4,000; attendance from 78,000 to 408,000, while the recorded membership rose from 17,000 to 76,000. The average yearly increase is about 53 percent.¹⁴

The following statistics of growth from 1972-73 may shed more light on the responsibility of the pastor. The pastor is usually placed over a local church. If we take for example the Plateau region which has only 62 ordained ministers serving 75 local churches in 1116 places of worship, we would find that the region needs 13 more ordained ministers. A pastor therefore is in charge of approximately 16 church congregations, and he relies heavily on the evangelists and the catechists. These figures show that the pastor cannot counsel effectively and carry out his administrative and other priestly duties. If the additional limitations of time, training, role, transference (in cases of long term counseling) and payment are considered, the pastor in the TEKAS Church is excluded from an effective counseling ministry.¹⁵

¹⁴ Edgar H. Smith, TEKAS: Fellowship of Churches (Jos, Nigeria: TEKAS Literature Committee, 1969), p. 60.

¹⁵ Clinebell, pp. 52-54.

5. Pastors or Elders as Counselors?

The churches of TEKAS have recognized the fact that the pastor is more of an administrator than the full time shepherd of the congregations. Even in the churches where the pastor is directly responsible, he enjoys the active participation of the elders and the catachists in running the church. The pastors at Shendam township congregation are one typical example. The counseling activities in the churches are carried out by the different elders as they are consulted by the people. These elders are without any training in counseling work on the model of the traditional compound families. Other congregations under the sole charge of evangelists and catachists are equally dependent on the assistance of the elders. Only insoluble problem cases reach the pastor.

An effective counseling program for the TEKAS churches would best serve the common people if some of the elders were trained to carry out the general caring ministry of the church in the form of individual and group counseling. The necessity for using the elders instead of the pastors is not intended to reduce the importance of the caring and counseling ministry; rather it would be to make the caring ministry available in an effective way to the common members.

A counseling ministry does not eliminate nor ignore church personnel. Rather it should serve the entire church from the minister to the ordinary member.

B. GENERAL GOALS OF THE MODEL

Pastoral counseling occurs when there is a real meeting of a counselor with another person in a moment of need. It is far more than giving counsel in the form of advice. Johnson understands it as a "relationship in which one person seeks to help another grow into self understanding" which results in his ability to take responsibility for a way of life fulfilling for him and his community.¹⁶ The pastor may be sought out by the emotionally troubled or he may come across them in the course of house to house visits. It is often not easy for the pastor to determine then and there what the goal of the encounter might be. The best that the pastor can do is to listen and facilitate the expression of emotion by responding to feelings. In cases where the pastor is sought out and the problem requires more than one session, the pastor must consider the goal for the counseling. Freud and the ego analysts believe that the expert therapist, who knows what is wrong and what is required, should decide on what the goal should be. The psychoanalysts argue that the patient's disorder prevents him from making sound judgments. The Nigerian traditional doctors usually decide the goal with the patient's relatives. The existentialist psychotherapists would let the patient decide what his expectations are from therapy. It seems that Sullivan's approach is more in conformity with that of the pastoral counselor than is the approach

¹⁶Paul E. Johnson, Person and Counselor (New York: Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 17.

of the other schools of psychotherapy. The goal is to be selected by both the therapist and the counselee.¹⁷ Although the pastor would want to know the expectations of the person who calls, the pastor must have some general goals that he would expect from a fruitful therapy. The general goals are guidelines for Therapy and are not necessary in every case. It may even be that the need perceived by the client is simply one of the many goals.

1. Freeing the Individual to Live a Whole Life

People who seek counseling may differ in the kind of problems and they may have different ways of coping with the problem. They all experience the difficulty of resolving an inner conflict that defeats the wholeness.¹⁸ Glasser sees the common experience of the emotionally troubled as "the need to love and be loved and the need to feel worthwhile" to themselves and to others.¹⁹ Even though the traditional Nigerian may view his problem as a result of social disharmony, attacks of spiritual forces or a punishment for his sins, the cry of the soul is for acceptance, for a sense of worth to self and others. The counselor needs to be aware that there may also be the need for food and adequate shelter at the base of the complaint brought

¹⁷ Donald H. Ford and Hugh B. Urban, Systems of Psychotherapy (New York: Wiley, 1963), pp. 663-664.

¹⁸ Johnson, p. 19.

¹⁹ William Glasser, Reality Therapy (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 9.

to him. Even though the client may be truly rejected by his clan, the pastoral counselor must also recognize the responsibility of the client in the problem that he carries. The pastor may be very accepting of the person but must not deny the client the opportunity to be aware of his own responsibility. The pastor's goal is the freedom of the individual to live a whole life. To do this, the pastor needs to lead the parishioner to be in touch with his feelings and verbalize them. The pastor would stress dealing with feelings as they appear in the present. In some Nigerian languages, the same word is used for "hear" and "feel," effort should be made to distinguish what is actually heard from what is felt.

The gaining of insight in the psychoanalytic sense has not often been emphasized in the traditional treatment. A person could be healed and still believe that evil spirits or witches were after him. While the pastor may not have to deny the existence of the extra-sensory communications, he may direct the client to take some responsibility for his own feelings. The person may need to begin to change his ways of thinking about himself and his own contribution to his problem.

In helping a person gain freedom, it is the accepting, non-judging and confrontive relationship that is important. Gaining initial freedom to open up may lead to greater inner freedom. Gaining inner freedom may require for some people the reowning of the parts of the psyche that were previously not accepted.²⁰ For the Nigerian to

²⁰Erving and Miriam Polster, Gestalt Therapy Integrated (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1973), p. 67.

gain insight into his own problem and accept responsibility for it, he might need the revolutionary approach of Ellis' rational emotive therapy.²¹ In line with the practice of traditional religious figures in the use of suggestion and word power, rational emotive therapy may be useful in combination with the pastor's other skills.

2. Improving Interpersonal Relationships

The individual, whether he is a traditional person in the country village or an educated city person still lives his life in some sort of a community, where he stands dangerously exposed. He has to face and relate to the community and assert his individuality within the context of the community. Improvement of interpersonal relationship is a major goal because very often the root of emotional problems are generated from the clan or family communities. Therapy on an individual one-to-one relationship will continue to be practiced with or without the presence of the significant persons or relatives. It should be remembered that sometimes it is the community that is sick and not only the individual who asks for help. The pastoral therapy should strive to include those closely related to the identified patient in the counseling process.

The improvement of interpersonal relationship is necessary because it is easier for a Nigerian to be reconciled with the community than for him to sever relationship with his clan or family.

²¹ Albert Ellis, Humanistic Psychotherapy (New York: Julian Press, 1973), p. 10.

A person has, therefore, to develop affection and concern for the good of the members of the family, relatives and the society. Needing to understand and be understood necessitates some learning of communication techniques.

Where reconciliation with the clan, family or the significant persons is not possible therapy may need to emphasize building up the ego strength and the aggressiveness of the person by assertiveness training so he might be able to face the community.

3. Creating a Caring Community

The concept of the church as a holy priesthood, the body of Christ with different members, each working for the good of all under the same head, makes the caring ministry of the church a model for counseling. Healing gained through one-to-one or group counseling relationships involves helping "people handle their problems of living more adequately and grow towards fulfilling their potentialities."²² Personal healing which comes as a result of the removal of "inner blocks" would for the Nigerian also have a contagious effect. It would mean not only contributing to the harmony of the family but also to harmony in the society. A church counseling program would therefore not be seen as an end, but as a vital means to a more comprehensive ministry.

²²Clinebell, p. 20.

A person who is made whole through the counseling relationship not only gains inner freedom by getting in touch with his feelings and taking responsibility for them; the whole person is free to relate well and take some responsibility in helping others become responsible, that is, personal and social responsibility. There comes a time when the Gestalt prayer is answered, and a person experiences the grace of the Holy Spirit. A person then comes to a "commitment of faith to live in active loyalty to Jesus Christ." It is now that an individual member has responsible freedom.²³ The fruits of the Spirit are manifested in the character of the whole person now, not by phony acts, but from genuine intention which was become part of the working of the new nature.²⁴ The whole person does not consider the responsible freedom to be without pain or exertion but finds meaning and fulfillment in it.

Through one-to-one or group counseling, the church members become aware of and share the responsibility of caring for each other, the church community and the wider community.

4. Improving Relationships with God

In Nigeria today, many are confused about the right philosophy of life. Those who are not firmly rooted in Christianity or Islam are

²³L. Harold DeWolf, Responsible Freedom (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 68.

²⁴Galatians 5:22, "But the fruits of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control against such there is no law."

not certain of their relationship to God because the claims of the traditional world view have been stripped of mystery and authority or proved untrue by the changes due to western civilization. There is therefore uncertainty in deciding which faith and philosophy of life is best for one's life. Many are willing to settle for anything that brings temporary relief, and because they are vacillating in their habits the danger of combining value-conflicting life styles is high.

Deep down, there is an unconscious desire for harmony with oneself, with one's neighbor and with the spiritual world. The counselor needs to realize that for many, such as people with chronic diseases, the aged, the bereaved, relief will not come in the form of a return to the original state of things. They need support to be able to cope.

Tillich sees the theological element as the basis for the healing of especially acute illnesses which produce psychosomatic irregularities in the form of illness which compulsively restricts man's potentialities. These illnesses concern the existential structures and are universal in character. They are anxiety, guilt and emptiness. Tillich claims that even the most refined technique cannot heal the existential structures. Here the pastor as a concerned person, a friend, a parent, a child, can be instrumental in therapeutic healing. Healing of the existential structure requires the healing of the center of the personality.²⁵

²⁵ Paul Tillich, "Psychoanalysis, Existentialism and Theology," Pastoral Psychology, IX:87 (October 1958), 14ff.

The first need is the right relationship with God. The influx of new members into the churches in Nigeria over the past 20 years is clear evidence of the need in people to be in harmony with their God.

Clinebell points out four basic spiritual needs:

- (1) The need for a meaningful philosophy of life and a challenging object of self investment.
- (2) The need for a sense of the numinous and transcendent.
- (3) The need for a deep experience of trustful relatedness to God, other people and nature.
- (4) The need to fulfill the 'image of God' within oneself by developing one's truest humanity through creativity, awareness and inward freedom.²⁶

The Christian counselor by virtue of experience and participation in the "new being" in Christ is primarily mediator between God and human beings; he acts on the pattern of Jesus. Depth psychology has helped Christian thinking in the points outlined by Tillich.

- a. The psychoanalysts' discovery of the depth of the psyche has added new understanding of the scriptures.
- b. Sin is viewed not as sins, but as universal estrangement, separation from one's essential being.
- c. The rediscovery of the demonic structures that affect human consciousness and decision leads to a greater insight into the extent and limitation of human responsibility.
- d. The meaning of salvation by grace is made clear. The acceptance of the patient by the analyst is parallel to the Christian experience of forgiveness. It is not the righteous that are called but sinners.²⁷

²⁶Clinebell, p. 251.

²⁷Tillich, "Psychoanalysis . . . ," p. 14ff.

In Nigeria and the developing nations where the living standard is low and where poverty and diseases are common, height psychology also has a contribution to Christian thinking. The discovery of a purpose beyond the world of poverty, disease and death of loved ones changes the meaning of life and makes life worth the struggle in spite of its harshness.²⁸ The emphasis on spiritual forces, good and evil, influencing the life of the Nigerian may account for the fact that the people have survived despite their low standard of existence. To the Nigerian, the vertical dimension, namely the restoration of the relationship with God, must be an indispensable goal for therapy. Nowadays people need to do more than merely struggle to exist; they must search for other variations of meaningful purposes for living in addition to the traditional ones.

5. Reconciling Relationship with the Environment

A person who is in harmony with himself, his interpersonal relationships within the family, the church and in the spiritual relationship with God would care for the environment in which he lives. The environment is understood here in two senses.

a. The social environment relates to the wider concern of the village in its political life, namely, the welfare of the members of the entire community. The freedom gained through the counseling

²⁸ Robert C. Leslie, Jesus and Logotherapy (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965); pp. 17-18.

ministry would lead to working to develop more freedom in the lives of the people.

b. Physical environment continues the basic aim of humanity to multiply and subdue the earth. A person that has resolved inner conflicts would be concerned about his living standard in the area of housing and sanitation. In the developing countries, he would be concerned with agriculture for the production of balanced and satisfying food. The danger of carrying the command to multiply and subdue the earth to its logical conclusion still remains and in some areas it may mean that there should be a critical re-evaluation of the way the mission is being carried out.

C. THE INDIGENIZED MODEL

Social, cultural and religious change has led Nigerians to live double lives. Innovations are adopted in cumulative fashion, with the individual retaining the best and easiest forms of the old and as much of the new as his means permit. It is therefore difficult to determine exactly what the future of the traditional ways will be; presumably they will continue to be expressed in new forms. One may guess that the experience of change has irrevocably altered life styles and habits. The model for pastoral counseling and care needs to be flexible to meet the needs of the rural and urban people with their varying social classes. This model is eclectic, incorporating forms of the traditional approach to healing, recreating some forms of the traditional social structures in the church and using western psychotherapeutic insights and approaches as seems useful.

1. Relationship Oriented

The key word for this model is relationship. The model follows Sullivan's understanding of therapy, its process and goal, as primarily dealing with relationship.²⁹ In Nigerian society, disease results from the disruption of intimate relationships in the clan, giving rise to witch activities and accusations. Disease comes when there is spiritual disharmony between the living and the dead, God, the deities or the free floating spirits. The moral factor in disease stems from the failure of the individual to honor the rules and taboo that govern relationships. Viewed from the individual's personal life, the traditional view among the Hausa and Ngas is that the sick person is responsible for becoming ill by consciously getting tense and not letting go of the self and trusting. A sick person is not in control of his world; that is, he is primarily not in right relationship with himself. The person who suffers from emotional problems is alienated from the self, the community or the spiritual powers that give support in life. If any of the damaged triune relationships are not repaired, therapy would be considered incomplete. Salvation may best be considered in terms of reconciliation.

It is important that counseling and care be based on a firm relationship between the counselor and the counselee, firm in the sense that it is "deepened and intensified" for the duration of the

²⁹ Harry Stack Sullivan, The Psychiatric Interview (New York: Norton, 1954), p. 3.

caring and counseling relationship.³⁰ The relationships developed by the pastoral counselor should differ from those of other counselors in that for the pastor, people are persons whose worth remains high, and the relationship does not die with the termination of the counseling. Relationships in counseling are not intended to limit the counselor or the counselee. For the counselee, an accepting relationship increases a sense of trust in the pastor and therefore freedom to open up. For the counselor, the relationship does not mean that he ceases to confront the counselee's unrealistic view of life.

2. Emphasis on the Indigenized Model

The emphases of the indigenized model aim at helping the Nigerian with the traditional world view, that is, not to deny the existence of the spirit world or the belief that extra-sensory hostilities may affect health, but to help him face those beliefs and take constructive action to free himself. The traditional Nigerian believes that disease is caused by wicked people who conspire with the spirit world or by the deities acting on behalf of God. The Nigerian therefore responds to the harsh reality of existence in certain characteristic ways, as Lambo mentions in the "Characteristic Features of the Psychology of the Nigerian." "In his normal and abnormal psychology, the Nigerian tends to project his feelings. His social upbringing makes him identify easily. Belief in the effect of

³⁰ Carroll A. Wise, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), p. 44.

magic and the spirit world makes fear and anxiety a common malady. Any extraordinary events during stressful times tend to heighten this fear and anxiety. Lambo writes that, "the exaggerated state of mind" may lead to death, if not treated.³¹ Fear of the unknown, evil machinations of neighbors leads to suspicion. The Nigerian carries shame and guilt for moral and social failure. The prevalent poverty and low standard of living create in many a sense of irresistible inferiority. There is therefore, almost neurotic clinging to relatives and tribal and religious identity as a source of esteem.

Based on the psychology of the Nigerian, the following points will be prominent in the model. Some of the techniques of the western psychotherapeutic schools will be adopted. It should be noted that only a few of the techniques are entirely new to the Nigerian society.

a. Dealing with attitudes and patterns of thinking. Because attitudes toward disease are largely based on incomplete information, it is important to educate people about other sources of disease and misfortune. The traditional persons those uprooted in the cities, who have little or no education, may be suffering from this lack of information. The counselor must watch against taking over responsibility from the client. The first thing is to "discover" what facts, concepts and values are needed, then communicate the facts directly, and help the client take responsibility in using the information in decision

³¹T. Adeoye Lambo, "Characteristic Features of the Psychology of the Nigerian," West African Medical Journal, IX (June 1960), 101f.

making.³² Educative input may work best through growth group modes in which the people are able to fully discuss new ideas and their implications.

People need to be led to discover the power of the mind to transcend the social and environmental limitations in this existence, by the exercise of their freedom. They need to look for meaningful tasks to fill up the existential vacuum. There may be the need to break the self-propagating cycle of unproductive life by the use of some technique of "paradoxical intention."³³ A study of Ellis' rational emotive therapy in a group setting may help persons change their thinking. Instead of feeling upset by others, they can learn that they allow themselves to be upset. Ellis' theory helps people understand the fuller meaning of Christian grace by ceasing to esteem or disesteem themselves on the basis of their performance.³⁴

b. Leading individuals to face reality. Leading people in the here and now to acquire socially acceptable need-satisfying knowledge by the use of reality therapy and the use of praise, token reinforcement used by the behavior therapists, needs to be associated with action by both the therapist and the client. While therapy is going on, plans should be made and acted upon with the aim of shaping the future.

³²Clinebell, p. 191.

³³Leslie, p. 49, 95-96.

³⁴Ellis, p. 15.

c. Resolving inner conflicts. This may be seen as resolving the conflicts between the "head" and the "gut." The ambivalence in a person is described by Freud as the inhibition based on "powerful internal forces" acting against the desire of the instinct.³⁵ The resulting conflict may be seen as the disharmony within an individual psyche, that is, the lack of integration of the principles held in the "head" and the urges of the "gut."³⁶ The resolution of such conflicts has often been done in the practice of addressing the feared object. Gestalt dialogue directed by a therapist helps a person to find out where his true desires lie. The counselor may need to affirm the positive side or help the client maximize the use of "positive personality resources."³⁷ The use of the behaviorists' method of praise and token reinforcement may be used in combination with other techniques.

d. Reclaiming the unused power. The ordinary traditional Nigerian needs to know that some of the power believed to be possessed only by the witches and gifted people, namely, word power and extrasensory communication, may be latent in each person and can be awakened. Getting in touch with one's feelings of fear, suspicion and anxiety and claiming responsibility for one's actions and feelings will help one to know oneself. Unused power may be reclaimed by the use of psycho-

³⁵ Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo (New York: Norton, 1950), p. 29.

³⁶ See Pages 50-51.

³⁷ Clinebell, p. 27.

synthesis exercises to strengthen a person's will³⁸ and through training persons to be assertive. The behaviorists claim that what a person does influences who he is and his feelings about himself.

Attention could sometimes be focused on the elimination of the undesirable behavior, on freeing the self to act, in ways that increase a sense of self-worth and respect, and on taking action towards the fulfillment of one's desires. Fensterheim and Baer recommend that assertiveness training be done in association with others and not in isolation.³⁹ Group interaction may help bring hidden power to the surface.

e. Maintaining a harmonious relationship with God and the spirit world. It is important for the counselor to check with the counselee about any unresolved guilt or shame that may be causing anxiety. The relationship with God covers the relationship with fellow human beings. Counseling should focus on conflict points. In dealing with guilt, five steps may be followed within a context of acceptance:

1. Confrontation of the reasons for guilt would be in place, although here care needs to be taken with people who already feel condemned and whose sense of guilt or shame is high. Such persons may need to be helped to verbalize how they see themselves.

³⁸Roberto Assagioli, Psychosynthesis (New York: Viking Press, 1973), p. 101ff.

³⁹Herbert Fensterheim and Jean Baer, Don't Say Yes When You Want to Say No (McKay: 1975), p. 6, 14. See also pp. 252-258, for assertiveness training in groups.

2. In cases where guilt was not felt in the first place, confrontation may result in the taking of responsibility and confession.

3. Forgiveness could then be extended to the repenting person.

4. Atonement should be made in every case by some act or gift rendered to the wronged person. Where the wrong is victimless, the person needs to carry out benevolent deeds that would be satisfying to his own ego and add to his sense of worth.⁴⁰

5. The final stage is reconciliation. Reconciliation should be dramatized or acted out with some joyful ritual which restores the forgiven to fellowship.

f. Treatment of the environment. Emphasis should be laid on the treatment of the environment of the counselee if the roots of the problem may lie with members of the clan or family. Where possible, effort should be made to include the significant people with the counselee in therapy.

The counseling and care program could provide for a one-to-one relationship for people who desire it. However, the traditional form of two or three working together would prove helpful once the relationship is achieved. To follow the traditional pattern, one of the

⁴⁰Mairafi, the reputed diviner medicine man of Bauchi, charges fees on the rate set up by the client. The client is asked to demonstrate appreciation for help received by giving gifts to some poor helpless beggars. The sense of being able to help the less fortunate may do much for the ego.

counselors must be male or female when two counselors work together. On the other hand, the preference of the client may be considered.

3. The Indigenous Healing Procedure

As outlined in the pages 91ff, treatment takes the following steps. The model should follow a similar order.

a. Prayer. Prayer should be understood in the broadest sense of the word as the "soul's sincere desire uttered or unexpressed." A person who seeks help from the pastor has definite expectations. During the first interview, the problem as the client sees it should be discussed, and the goal decided jointly by pastor and client. The goal must be within the reach of both the counselor and the counselee. If the pastor considers it helpful, he may pray with the client, but he should emphasize that prayer without action would achieve nothing.

b. Divination. This is the stage of inquiry into the physical and spiritual cause of the problem. Since the pastor may have no knowledge of the traditional art of divination, through indepth listening and perception of the facial expressions and verbalization of the patient, the pastor gets the picture of the problem. The counselor needs to keep the complicated diagnostic interpretations to himself, informing the patient as briefly as possible. The Nigerian may not be used to long interviews, and if it is necessary to have many sessions, this should be made clear at the beginning. In the stage of divination the techniques taken from the western psychotherapeutic schools are utilized. Divination would then have a different meaning from the

traditional, that is, the counselor leading the emotionally disturbed to see himself in his predicament and to find within his potential resources the best ways to deal with the problem. Where the problem is beyond resolution from the latent potential in the client's psyche, the counselor would guide the client to the divine resources, for example, to claim divine salvation in prayer. Sessions should include some exercises, and homework exercises are recommended. It may be that the client may see his problems in the traditional spirit world and express his problem in terms of witch a-tack. The pastor need not seek to change that world view; at that point he should take that "obsession seriously instead of reviling it as pathological nonsense."⁴¹ The pastor has to work from where the patient is to help him face himself and the witch.

The use by the minister of spiritual resources is important in therapy with the Nigerian because of the belief in witches and evil spirits as the causes of diseases. The ministers of the missionary churches have often failed to utilize the powerful spiritual resources of the Christian faith and have often openly dismissed explanations of diseases in terms of witch and evil spirit attacks as false. The troubled person has often heard the denial of witch activities as a defense mechanism on the part of the minister?

Witch accusation by a spiritually depressed person may have some element of transference and projection of hostility in it; however

⁴¹C.G. Jung, Psychology and Religion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 24.

to understand the problem of the Nigerian one has to see witchcraft accusations more as insecurity problems than transference or projections.⁴² Tillich's idea of existential estrangement may help illuminate the spiritual nature of the problem. The viewing of disease as an aspect of existential estrangement seems to point to two facts about illness.

The first is pathological anxiety, which Tillich describes as a "state of existential anxiety."⁴³ The person who is a neurotic is one whose problem lies in the avoidance of "non-being by avoiding being."⁴⁴ The sick person is not affirming his full potential but only a small section of himself. This person may be seen as disowning some of his natural and spiritual power, or not claiming responsibility for those problems which his physical and spiritual constitution was designed to handle. The Hausa seem to be aware of this when they say of the sick person, bai sake ba, "he has not let go," meaning that he is holding on too firmly to some area of his world. The Ngas express the same idea by saying, bot shikka, "he has not let his body go." Although the traditional Nigerian would also explain milder problems in terms of witch attack, it should be understood that the fear of

⁴² Jean Masamba, "Psychotherapeutic Dynamics in African Bewitched Patients: Toward a Multidimensional Therapy in Social Psychiatry." (Unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, June 1972), p. 244. Masamba and Mbiti understand witch accusation as basically an insecurity problem.

⁴³ Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 64ff.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

witches is the popular way of expressing the existential anxiety that threatens one's being. The treatment would involve the healing of the spirit, with the ultimate goal of helping the person claim responsibility for his own feelings as well as continuing to trust the powerful Holy Spirit that is within him. In pathological anxiety the individual has more power within his natural resources to help alter his predicament than he has over the existential anxiety.

The second fact is that existential anxiety must always be experienced as a result of fallen human nature which is similar to Tillich's existential estrangement. Existential anxiety is also present in neurotic anxiety, and it accompanies serious diseases as an aspect over which the individual has not much control. The intensification of the feeling of existential anxiety betrays the degree to which the being of the individual is threatened by non-being. When the disease persists against every treatment effort a Nigerian believes that the spirits are involved. The sick person has images of spirits attacking his spirit; to him the attacking spirits are indisputably real, and the disease is only a visible evidence of the wars that go on within himself.

The minister need not interrupt the imagery by the introduction of a new concept of the causes of disease. Torrey recommends communication which includes "a shared language" and also a "shared world view."⁴⁵ The response of the minister in a different world view or

⁴⁵E. Fuller Torrey, The Mind Game (New York: Emerson Hall, 1972), p. 13.

language which ignores the patient's world view would leave the patient feeling misunderstood. The image of the spirits may go away only to come back again. The minister should seek to enter the world of the patient, accept the image of the attacking spirit and together with the patient stay with it and fight the witch. Torrey emphasizes the naming process as the "most important component of all forms of psychotherapy." Speaking the language which the patient understands, which in this case means using the same imagery that the patient uses, proves to the patient that someone understands.⁴⁶ Once the problem is expressed in terms of witches or evil spirits, the spiritual enemy can best be defeated by another more powerful spirit.

Once illness is understood as an aspect of existential anxiety, the treatment recommended is not only medical but spiritual. The realization of the interrelationship between the pathological and the wider existential anxiety in each instance of disease has led to the combination of physical and spiritual treatment of illnesses by the traditional healers.

In the cases where the fear of the witches or evil spirits is clearly manifest, this model recommends a combination of medical and spiritual treatment. In hospital situations the medical people may need to sanctify their medicine before administering it to the patients. The minister should use the following procedure.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

i. Discovering the areas of breach with his spiritual world.

What the sick person needs in the spiritual realm is to face himself, his predicament within the context of his society and the spiritual forces. The person may accuse neighbors of bewitching him. The minister does not need to enter into arguments about what evidence the person has that he believes those people to be responsible for the witchcraft. Rather attention should be focused on two things, the patient's perception of his spiritual predicament and what the patient has done in his social and spiritual world that now makes him vulnerable to spiritual and social attack. The patient needs to examine his relationship with his ancestors if they are a strong part of his world view and his relationship with God. If there has been a breach in his social and religious relationships, these relationships would need to be rectified; there may be confession and penitence, forgiveness, restitution and reconciliation.

ii. Reconciliation and association with a more powerful spirit.

The minister of the gospel is the best fitted person to direct the reconciliation and association. First he is the priest of the supreme ancestor, Jesus Christ. Secondly the Holy Spirit who proceeds directly from God is with him. Thirdly Jesus and the apostles used the approach of direct confrontation of the evil spirits in possessed persons. In cases of spirit possession the minister may address the spirit in the name of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The place of the deported evil spirit must be filled by the Holy Spirit. The minister and the church could arrange a special ceremony to mark the indwelling of the Spirit

of Christ. In simple accusations and fear of the spirits, the minister, in a suggestive way, may seek to bring assurance of the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit with the sick person. Appropriate verses may be quoted, for example Matthew 28:18; Acts 1:8f; Psalm 23:27. The purpose here is to help the sick get into the image of and identify with the crucified and the risen Christ. This process would be the transfer of trust from the defeated self to the victorious Christ. As he trusts Jesus Christ, he allows him to take over the fight against the witches and the evil spirits. The sick person now gains a new or renewed identity, which may be symbolized by the wearing of a specially sanctified cross. The person may need to get into the habit of prayer and guided daily Bible reading of passages which are reassuring to the soul. This process may take much time and patience.

iii. Acting out of the new spiritual association. Having been helped to identify with the person of Jesus Christ the person now lives convinced of the continuous presence of the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit with him. He now can face the evil spirits and the witches. Through a chair dialogue with the feared spirits, the person may act out a new being in dealing with his inner and outer world. He can deal with his resentments, hostilities and grudges against the society. In his everyday life outside therapy he should be encouraged to live out his new identity.

iv. Release of inner power. After the new being is fully incorporated in the psyche of the person, he will continue to find new life in Christ and the inner power. This is the stage when the person is helped to deal, in his everyday life, with his acceptance or resistance of emotions like love, anger, shame, guilt, fear, resentment and other instinctive desires. The effort here should be to help the person accept all these emotions as coming from God and to express them in the fulfillment of his new nature.

v. Growth of the new image. The new image is expected to grow towards maturity with time. It is not a static life but a growth toward a balanced Christian faith. The individual can grow to accept a wider world concept. The Nigerian may not completely grow out of the belief in the spirit infested world since he lives in a culture where the belief is an everyday language. Spiritual growth in the new being means the weakening of the effect of the concept of the traditional world view. To be healed from bewitchment is not so much to stop believing in witchcraft but it is finding a source of greater spiritual security that makes the power of the witch ineffective.

c. Prescription of medicinal remedy. The pastor needs to work in conjunction with hospital services. The doctor then can take over the administration of the medical treatment while the pastor takes care of the person's emotional welfare through regular visitation. In the Nigerian situation, the rural pastor may need to stock some common drugs like aspirin. Some knowledge of the constituents of a balanced

diet should be acquired. In the case of children particularly, malnutrition may be the cause of some diseases.

d. Sacrifices. Sacrifices of chickens and goats are still meaningful to many Nigerians. It remains a very powerful rite with substitutionary and propitiary effect for the people who offer them. The Christian Church looks to the death of Christ as their sacrifice. Some ritual is needed to revive the effect of sacrifices in treatment. A blood sacrifice that looks back to Christ is highly recommended to aid the faith of the mentally troubled. Counseling fees or some act of appreciation may be required, perhaps a donation to the church of money or labor for a special project.

e. Dieting. Concern for the physical body may still be required in areas where people do not eat well or where the knowledge of a balanced diet is lacking.

f. Ritual of discharge. At the end of a successful therapy period, the group or the individual client need to enact a ritual in which the Holy Spirit is represented as continuing with the counselee. The close friends or relatives may need to be there to receive the counselee.

g. The setting for counseling. The setting for pastoral counseling could be at the home of the counselee. The pastor or elder counselor would have to reach out to the people with the purpose of demonstrating interest and care, since in the poorer communities the people do not easily seek pastoral help unless they are desperate. The pastoral

counselor need not be afraid of invading the privacy of the people, since Nigerians value friendly visits as a sign of interest and concern. Counseling could take place as the pastor takes part in socializing with the elders under the tree or in the zaure (reception room).

The pastor's office or some rooms at the church should be set aside for counseling. To raise the expectation and strengthen confidence of the clients, the room should be provided with appropriate symbols, drawings or carvings of symbols of the faith.⁴⁷ For the Nigerian, the cross with Jesus crucified will be appropriate to represent the permanent sacrifice of God for his people. A picture of the resurrection may represent the victory of the Christian life. The circle is a popular symbol, and a circular building may be used for counseling rooms. Candles may be used to represent the Holy Spirit. Seeds and eggs represent potential life; the mortar and pestle represent cohesion. Where people are literate, some suggestive Bible texts may be written on the wall.

D. THE CONTEXT OF COUNSELING AND CARE

The Christian church is a collection of persons who have acknowledged their need of a savior and who see the church community as a place of refuge. Need for the church is often forgotten when

⁴⁷ Torrey, p. 136. Symbols like the horn, animal skull, sprinkled blood, gourds have been used to decorate the traditional healer's sacred rooms. The two-edged knife, fire and kolanuts are also powerful symbols.

Christians start looking down on outsiders with pity, as though the church has ceased to realize that its members too need pity and concern. The church in Nigeria needs to be aware of the mental and emotional unease that change has brought about. It needs to realize that it is the halfway house needed by the uprooted persons who cannot cope with life. The TEKAS Church and the other missionary Christian Churches in Nigeria need to learn from the native Christian churches that the Christian church needs to incorporate as much that is traditional and familiar as possible in a pattern of socialization and structure to make its members feel at home. The church then can be simultaneously "catholic and local, universal and vernacular." It should be a "place to feel at home."⁴⁸ It is part of the aim of this model to suggest that there should be built-in factors in the church structure and life that aid adaptability, patterned after the traditional social structure with initiation practices which mark entry into the different development stages of life. It is hoped that the church would retain some of the psychological rebound phenomenon that characterized the clan and family community setup. This church would be similar to the traditional clan and family life in her effort to make every member participate and feel needed.

⁴⁸F.B. Welbourn and B.A. Ogot, A Place to Feel at Home (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 132ff.

1. Groups

The community orientation of societies in rural and urban Nigeria makes the group the most effective context in which education, counseling and discussion takes place. Small group therapy enables persons to grow individually and contributes to the growth of others. Group work is necessary, when the problems of shortage of church personnel is considered.

a. Caring communities. The church in the rural TEXAS fellowship is growing so rapidly in attendance and membership that they are ceasing to be warm and personal. A member in the church finds difficulty in feeling at home and needed in a church of more than 200 members.⁴⁹ The pastor and a few elders usually bear the responsibility and have definite duties in the church. If there is a church choir, then a few talented members may sing. The bigger the churches grow, the more professional the churches get. The few who have outstanding talents are overworked. The mass whose gifts are not so obvious may not have the opportunity to put their talents to use.

A church or an organization whose number has grown beyond a hundred (the number of a workable clan) finds that its members do not know each other and that most decisions are made by the few committees. Driver, in a chapter titled "Effective Participation in Small Group

⁴⁹ The number of registered members is usually smaller than the attendance recorded in the Nigerian churches.

Discussion and Role Playing," points out that the majority of members in organizations and churches leave all the effective participation to the leaders. Many never participate in "free discussion" with the possible exception of the brief period of preparation for membership.⁵⁰

It is not expected that every member of the church must participate in making the final decisions in a church with over 200 members and 400 attendance at worship. Important as the corporate church worship is, it does not fulfill every spiritual need of the members. A large size church may enjoy greater emotional security if the memberships are formed into "caring clan" groups, consisting of 50 to 70 persons each. In the urban set up they would not need to live in the same locality, but would have the responsibility of caring for the welfare of each member of their group. New persons arriving in the church could be referred to one of the caring clan groups, where he would receive personal attention in the name of the church. Caring clan groups would have elders in the person of more mature men and women of the group. These elders, who may not be the same as the elders of the general church, would be the pastors of their clan groups.

In the rural areas where the church members live in their clan or compound family groupings, the church may need to encourage the clans and families to continue as supportive and caring communities. These clans or compound families would be already supplied with their heads and elders who are looked up to for guidance and counseling.

⁵⁰ Helen I. Driver, Counseling and Learning Through Small-Group Discussion (Madison, WI: Monona Publications, 1970), p. 79.

The communities may be encouraged to be more caring. However, caring communities that are based on the traditional clan or family relations may have some weakness. First, as the clan and families are centers of support, care and love so they are also centers of intense jealousies, strife and emotional disease which often lead to witchcraft accusations. Where the traditional clans and families are allowed to continue as caring communities they have to be injected with fresh blood from outside in the person of elders and members of other caring communities. The presence of "outsiders," in a clan or family decision making and problem solving counseling sessions, may help to provide cohesive growth and objective confrontations that may be needed to get a stagnating community moving into positive action. Secondly, caring communities based on clan and family relationship may sometimes have the tendency of excluding lonely and detached church members who might not feel free to participate in a clan or family in which all others are related except themselves.

The advantage of the caring clan group is that individual members without prominent talents will have the chance to discover and exercise their gifts. Efforts should be made by each person in the clan to discover what gifts he has. Pastor Baumann's four point approach could be used:

- (a) All Christians are gifted. (I Cor. 12:7, Eph. 4:7) Which gift do I have?
- (b) The Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes gifts. (I Cor. 12:7, 11, Eph. 4:7)
- (c) Gifts are to be used for the benefit of the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:12ff)
- (d) Am I Using Mine?⁵¹

⁵¹J.D. Baumann, "A Minister's Work Sheet—What is my Gift?" (Whittier Area Baptist Fellowship, 1975).

The purpose of the effort is to discover professional, spiritual, and natural gifts and use them constructively in such a way that a mutual sense of worth between the individual and the community is achieved.

b. Smaller groups. Smaller groups can be created by providing general "educational programs" for the church.⁵² The lack of scientific information and ignorance that plague the traditional mentality makes education an indispensable part of an effective church ministry. Small groups would be like the growth group described by Clinebell:⁵³

(1) Their prime purpose would be the growth of the members "emotionally, interpersonally, intellectually and spiritually."

(2) The growth would first be facilitated by a trained leader and gradually by each member of the group.

(3) The aim is growth with emphasis on stimulating the unused potential in the "here and now" instead of dwelling in the past or future.

(4) The membership should be composed of persons who are in touch with their feelings and reality, seeking to make healthy people whole. The number could be from 6-12 persons.

(5) Group counseling deals with personal feelings and informational input.

⁵²Robert C. Leslie, Sharing Groups in the Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 3.

⁵³Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., The People Dynamic (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 3.

(6) The experience gained from the group is to be used in every day living.

(7) Change in both attitudes and feelings and in behavior in interpersonal relationships is the goal.

Small groups in the church should combine emotional growth and attitudinal change. They should be places where "intimate sharing of the burdens, of the joys and the consequence of Christian behavior" are shared.⁵⁴

To aid the understanding of the functioning human personality in growth groups, cognitive aids like the Jahori window may be used to clarify the understanding and appreciation of sharing feelings and feedback of observations.⁵⁵

	Known To Self	Unknown To Self
Known to Others	A	B
Unknown to Others	C	D

⁵⁴ Thomas R. Bennett, "Project Laity: Groups and Social Action," in John L. Casteel, The Creative Role of Interpersonal Groups in the Church Today (New York: Association Press, 1968), p. 69.

⁵⁵ Irvin D. Yalom, The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 350.

c. Groups in the church. A church could have training groups for special projects. To begin with a group could be started with the purpose of training church members in group leadership. The following groups could be formed as the need arises in the church.

~~1.~~ Growth groups based on interests or common concerns dealing with some problems of the society. Marriage enrichment groups for healthy marriages to explore deeper relations. Intergenerational groups could be formed using the T.A. (PAC) methods, prayer therapy, Bible study groups, sermon discussion groups, business people's groups could also be formed to help people deal with their problems in Christian living.

Groups are needed for the church personnel as well. The pastor and the elders need a group with which to share their achievements, joys and frustrations in the church and personal life.

2. Therapy group. An open ended counseling group may be needed for those people passing through periods of stress, as well as for persons with drinking (alcohol) problems.

3. Healing groups. The prime aim of this group is outreach to the needy, the sick and disturbed who may need spiritual healing, as exercised by the apostles (James 5:14ff), and still practiced by the native Christian churches. This group would work in conjunction with the counselors of the church and may refer troubled persons for one-to-one or group therapy. The healing group represents the presence of the larger church to the sick at home or the hospital and needs to maintain a link with the sick person by constant visit to the home, prison or mental hospitals. The church healing group with its care may

be important in the healing of the person alienated from society because of mental illness. It must be remembered that however far removed a person may be from reality, it is the feeling and assurance of love and care of "people not the things or theories" that cure the mentally sick.⁵⁶ This group would be responsible for seeing that patients discharged from hospital, prison and other institutions are received by the church community and helped to readapt to normal life.⁵⁷

For all kinds of church groups, there are some essential elements for their effective working. First is the golden formula for growth: $\text{Caring} + \text{Confrontation} = \text{Growth}$.⁵⁸ Confidentiality is an indispensable characteristic of any functioning group.

2. Preventive Counseling

Preventive counseling is based on the simple, but important principle of rigakafi ya fi yin magani, the Hausa saying, "prevention is better than cure." Although the major ministry of the church, after her Lord, is the proclamation of release to the captives and oppressed, it need not wait for misfortune to overtake the people before acting (Luke 4:18-19). The contributions of Freud, Erickson and the various schools of developmental psychologists have alerted us to

⁵⁶ Frank L. Wright, Out of Sight, Out of Mind (Philadelphia: National Mental Health Foundation, 1947), p. 17.

⁵⁷ Charles W. Stewart, "Training Church Laymen as Community Mental Health Workers," in Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Community Mental Health (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 194.

⁵⁸ Clinebell, The People Dynamics, p. 8.

the normative crises that characterize the different stages of the life cycle. Preventive counseling is aimed at preparing people to deal successfully with the stresses that are an inevitable part of our existence.

a. Childhood. Childhood in the Nigerian family is usually in the context of the community. Members of the community show their care and concern for the children, although the atmosphere sometimes reinforces the sense of inferiority, and the feeling of smallness of the child before the adults. The child finds freedom in the children's group, because the child is not too free to verbalize feelings or ask informational questions from the adult. Another problem of childhood is malnutrition, often resulting in weakness that makes recovery from illness difficult.

The significant persons in the lives of the children, namely the immediate father and mother, the baby-nurse and the related neighbor, need to be aware of the early needs of the developmental stage of the child's life.⁵⁹ With the families becoming smaller, the introduction of nationwide free primary education and the growing industrialization, the psychological experience of the Nigerian childhood may be closer to that of Erikson's stages of development than it previously was.⁶⁰ A knowledge of Erikson's stages in the caring

⁵⁹ Howard J. and Charlotte Clinebell, Crisis and Growth: Helping Your Troubled Child (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 16ff.

⁶⁰ "New Programs for the Nation," New Nigerian (October 3, 1974), p. 12. As from 1976 there will be free primary education for all children.

for the child. (1) Infancy. Erickson's stage of basic trust and mistrust. Parents may be encouraged to continue breastfeeding instead of using the milk bottle, which is often not kept sanitary. The sense of touch derived from being carried on the back is of importance to the satisfaction of the child's "stimulus-hunger."⁶¹

(2) Early childhood - 15 to 20 months. In this is the stage of autonomy vs. shame and doubt, the parents need to be "firmly reassuring" and combine love with their discipline.⁶² Toilet training needs a lot of freedom and may best be done by the baby-nurse.⁶³ (3) Play-age (2 1/2-6 years). During the stage of initiative and guilt, communication between the adults in the community and the child is very important. The child needs to be listened to and encouraged in the search for knowledge about the world while the super-ego is forming. The parents need to show their children that they are persons with "human faults" and not gods.⁶³ The parents need to know that there may be a problem of fixation with the parent or the authority figure of the opposite sex and possible hostility against the parent of the same sex, resulting in Freud's oedipal complex. The child needs to be free to deal with hostility in play with toys. (4) School age. Six years to puberty is the age of

⁶¹Eric Berne, Games People Play (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 13.

⁶²Clinebell & Clinebell, p. 27.

⁶³Thomas Gordon, Parent Effectiveness Training (New York: Wyden, 1972), p. 13.

industry and inferiority. Parents' interest in the achievement of their child at school or at play need not be rigid. Reinforcement of the positive sides with praise and small tokens may be appropriate instead of bribing the child into doing as the parents wish. This is the period of latency when most of the child's energy is put to physical and mental growth leading to; (5) Adolescence. In the stage of the identity formation or identity diffusion, the physically developed teenager is asking the question, "Who am I? What am I worth? What can I do that is important?"⁶⁴ The search for an ideology of life is important. This grown up child seeks inner and outer independence from the parents. The young person vacillates from demanding independence to seeking dependence. Baruch recommends parental firmness.⁶⁵ Since this is the stage of rebellion, the church may need to show special and tolerant interest in the young people and not write them off as bad or as trouble makers.

b. Initiation and adolescence. The various traditional societies have different initiation practices. However, they all seem to agree in the general purpose, that is, introducing the young people into adulthood, seeking to impress on the initiates the facts of their sex, clan and religious identity. The initiation rites in some areas sanction guided rebellion and aggression. The practice is not a family

⁶⁴ Clinebell & Clinebell, p. 30.

⁶⁵ Dorothy W. Baruch, How to Live with Your Teen-Ager (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953).

ritual but a corporate clan/community act. Initiations are characterized by periods of segregation of the initiates from the society and their reintegration as new persons, adults. Christian churches also have initiations before members are baptized or confirmed into the church. The catechism classes always end with a pass or fail test, giving people the impression of having achieved Christianity. After the acts of the confirmation or baptism are hurriedly completed, the initiate sees Christianity not as the beginning of a new process but as a new status which has been achieved. The church may pattern its initiation to membership on some forms of the traditional practice. The catechumen classes could be run as growth groups in which the initiates not only learn the doctrine but try to get into the experience of the new life by exploring and sharing at feeling level. The initiates may also be informed about the traditional and the western concepts of the psyche. In conjunction with the study of passages like Romans 7, the development of id, ego and super-ego may be discussed. The dynamics of the conscious, pre-conscious and the unconscious regions of human personality may be discussed, Keith Miller in his book, "The Becomers," discusses the Christian life in the light of the findings of the Freudian psychologists in the area of the human mind.⁶⁶ The catechumen could be taught the concept and workings of the human mind and behavior as seen by the transactional analysts.

⁶⁶ Keith Miller, The Becomers (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1973), p. 63 and see p. 88 for diagram of the human mind.

Transactional Analysis (T.A.)

The implicit theology in the understanding of human nature, according to TA, may seem to see human beings as beginning with minds that are tabula rasa. As human beings come into contact with their environment and the society, they are formed by the sociological cultural religious environment that they find themselves in. This outlook tends to leave human beings under the sole influence of

- a) the parents and the significant figures of one's environment, and
- b) the child who reacts to these happenings in the way it naively understands every reality.

At this stage, it looks as if a particular human being could be moulded into any kind of personality, but an adult does develop with the capacity to modify and control the parent and the child parts of the personality. Transactional Analysis seems to lay much stress on the act of decision of the individual. Theologically it sees salvation resulting from personal decision and work. In the healthy person, the adult stands as the supreme director of the different ego manifestations. An adult-controlled personality looks at life and the world as both a realist and an idealist, subject to situations the child, parent or adult ego states are allowed to manifest.

The religious life of the adult controlled person appreciates the experiential part of religious life. The person has religion with joy and happiness that is humanly childlike; it also appreciates the authority of the law as giving direction and some order to life and society—this seems to be the parent aspect in religious life. He also appreciates the part of reason in religion: the adult is most

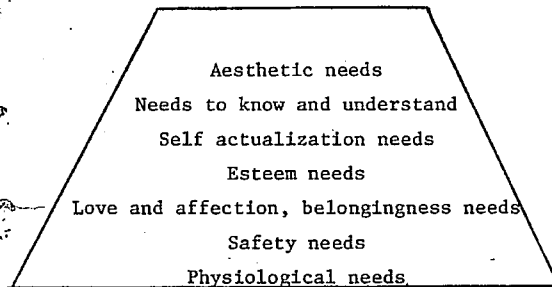
active in regulating the experiences of joy and happiness and subjects respect and blind obedience to law and order to changing situations. "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1.

Theologically, the TA description of a human in triplicate ego states parallels the trinitarian understanding of Godhead as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, but all these are one. Seeing God this way emphasizes the ONENESS. TA would see God as having the three ego states. One's ultimate reality in life, if it is genuine, has to be viewed from the viewpoints of the three ego states. Salvation history could be studied in terms of the developing awareness of the nature of God.⁶⁷ (1) God as the parent law giver; God as worshipped from that perspective involves the child fearing more than loving; (2) the Christian religion stresses the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31f, Acts 2), and (3) the guidance of the individual by the Holy Spirit who calls people to freedom (Galatians 5:13). The application of TA methods to church groups will help lessen the number of people who leave the church, when on their own they find that they became Christians for childlike or parental expectations. When these expectations are not forthcoming, they give up or start playing dishonest games. TA would be an ideal tool of the Christian community working in the following areas: with children, adolescents, young adults, parents, adult groups and intergenerational groups.

⁶⁷ Musa Gotom, "Transactional Analysis and its Application to Church and Community Development," term paper presented to H.J. Clinebell for course No. AM 340, Fall Semester, 1973-74, p. 15.

The PAC methods, used with Gestalt dialoguing, would be of help with people who have come under the threat of witches and spirits and even the fear of wicked people in the society.

The study and discussion of Maslow's hierarchy of needs would help clarify the relation of spiritual and material values of the people.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs⁶⁸

The end of the group life of the initiates could be marked by a retreat with some elders from the church. Their reception through confirmation or baptism would be marked by rejoicing. Their new identity would be considered begun, and their education into the meaning and depth of Christian experience would continue. This initiation into church membership would consist of persons of a wide age group. Young people who have grown up in the church will be encouraged to join the class for the initiates with the hope that they might experience the Christian identity. Membership into the church is

⁶⁸ Miller, p. 94.

not only the initiation into adulthood in the traditional sense, but also initiation into a new identity.

c. Adulthood and the aging. As children in the church reach their teens, they may be educated about sex and reproduction, Christian marriage and the family. Different marriage customs may be discussed in groups, thus giving the young people a world view of marriage with some understanding of the responsibility involved. Problems of child-rearing and relationships between the traditional customs and western influence could be dealt with in groups.

Intergenerational groups will be useful to help bring some understanding between the persons of different ages. Problems like aging could be studied in growth group contexts and hopefully more could be discovered about this stage of the life cycle.

Studies and discussions on the reality of cultural and social changes are important for the adult and elderly persons.

d. Death and mourning. The dying person also needs the concern and support of the Christian members. Usually the blood relatives and close friends would be nearby during the deterioration of the dying person. They, as well as the dying person, need courage to face and accept the fact of death.

The pastor needs to be aware of the struggles of the dying patient as outlined by Kübler-Ross:⁶⁹ (1) Denial and isolation. Even

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Kübler-Ross, On Death and Dying (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 38f.

though death is accepted as a commonplace phenomena in Nigeria, the reaction of the individual to his inevitable death as the dread of facing the unknown alone continues to be a threatening experience.

(2) Anger. "There may be the question, Why me?"⁷⁰ (3) Bargaining. Some seriously sick people bargain with God that if they are allowed to survive the sickness, they will change their lives by showing good behavior in return.⁷¹ (4) Depression. Kübler-Ross says that the sick person should not be given false reassurance, but permitted to face the reality.⁷² The fact that death makes life unpredictable makes the acceptance of the possible death come more easily with some Nigerians. The writer has witnessed many cases in which the sick persons become despondent and give up the struggle, perhaps too early. They cease to fight for life. It may be a-proprate to reassure the seriously ill if the pastor considers that the biological illness is not that serious. Lack of advanced medical facilities makes it difficult to determine whether some illnesses are terminal or not. The pastor may seek to help the patient continue the struggle for survival by pointing out how much he is needed. He may use the height psychology of Viktor Frankl to help the patient see some meaning worth living for. (5) Acceptance. This may come just prior to death. In the Nigerian traditional society, the elderly tend to accept their own

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 50f.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 83.

⁷²Ibid., p. 57.

deaths more easily. In old age, most of their age set that gave meaning to their social lives would have died. The attitude of the aged toward death is that of gratitude, not "Why me?," but "Why not me too?"

The actual funeral service led by the pastor could be at the church or the burying ground. This part of it may be brief as there would usually be a lot of crying, and perhaps wailing.

People would come and go as is common in the traditional mourning. It might be best for the pastor to allow the traditional pattern to continue, with the experienced women playing the central role in facilitating the grief work.⁷³ The bereaved persons need to be made to verbalize their feelings of grief to persons who are accepting, understanding and supportive in a relationship of freedom and responsibility. The pastor and the elders need to cooperate with the women and perhaps encourage them by reading appropriate texts from the scripture at intervals. Mourners would be allowed to do their grief work but should be reminded that death is not the last word in the Christian, Islamic or traditional faiths.

Lindemann has observed certain traits in the character and experience of the closest relatives of the bereaved which can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Indication of marked physical distress.
- (2) Symptoms of acute grief and complaint that things seem unreal.

⁷³See page 127ff.

- (3) Feeling of guilt for failure to do what one should have done.
- (4) Feeling irritable, hostile or cold toward others.
- (5) Sense of loss of patterns of conduct.
- (6) Appearance of traits of the deceased in the behavior of the

bereaved.⁷⁴

Wise further outlines some "symptoms of morbid grief reactions which are summarized as follows:⁷⁵

- (1) A person may suffer delayed reaction, or as Westberg puts it, a state of "temporary anesthesia."⁷⁶
- (2) There may be a morbid grief reaction characterized by distortion in a person's way of acting.
- (3) The distorted reaction may lead to physical illness.
- (4) There may be alterations in a person's relationship with friends and relatives.
- (5) Repression of strong feelings of hostility may be accompanied by schizophrenic characteristics.
- (6) There may be a loss of the pattern of living in the social relationships.

The pastor should discuss the above points with the grief facilitators.

⁷⁴Wise, Pastoral Counseling, p. 206f.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 208f.

⁷⁶Granger E. Westberg, Good Grief (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 11.

After the first mourning, there may be a small support group for the family of the bereaved facilitated by the pastor and the experienced elders of the church. The purpose of this would be to help complete what grief there may be and to help the bereaved plan out how to live without the deceased. The church would need to assign some elders who are close to the bereaved with the responsibility of care and support and keeping up to date with their welfare.

Grief lasts long and the practice of second mourning for the dead needs to be retained by the church.

3. Hira—Jesus Model

Hira is the Hausa word which describes a kind of leisurely socializing. Hira takes place when one friend has a visit with another with no other motive than the need to be with the friend. It is characterized by the lack of an agenda. Hira takes place in the daytime or night time when people are having a chat under no pressure of time limit. It may take place after the evening meal when the day's work is over. The subject of the conversation is spontaneous and could run from comments about the state of the weather to very personal matters. Continuous hira with a person or persons leads to a growing interpersonal relationship. The initiator of hira is the person who visits, and he visits because of the interest that he has for the other person, or for the worth that the other person has for him.

Hira typifies the ministry of Christ among the humanity. He first loved and made the first move (John 3:16). He "emptied himself"

and was found in "human form" (Philippians 2:4f). He came to speak and to listen. The ministry of Jesus was characterized by his interest in persons as persons, which meant vulnerability and the possibility of being accepted or rejected.

The foundation of the caring ministry is in pastoral visitation. It means visiting the people of the church not because of an agenda needing to be fulfilled, but because of genuine interest in persons for their own sake. It is in visits that the elders, pastors, counselors and church members may show to the lonely, the socially alienated, the uprooted and those humiliated by poverty, that it is good to be human. A visit to a Nigerian home is not readily interpreted as an invasion of privacy, but as a recognition of the fact that the host is a worthy person.

Pastoral counseling and care may be understood as helping persons resolve emotional conflicts. It may also be understood as establishing and maintaining relationships. A hira, understood as counseling, consists of listening to the other person and sharing oneself with the person in the act of conversation.

a. With the poor and lower class persons. Some of the people in the church locality need to be sought after and found like the lost sheep. The poor and those of lower social class have been accustomed to handling their problems in various ways that may be considered abnormal or maladaptive. They know nothing but maladapted existence. The pastor or elder who may come from a higher class has to be in touch with his human nature and relate to the poor person on the level

of common humanity. It may mean that the counselor may need to get into the world of the poor and social outcast to be able to relate. He should be ready for hesitation and resistance.⁷⁷ The pastoral counselor would find that in the process of hira, "listening, reflecting feelings and interpretation may prove more effective than the techniques of psychotherapy based on 'insight' and 'self-awareness.'⁷⁸ Ignorance may mean that the need of the poor is not so much the resolving of inner conflict, but the right information and advice, support and encouragement. Hira may be a means of knowing people of other tribes or persons outside the church.

b. With the urban elite. The tendency in some areas has been to ignore visiting the elite because their need may not be great. The pastor or elder who has not received much education may feel inferior. The pastor and elder must remember that they are ministers of God and that the rich and people in authority are humans with spiritual needs that are common to all human beings.

c. Benefit to the pastor. Hira could be of therapeutic value to the pastors in that it allows them to relax and be themselves. It allows them to play and forget about the time and the agendas. It allows them to play pasttime games like the Ludo, dice and cards.

⁷⁷ Charles F. Kemp, Pastoral Care With the Poor (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 65.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 68; and Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, p. 152.

Hira is important for the pastors and the elders, because it provides the opportunity to meet people in their natural environment. Hira also builds a firm foundation for growing relationships.

4. Marriage and Family Counseling

Although there is some trend towards marriage without the consent of the families or clans of the couple, the general concept of a marriage is unchanged. Marriage is still understood as a unity of two clans or families. The support or lack of cooperation by either side of the families or clans contracting the marriage still has a force that may make or destroy marriages. Marriage and family counseling may deal with only one member of the marriage couple, the couple together or the whole "nuclear" family, but it would be difficult to consider any forms of counseling without the involvement of the dynamics of the group that form the context of the disrupting experience.

Marriage and family counseling would deal primarily with the members of the troubled family. Following the community centered approach of the traditional marriage reconciliation, the counselor may find it necessary in complicated cases to include the relevant persons from the members of the husband's or the wife's family.

a. Preventive marriage counseling. Marriage problems differ but there are certain questions and problems which most marriages encounter. Preventive counseling in the forms of groups discussing marital interests would be useful.

i. Premarital counseling. Premarital counseling should deal primarily with the people who wish to marry. They need help in examining their interest in marrying. They need to check their motives, what they expect in marriage, what fears and anxieties they may have. Counseling communication may be facilitated by one or two elders; where there are two counselors, it is ideal to have one male and one female. The aim here would also be to break through the ice of shyness that often paralyzes communication between marriage partners in the traditional homes.

The second part of premarital counseling deals with the couple and their parents or significant persons from the two families. The aim here is to facilitate meaningful communication between the two families and build up good in-law relationships. The combined session would begin the "realignment of family loyalties" that Duvall points out. It may be pointed out to the group that the married couple would be a new family in its own right while also belonging to the two families.⁷⁹

The couple would be given information on marriage which could form a basis for discussion in the following sessions.

ii. Marriage renewal and reconciliation. The idea of the renewal of marriage vows comes from the East African churches. The Machakos Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church put forward the following

⁷⁹ E.M. Duvall and R. Hill, Being Married (New York: Association Press, 1960), p. 209.

aims for the renewal:

To start married life afresh according to the Catholic view on marriage.

To offer the married a chance to mend their ways, to repent infidelities to each other or neglect in bringing up their children.

To pledge loyalty and honesty to each other.

To bring back lapsed Catholics to the Sacrament.

To rectify illicit unions.

To offer baptism to one spouse who is still pagan.

To heal broken marriages.

To strengthen the bonds of family life.⁸⁰

In presenting the opportunity for renewal and reconciliation, the church is demonstrating its willingness to help marriages with problems. The Information Service of the National Pastoral Center, Accra, has prepared a special ceremony for renewal and reconciliation.⁸¹

iii. Marriage enrichment groups. The importance placed on children in the home often means that marriages are based on the children. Many couples live together in a state of "psychological divorce," because they have children and have not made any effort to improve their marriage.⁸² The purpose for the group is to make healthy marriages richer and prevent their deterioration. The marriage group facilitator would lead the couples to deal with the vital question, "What are we creating together in our marriage and family?"⁸³

⁸⁰ Marriage Renewal and Reconciliation (Bodiya, Ibadan, Nigeria: Pastoral Institute, 1974), pp. 10-11.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸² C.W. Steward, The Minister as Marriage Counselor (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961), p. 11.

⁸³ Howard J. and Charlotte Clinebell, The Intimate Marriage (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 65.

Couples might discuss the following questions:

- 1) List ten important things that you would expect from your husband/wife.
- 2) List ten important things you would give your husband/wife.
- 3) How many children do we want? What if there are no children?
- 4) How to raise children in a changing generation.
- 5) To whom do the children belong?⁸⁴
- 6) The traditional and Christian meaning and purpose of marriage.

Communication in marriage groups. Marriage groups could deal with the subject of communication in the family in theory and practice. Emphasis should be laid on the sending and decoding of verbal and non-verbal messages. The aim in healthy communication is to match the non-verbal to the verbal message. What is said should balance with how it is said.⁸⁵ Role plays in communication are appropriate. Couples need to stand aside and look at their dysfunctional conflicts and learn from them with the help of group observation and feedback. It would be evident that conflict may be positively functional for a group if it is faced.⁸⁶

⁸⁴The points for discussion are based on "Preparation for Christian Marriage" Information Service, National Pastoral Center, Accra, Ghana, Sheets 74/40-75/2.

⁸⁵Virginia Satir, Conjoint Family Therapy (Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, 1967), p. 78.

⁸⁶H.L. Raush, W.A. Barry, Communication Conflict and Marriage (San Francisco: Jossay-Bass, 1974), p. 31.

b. Marriage and family counseling.

1. Polygamous marriages. Marriage and family counseling in Nigeria must face the fact that some marriages are polygamous rather than monogamous. The missionary Christian church has looked on the polygamous marriages as living in sin or concubinage.⁸⁷ The polygamists have encountered only criticism from the churches. If the church is to extend the counseling ministry to the polygamist it will need to change its attitude and see the practice, not from a western but from an African point of view. Luzbetak writes:

. . . to understand polygamy, the missionary will have to view the practice not as he would a photograph of a polygamous trio, but rather as plural marriages are related to prestige, to friendship between families and tribes, to wealth, daily routine, comfort, animal husbandry, feuding, tribal loyalty ancestor worship and to all other associated aspects of life.⁸⁸

To be of help to the polygamist, the counselor has to see the form of marriage from the viewpoint of the traditional person. The counselor may need to study the customs and expectations that govern these homes. The counselors may find it easier to follow the directive procedure of the traditional elders. Listening and responding to feelings is important. The goal would be towards clarifying the role of the husband and the wives. Any changes from the traditional custom desired by any of the members of the family should be made known to the members of the house. Decision would be group centered.

⁸⁷ Ram Desai, Christianity in Africa (Denver: Swallow, 1962), p. 20.

⁸⁸ Luzbetak, p. 144.

Emphasis may be placed on facilitating communication between the wives and between the wife and husband. The counselor needs to watch where the power is, with the wives united against the husband or with one of the wives and the husband against the other wives. Jealousy is often the disease of the polygamous homes and may lead to dishonesty in communication.

ii. Monogamous marriages. Monogamous marriages may not have as much jealousy as the polygamous marriages because of their less complex structure. Counseling would be approached from a role relationship aimed at freeing each member of the marriage in relating. The counselor leads the man the woman to understand their contributions to the problem.⁸⁹ From this understanding, he leads each person to work on satisfying the needs of the other partner and to concentrate on changing himself and not the other person. Clinebell has outlined the goals as making the "relationship more mutually need-satisfying."⁹⁰ The approach of the behaviorist would be effective with a monogamous couple. Each spouse is helped to define appropriate goals, specifying the behavior that needs changing. The counselor then helps the couple contract on which behavior each wishes to change. The concern of the therapist is in initiating and maintaining the behaviors which result in marital happiness.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 101.

⁹¹ David Knox, Marriage Happiness (Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1971), p. 3.

For both forms of marriage, Satirs' conjoint family therapy may be effective since it focuses on bringing the whole family together. The pain of one member of the family is the pain afflicting the rest of the family; this affirms the traditional concept of the social basis of disease.⁹² The concept of conjoint family therapy may be expanded to include the extended relatives. In cases in which the children do not feel free to verbalize their complaints about the family situation, the counselor may need separate sessions with the children until they have regained sufficient freedom of expression.

The use of the transactional analysis (PAC) method may be helpful.

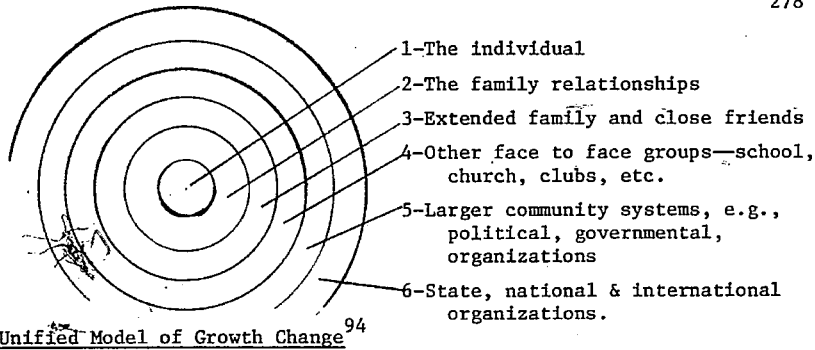
5. Counseling through Community Development

"To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new name."⁹³

A person who has attained wholeness becomes aware of the need to improve his social and physical environment. In social relations wholeness begins with the individual, spreading to family relationships to the extended relatives, to the church, clan, schools and social clubs, local and political relationships, and finally to the nation and international relationships, see diagram below.

⁹² Satir, p. 1.

⁹³ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 76.



Seifert and Clinebell have outlined five phases of change:

- (1) Motivation and preparation.
- (2) Analysis (or diagnosis) of the problem and exploration of alternative goals.
- (3) Formulation of strategy.
- (4) Action.
- (5) Evaluation, generalization and stabilization.⁹⁵

For a successful implementation of the five phases, the people, as change agents, need a mature way of reasoning relating to each other and the problem. Transactional analysis (PAC) methods may be used to liberate them to handle the social action and community development constructively.

Transactional Analysis (TA) may be used in liberating people for community development. The parent figures are, the elders, the educated, the leaders, the rulers, the rich, the husband, and at times,

⁹⁴Clinebell, The People's Dynamics, p. 148.

⁹⁵H. Seifert and H.J. Clinebell, Jr., Personal Growth and Social Change (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 83ff.

the wives. Most people live under the control of their parent and child ego states. In training in development, the PAC method urges each person to freely voice his innovative thinking and action by allowing his adult (which in most cases is repressed in favor of the authoritarian parent leaders) to speak his real feelings. It would be a way of liberating people to think and "name their environment," as Paulo Freire terms it.⁹⁶ A pastor can use PAC methods in consciousness raising discussions; a number of problem subjects could be discussed on an adult level. The freedom of the individual would be the freedom of the adult to reason freely and responsibly. Once a person learns that it is all right to question the parent's side and act according to his adult, there is a wide open door for creativity and personal growth leading to social change and therefore change of their environment. For the church in developing areas of the world, mental health is closely linked with the harsh fact of poverty. The church's saving mission includes, "participation in the on-going struggle for human liberation."⁹⁷

Community development would seek to deal with the problems of the uprooted and maladjusted, the unemployed, the "school leavers" and the lack of meaningful occupation for many housewives and widows, the elderly and the retired. There is a need for occupational

⁹⁶Freire, p. 79.

⁹⁷M. Darrol Bryant, A World Broken By Unshared Bread (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1970), p. 73.

centers such as domestic science, needlework, dressmaking and laundry, motor mechanics, modern farming and animal husbandry to help provide self-employment for people without jobs. In Lagos, domestic science and needlework centers are increasing to help train girls who may have no occupational skill before marriage.⁹⁸

6. Emergencies and Referral

Paul Tillich divides healing into (a) religious healing, (b) magic or psychic healing and (c) bodily or natural healing.⁹⁹ The three ways of healing overlap and the specialist in each field needs the others. The counselor may find that consultation with or referral to doctors is helpful if the disease is physical. In cases of mental illness, he may need to refer to the mental hospital. Referrals do not mean cutting off all relationships. The church's continued interest in the welfare of its referred persons may hasten their recovery. By whatever means healing comes, many Nigerians believe that God is the ultimate healer. The form of prayer-greetings commonly heard spoken to the sick is "Allah ya kawo sauki," Hausa, meaning, "God give you recovery."

The pastor or the elders may be called upon at any time because of unexpected personal crisis in the parish. Clinebell

⁹⁸ J.R. Sheffield, and V.P. Diejomah, Non-Formal Education in African Development (New York: African-American Institute, 1972), p. 16.

⁹⁹ Paul Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health," Pastoral Psychology, V:44 (May 1954), 4.

recommends three steps toward helping persons in crisis.

(A) Achieving a relationship. Allow the person to feel your warmth and concern. Ask him to relate how the misfortune happened from beginning to the end. Listen to his feelings and respond to them. Express willingness to help the person find a solution.

(B) Boil down the problem. Help him to analyze the problem and to discriminate that which he can change from what cannot be changed. Encourage him to find solutions and to decide and act on the most effective alternatives.

(C) Challenge him to act. Encourage him to plan how he will take action. Be sure to detect resistances and help him move beyond the resistance to confidence and immediate action. Keep in touch with him and his progress.¹⁰⁰

It may be advisable for the pastor to bring the incidents of crisis to the notice of some less busy persons who would also show concern and help.

¹⁰⁰ Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., "How to Help a Person in Crises, the ABC method."

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The indigenous model has been based on socio-cultural and theological presuppositions generally held by some tribal groups in Nigeria, namely the religious and social influences of the concept of disease. The procedures in treating disease have been considered within the context of social structure and socialization and the customs marking each step of the life cycle. The research has not ventured into the details of customs of any one tribe. It is hoped that pastors and elders serving a church in any language group would be members of that group and therefore would find no difficulty with the intricate customs, beliefs, expectations, and social values. However, if a pastor or an elder is serving in an area different from his own, he needs to make an effort to examine the goals and values that may be in that group. Luzbetak has outlined some useful guides to seeking an understanding of a different culture:

- (1) The self image of the society and whom the society considers to be "a good person;"
- (2) the violent resistance to certain innovations;
- (3) the native educational content and motivations, the constant lesson and warnings given to small children, the instructions given to youths during initiation rites;
- (4) arguments between tribesmen, quarrels between husband and wife;
- (5) the scolding reprimands, and praise given, especially to the young;
- (6) the factors that contribute to a feeling of security;
- (7) the factors that contribute to a preferred status;
- (8) the content and motivation contained in the arguments of native agitators;
- (9) the reasons for dissatisfaction and criticism;
- (10) the objects of violent hate and condemnation;
- (11) the assumptions, motivations and general line of reasoning observed in tribal meetings and court sessions;
- (12) the behavior which the more

severe sanctions aim to control; (13) the types of sanctions feared most; (14) the more serious worries; (15) the severest insult and the most painful type of ridicule; (16) chief aspirations; (17) occasions for war; (18) and motive for suicide.¹

A person who makes a habit of hira visitations will often pick up a lot of information about a people's cultural values and expectations.

A. IMPROVING THE MODEL

The society and culture are ever changing.² The theology changes too, as different problems arise and new answers are given. the proposed model of pastoral counseling and care is not expected to serve for all problems in every one of the language groups at all times. Rather it is a beginning of an inquiry. The model needs to be applied, evaluated with improvements made and then reapplied, re-evaluated and improved. Because there will always be change, this writer feels that there will never be a perfect model, although, the search for a better model will need to continue. The research procedure will be conducted as follows.

1. Tools for Research

(1) Language, Traditional sources, discovering, defining and examining of terms, proverbs, stories, folklore, legend, taboo,

¹Louis J. Luzbetak, The Church and Cultures (Techny, IL: Divine Word, 1970), p. 160.

²Ibid., p. 195.

customs, riddles, images and symbols of each language group;

(2) detailed documentation; (3) indigenous personnel who would gather information from their own language groups; (4) discussion groups, normally led by skilled and experienced indigenous people who through dialogue and problem solving discussion will obtain information on the ways of counseling that have been in practice; (5) educational and social institutions will be used for experimenting.

2. Fields of Research

There would need to be studies of anthropological factors that relate to counseling, including kinship, goals and meaning of life, roles and expectations of men and women, social structure, feasts and ceremonies, views of life, disease and death, and religious factors of the traditional religion, Islam, Christianity and others.

3. Research Procedures (a cyclical process)

- (1) History of traditional customs governing each stage of the life cycle.
- (2) Study of the present situation.
- (3) Reasons for the present situations.
- (4) Problems created, conflict areas identified.
- (5) Proposal for considerations for change of conflict areas, training of indigenous personnel.
- (6) Practice of counseling as experimental research for further counseling education.

- (7) Evaluation of the current practice and modifications and further proposals for practice.³

B. TRAINING OF COUNSELORS

For the ministry of counseling and care to be firmly established in the TEXAS churches, there needs to be training of a nucleus of people who would then help propagate the program. A counseling program at the theological colleges and the Bible schools will hopefully extend to the parishes. This may take a long time. Perhaps the most effective way of teaching counseling would be through church seminars, retreats and workshops with people who are currently in the church who will try out what they have learned in real life.

A group is the context of learning. This will be a group in which there is a teacher-student relationship other than "banking" education in which "the teacher talks and the students listen—meekly."⁴ Rather it is a dialogue in which the teacher and students in mutual trust struggle with the problems of their existence.⁵ Fromm emphasizes the importance of the teacher's faith in the potentialities of the student. He understands education to be identical with helping a person "realize his potentialities."⁶ This

³The above outline comes from joint studies between Dr. Sebastian K. Lutahoire and Musa D. Gotom, Spring, 1974.

⁴P. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 59.

⁵Ibid., p. 80.

⁶Erich Fromm, The Art of Loving (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), p. 124.

group would be a place where both the students and the teacher learn. Each person learns 1) about himself, 2) about the group, 3) about each member of the group, and 4) about the subject being discussed. The group would seek to help its members to be introspective and to scrutinize "personal resources."⁷

The six stages in the life of a group as outlined by Clinebell will be observed by the group members:

- 1) The state of "initial anxiety, testing and attempting at connecting." This stage is characterized by anxiety and defensiveness with each member sizing up the others. The group usually looks up to the leader to take complete control, so the leader needs to be careful not to fall into the trap of taking over the group. Exercises in here-and-now awareness and sharing of individual goals and expectations usually help reduce the initial anxiety.
- 2) The stage of "honeymoon." With the initial anxiety over, there is a feeling of "euphoria."
- 3) The stage of "frustration and questioning." This stage is marked by resistance to risk participation. Hostility may be directed against the leader who does not lead. The leader needs to take care not to take over control but to facilitate the expression of feelings of resentment openly.
- 4) The stage of "risking and trusting." Some members soon respond to the facilitation of the leader and begin risking.

⁷ Carl Goldberg, Encounter (New York: Science House, 1970), p. 29.

- 5) The stage of "effective growth work." Risking and trusting results in growth, which further encourages risking.
- 6) The stage of termination. There is usually the need to do some grief work for the end of the life of the group. Feelings need to be shared and evaluation and recommendation of future goals should be made.⁸ There may be a closing ritual, a retreat or some special event to mark the end.

The group may need some working psychotherapeutic theory. There could be a choice from any of the western psychotherapeutic schools. The theory and practice of the transactional analysts lends itself to immediate adoption, since

- 1) It does not brand any person as sick, but rather seeks to see the three PAC ego states in each person, including the leader;
- 2) It is easily translated into other languages. The analysis of the transaction does not require that a person be literate before understanding it.

⁸Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., The People Dynamic (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 31-34.

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