

AFRICAN INDEPENDENT PENTECOSTAL
CHURCH OF AFRICA AND ESCHATOLOGY

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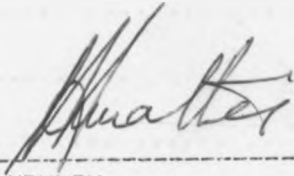
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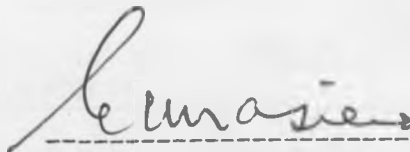
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ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	African Inland Church
AIM	African Inland Mission
AIPCA	African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa
AOC	African Orthodox Church
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSM	Church of Scotland Mission
Dan.	Daniel
DC	District Commissioner
EAA	East African Association
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes
En.	Enoch
GMS	Gospel Missionary Society
Heb.	Hebrews
Is.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Jn.	John
KAU	Kenya African Union
KCA	Kikuyu Central Association
KISA	Kikuyu Independent Schools Association
KKEA	Kikuyu Karinga Education Association
Lk.	Luke
Macc.	Maccabees
Mk.	Mark
Mt.	Matthew
NT	New Testament

(vii)

OT	Old Testament
Rev.	Revelation
RC	Roman Catholic
Tim.	Timothy
TTC	Teacher Training College
Thess.	Thessalonians

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ABSTRACT

Since Jesus ascended to his Father nearly twenty centuries ago, Christians have been waiting for his return. On his return, according to Christian belief, the eschatological end, the end of this world, will take place. The resurrection of the dead, the transformation of the living and the last judgement will also take place. The faithful people will be rewarded with eternal life in heaven and the wicked will face eternal punishment in hell.

The Christian message was brought to Africans by western missionaries. The message landed on people with different world views and beliefs. The members of the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) among the Kikuyu for example, shared the Kikuyu beliefs. The Kikuyu never thought that God (Ngai) would ever bring the world to an end. Such Christian ideas as the world coming to an end, last judgement, heaven and hell, have no counterparts in the Kikuyu religious beliefs.

Some AIPCA members still maintain the Kikuyu view, that, a person comes to the end of the world at his physical death. At the same time, in line with Christian belief, they look forward to the return of Jesus when the end of the world will take place.

The Kikuyu belief, that the spirits of the departed continue to participate in the affairs of their living relatives, has not been abandoned by some AIPCA members. During times of crises such as death, sickness or lack of children, ancestral spirits are often looked at as possible causes.

(x)

The belief about the coming end of the world is tied up with the notion of the Kingdom of God. In Jesus' teaching the Kingdom is both present and future. Some AIPCA members, by interpreting the Kingdom from a spatial point of view lay emphasis on the futuristic aspect. Furthermore, they interpret the symbols related to the Kingdom, such as country, new Jerusalem, and paradise, from a materialistic point of view. From such an interpretation, the life in the world to come becomes something found only in heaven which will be seen only after the return of Jesus. The present dimension of the Kingdom, whereby Christians have a foretaste of the life in the Kingdom, is thus overlooked.

The nearness of the return of Jesus is emphasized by the AIPCA members. In the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus mentioned some of the things that would be seen in the last days. This is taken as the proof text to show that we are living in the last days because some of the signs mentioned there (Mk 13) have already been seen. These include international wars, rise of various Christian sects each claiming to be the true one, and the increase of evil and immorality in society to name just a few. According to the AIPCA members, then, this is the end-time and Jesus is about to return, followed by the end of the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deep gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. S.G. Kibicho and Mr. E.M. Kasiera, both of the Department of Religious Studies in the University of Nairobi, for guidance and supervision during the course of this study.

Particular thanks go to the members of the African Independent Pentecostal Church in Muhoyas and Tetu locations for the information they gave during my field work. This study would not have materialized without their help. I also thank the staff of the University Library and the Kenya National Archives for their help in getting the books and documents I needed during the course of this study.

Finally, I thank Mr. Mbugua for drawing the maps used in this study, and Mrs. Mary Owiti for typing the thesis.

INTRODUCTION

(a) The Problem Stated:

This study is intended to find out how the members of the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa interpret the concept of eschatology; the Christian belief that the present world order will come to an end and a new and different world order will be established through divine intervention. The belief in a coming end of the world developed very slowly in the Jewish history and only towards the end of the Old Testament period in the second and first centuries B.C. did it attain some consistency.

The popular Jewish belief by the time of Jesus was that Yahweh would send the hoped-for Messiah who would re-establish the Davidic Kingdom. There was also the belief in the day of the Lord, when the end of the world would come, followed by the last judgement, and the rewards and punishment for the good and the bad respectively.

Jesus not only shared the Jewish beliefs but he went further than the Jewish prophets. He taught that the Kingdom which the Jewish people had long hoped and waited for had come and, therefore, the prophecies had been fulfilled. To the Jews, who expected a political Messiah to establish a political Kingdom of God on earth, Jesus' teaching made little sense.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, his followers began to realize that their master was the Messiah of whom the prophets had talked. The teaching of Jesus began to be understood in the light of that new understanding, that he was the Lord.

The early Church believed that its ascended Lord would return soon and that on his return, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgement, rewards and punishments would take place. As we shall see in the course of this study some of the believers raised questions of doubt regarding this Christian belief of eschatology, or the end of the world.

The teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God has occasioned an age-old debate among biblical scholars. The cause of the debate is the double nature of Jesus' teaching. Sometimes he spoke of the Kingdom as present among his hearers. At other times, he spoke of the Kingdom as yet to come.

This thesis aims at finding out: how the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) members understand and interpret the eschatological concepts in the New Testament and to what extent the Kikuyu beliefs about the after life have continued to influence the AIPCA members' interpretation of eschatology. Also to be considered is the question of possible influence of the Kikuyu view of the destiny of man on their interpretation of the Christian concept of the life in the world to come.

In the attempt to find out how the AIPCA members understand the concept of eschatology, this thesis will try to point out the theological issues related to their interpretation of the Gospel message.

(b) Location and Method of Study

For the purpose of this study, two locations in Nyeri District,

namely, Muhoya's and Tetu locations, were chosen. The reason for choosing this area was that the AIPCA is well established in this area, and some of the founder members of this Church are still alive and can be contacted. Kiriti AIPCA in Tetu location functions as a divinity school besides being the residence of the AIPCA Archbishop. Thus, much information about the Church can be got from this area.

Due to the limited time available for this study, not all the AIPCA Churches in the area were studied. Out of the eight AIPCA Churches, five of them were chosen. Kiriti was selected because it is the oldest, functions as a divinity school as well as the residence of the AIPCA Archbishop. A random sample of four Churches was then drawn from the remaining seven Churches. These are, Muthua-ini and Gatumbiro (in Tetu location), Kabage and Njogu-ini (in Muhoyas location)

For the theological part of the study, a sample of about a hundred informants (see appendix II), twenty from each of the five Churches, was selected. The time available could not allow all the members to be interviewed. In each Church, the priest in charge was chosen since it is he who mostly interprets the scriptures for the laity. The remaining nineteen were selected randomly in each Church so as to avoid choosing one category of people. The researcher contacted five members of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) whom he was informed knew the historical origins of AIPCA. This was done in order to avoid a one sided history from the AIPCA members

only. Two methods were mainly used during the research stage of this study. A questionnaire was used (see appendix 1) followed by free open discussions during the interviews. This method was chosen because the subject of this study deals with ideas and beliefs rather than bare facts. Hence, a person needs to be given a chance to express his views and beliefs. This method could also give the researcher a chance to explain to his interviewees the object of the study in order to remove any suspicions which might hinder the interviewees from giving required information. A tape recorder was used for collecting information during the interviews, which were conducted in Kikuyu.

The second method used was that of participant observation. During the fieldwork the researcher attended Church services of the AIPCA in the area of study. The services offered an opportunity to learn how biblical texts were interpreted to the congregation by the preachers. The researcher also attended some burial ceremonies of the AIPCA. Such ceremonies offered an opportunity to study what they say about their departed fellow Christian, which, in some way, is an expression of their belief of what becomes of a Christian after death.

(c) Literature review

Much has been written on the subject of eschatology. We need, however, mention only three schools of thought regarding the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God, since their views are relevant to this study. The first school is known as the school

of "Consistent eschatology". It is mainly associated with Johanness Weiss and Albert Schweitzer. In his book Jesus' proclamation about the Kingdom of God,¹ Weiss argued that Jesus taught of a Kingdom that was to come in the future on his return as the Son of Man. In his book, The Mystery of the Kingdom,² Schweitzer shared the view of Weiss. He concluded that Jesus taught of a future Kingdom yet to come. In other words, Jesus was not yet the Messiah and, therefore, the Kingdom had not yet come.

The second school of thought is associated mainly with C.H. Dodd. He was reacting against the views of the school of Consistent eschatology. In his book, The parables of the Kingdom,³ he argued that the Kingdom of God had come fully in the person and ministry of Jesus. He therefore emphasized the present dimension of the Kingdom, and his school is known as the school of "realized eschatology".

¹ J. Weiss, Jesus' proclamation about the Kingdom of God. Translated by R.H. Hiers and D.L. Holland (London : SCM, 1971).

² A. Schweitzer, The mystery of the Kingdom (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1956).

³ C.H. Dodd, The parables of the Kingdom, (London: SCM 1935).

The third school of thought tries to harmonize the extreme views of the first and second schools. For this school the two aspects of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom as a present and as a 'future' event cannot be overlooked. This school tries to find a solution to this tension of a present and a future Kingdom. A.M. Hunter for example, in his book, Introducing New Testament theology,⁴ prefers the term "inaugurated eschatology" to Dodd's "realized eschatology". By this, Hunter implies that the Kingdom has made a beginning in the coming of Jesus but its full consummation will be on the day of the return of Jesus. In his book The parables of Jesus,⁵ J. Jeremias argues that according to Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom, the Kingdom has dawned, although its full manifestation will be seen in the future.⁶

As far as the history of the AIPCA is concerned, very little has been written by its founders or followers. In a small book entitled, Kirya giatumire Independent igie, The Origins of the Independent Church, the Rev. D.M. Kiragu gives an account of how

⁴ A.M. Hunter, Introducing New Testament theology (London: SCM 1957).

⁵ J. Jeremias, The parables of Jesus (London: SCM, 1963).

⁶ Other works on the subject of eschatology will be cited in the footnotes.

⁷ M. Kiragu, Kirya giatumire independent igie, the origins of the independent Church. (Nairobi, n.d.).

the AIPCA began and, particularly the role he played in its expansion in Kikuyuland. This is the only work written by a member of this Church.

The members of this Church, do, however, recall the origins of their Church. Their oral information thus offers a primary source of information to the researcher. Other works have been written by historians and the AIPCA has been mentioned either in relation to the development of formal school education or to the nationalist movements in Kikuyuland. J. Anderson's book, The struggle for the school,⁸ deals at length with the independent school movements among the Kikuyu. The independent schools were linked to independent Churches. The AIPCA, for example, was linked to the Kikuyu Independent School Association (KISA). The book dwells, however, on the educational side of KISA and does not deal very much with the Church.

An article by J.B. Ndung'u "Gituamba and Kikuyu independency in Church and School",⁹ gives some information of the difficulties the AIPCA members were facing before they got their first ordained priests in 1936. The article dwells particularly on the founding of the first seminary at Gituamba.

⁸ J. Anderson, The struggle for the School, (Nairobi Longman, 1970).

⁹ J.B. Ndung'u, "Gituamba and Kikuyu independency in Church and School", in B.G. McIntosh. Ngano. (Nairobi East African Publishing House, 1969).

From a political point of view, the book written by C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, The Myth of Mau Mau,¹⁰ gives information of the conflicts between the Kikuyu Central Association (K.C.A.) the Colonial Government and missionaries in Kikuyuland. Out of the conflict emerged the independent schools and Churches. The work of F.D. Corfield, The origins and growth of Mau Mau¹¹, also gives some information on the participation of the AIPCA members in the nationalist movements. He sheds some light on the persecution of the independent schools and Churches during the Mau Mau revolt. F.B. Welbourn, in his book, East African Rebels¹², examines the arrival of missionary societies in East Africa and their evangelistic activities. He discusses the various reactions raised by Africans against missionary societies which led to the formation of independent Churches.

The sources mentioned above treat the AIPCA from a historical point of view. No theological work has so far been carried out on this Church. While the subject of this study is theological in nature, the scope of this study cannot allow a

¹⁰C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, The myth of Mau Mau (Nairobi, East Africa Publishing House, 1966).

¹¹F.D. Corfield, The origins and growth of Mau Mau, sessional paper No. 5 1959/60. (Nairobi: Government Printer 1960).

¹²F.B. Welbourn, East African rebels, (London: SCM, 1961).

full study of the theology of the AIPCA. In this study therefore, we limit ourselves to the theological concept of eschatology.

We may mention the work of J. Mbiti, New Testament eschatology in an African background.¹³ He carried out his research among the Akamba Christians of the Africa Inland Mission, with the aim of finding out how they responded to the Christian teaching of a coming end of the world. Among his findings, he found that Akamba Christians think of a futuristic Kingdom of God, where material rewards are kept for the good Christians while the wicked people will face in hell the physical punishment.

The work of Mbiti was on a Church which was established by missionaries and, therefore, with trained preachers. The AIPCA, as we shall see in this study, broke away mainly from the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) and Church Missionary Society (CMS) about twenty years after the establishment of missionary activities in Kikuyuland. The members of this Church have had little chance of being exposed to the various views on the interpretation of the concept of eschatology. Their divinity schools are not well equipped. Their interpretation of the gospel message has not therefore, been greatly influenced by scholarly views, especially from the Western world.¹⁴

(d) Organization of Chapters

Before we discuss how the AIPCA interpret the concept of eschatology we need to know who they are and how their Church came

¹³ J. Mbiti, New Testament eschatology in an African background. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

¹⁴ For Biblical references, the New English Bible will be used (except

into being. Chapters one and two deal with the historical background of the AIPCA. The social, political and religious circumstances in Kikuyuland in the 1920s which led to the formation of this Church are discussed.

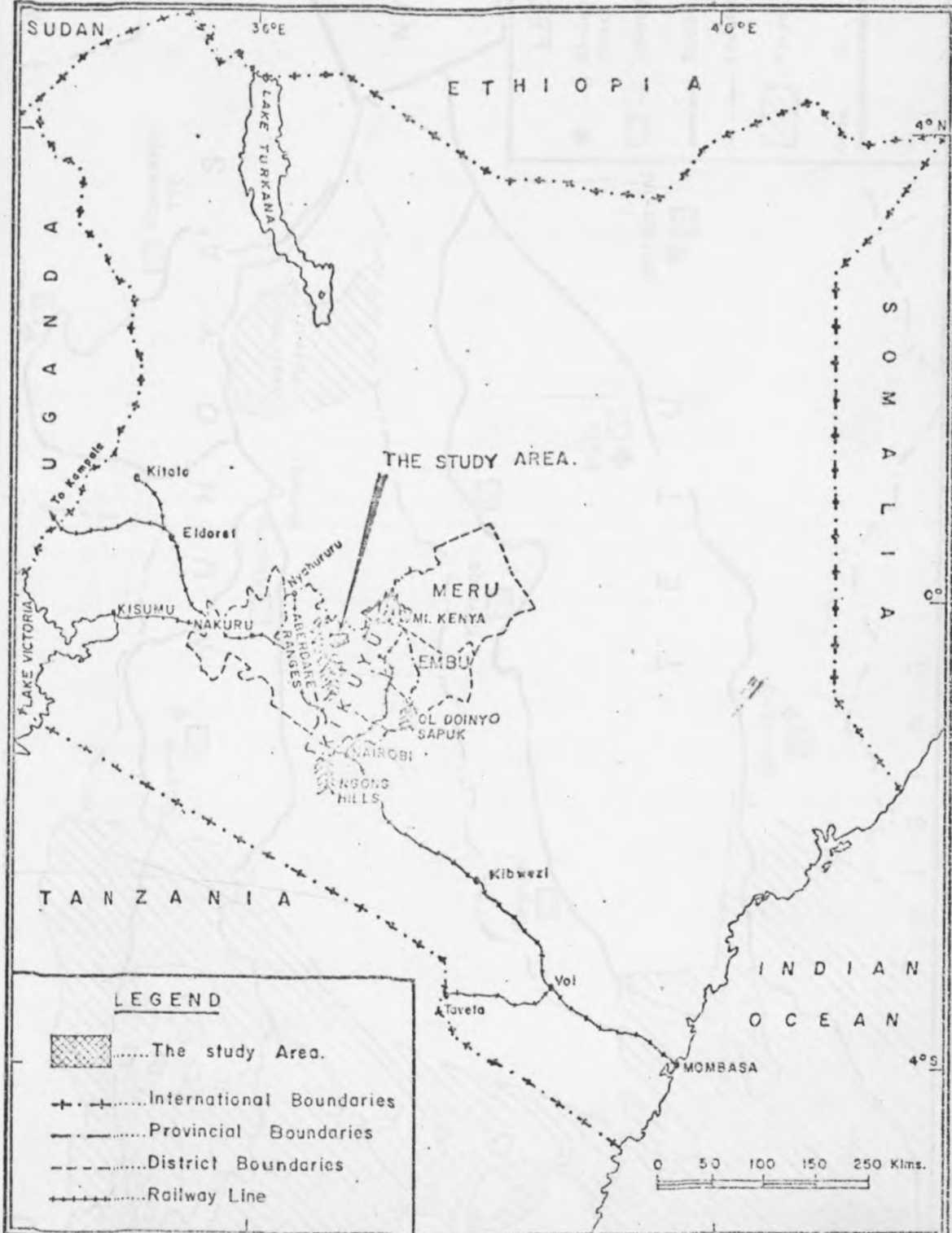
To understand the Christian belief of a coming end of the world, one needs to bear in mind how and under what circumstances this belief developed in the Old Testament. Chapter three begins by introducing the reader to the problem of defining the term eschatology. The development of eschatology in the Old Testament and the New Testament is then discussed, followed by a discussion on how the Kikuyu express the idea of the "end". The final section summarises the conclusions drawn from the Chapter.

The subject of eschatology is tied up with the question of the destiny of man. Chapter four deals with the belief in an afterlife, with particular emphasis on the belief of resurrection of the dead. Section one gives some background information on how the belief in the resurrection developed among the Jews, in the Old Testament. The second section examines how the belief is strengthened in the New Testament, on the basis of Jesus' resurrection. The third section discusses briefly the Kikuyu belief about the after-life, because this was the belief the AIPCA members shared before they became Christians. In the light of the first three sections, the fourth section examines how the AIPCA members interpret the idea of resurrection. The Chapter raises some of the issues arising from this interpretation.

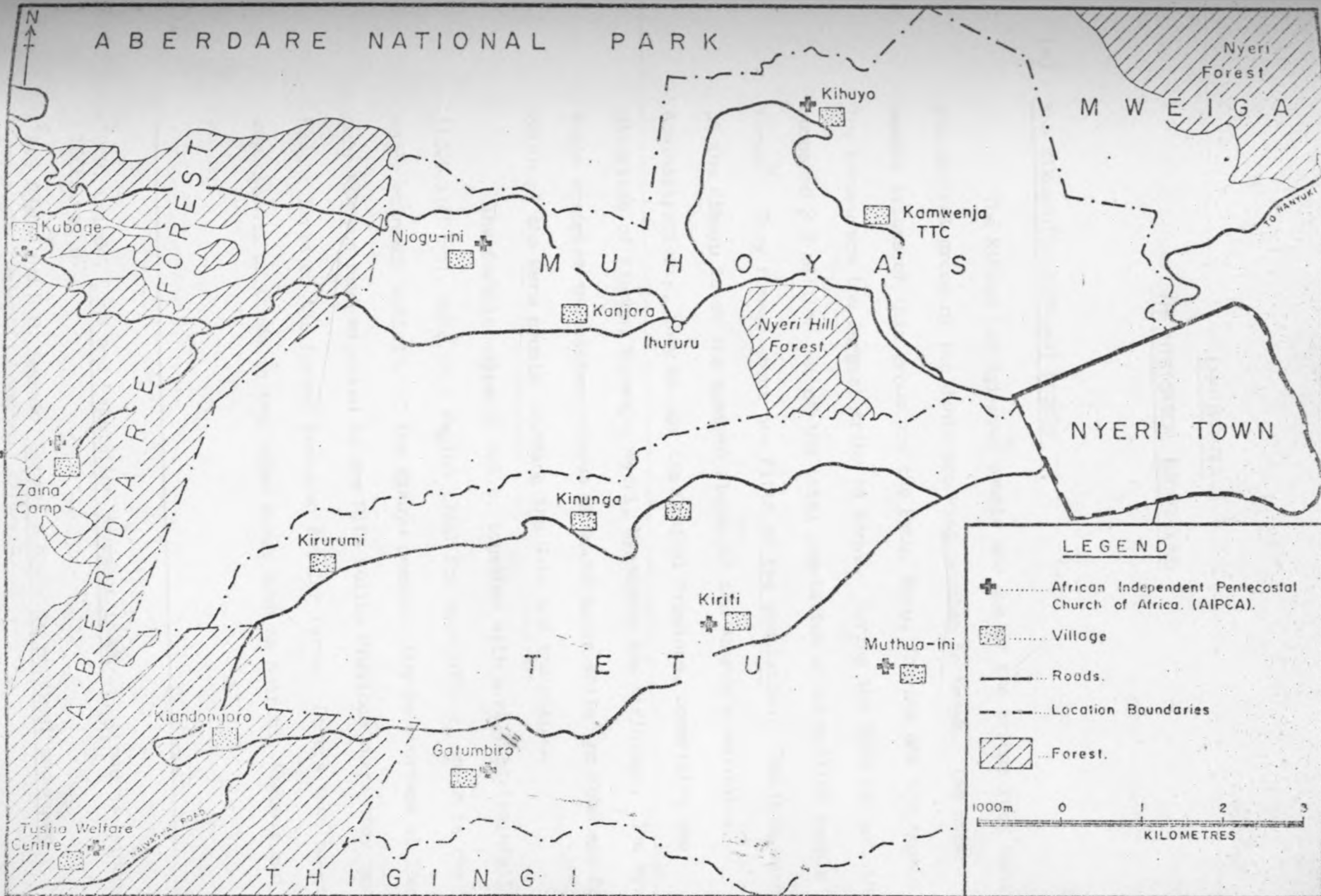
The world to come, as the destiny of men, is viewed in terms of heaven and hell. Heaven will be for the good and hell for the wicked. Chapter five deals with the belief of life in the world to come. The first section examines the various usages of the term heaven. The second section traces how the idea of hell developed among the Jews in the Old Testament. The third section discusses some of the symbols used to illustrate the life in heaven and hell. Issues that may arise from a materialistic interpretation of the symbols are examined. The chapter closes by examining how the AIPCA members interpret the idea about life in the world to come.

The teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God is central in a discussion on eschatology. Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom has been interpreted in various ways. Chapter six begins by examining some of the interpretations on Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom. The second part discusses how the AIPCA members interpret the Kingdom of God and the theological issues arising from their materialistic interpretation. The last section deals with the question of dating the day of the return of Jesus. On the basis of some predictions of Jesus before his death, social, political, and religious events are being interpreted as the signs preceding the return of Jesus. The last section examines some of such signs.

The last Chapter summarises the conclusions drawn from this study. The Chapter also points out the importance of undertaking further research work among the independent Churches in relation to their theology which is still developing, a theology comprehensible and relevant to the African Christians.



MAP I SHOWING THE MOUNTAINS BORDERING KIKUYULAND BEFORE THE COMING OF THE EUROPEANS, AND THE AREA WHERE THE FIELD WORK WAS CARRIED OUT.



MAP II TETU AND MUHOYA'S LOCATIONS WHERE THE FIELD RESEARCH WAS DONE

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

(a) The Kikuyu (or Agikuyu) people

The Kikuyu (or Agikuyu) people are one of the tribes that form the central group of the Bantu-speaking peoples in Kenya. The other member tribes of this group are the Embu, Meru, Tharaka and the Akamba¹. The Kikuyu are the largest tribe in Kenya. During the 1969 census, they numbered 2.2 million out of the total population of 11 million people in Kenya². They formed about one fifth of the population. The home base of the Kikuyu is on the eastern slopes of the Aberdare mountains. Administratively, they occupy the Central Province, comprising the districts of Kiambu, Muranga, Nyeri, Nyandarua and Kirinyaga. The Meru tribe occupies the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya while the Embu are found South of the Meru people, linking the Meru and the Kikuyu.

The fertile volcanic soils, together with a reliable rainfall (1020-1140 mm), make this region ideal for agriculture, which is the major economic activity of the Kikuyu people. Due to shortage of land, many Kikuyus have migrated to the Rift Valley Province where they have bought farms on the former European settler farms. Others have taken up employments or trade in the urban areas such as Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru.

¹ S.H. Ominde, Land and Population Movement in Kenya, (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 87

² F.F. Ojany and R.B. Ogendo, Kenya; a study in physical and human geography (Nairobi: Longman, 1973), p. 122.

Kikuyu religion, before the coming of Christianity, centred on the worship of one God who was known by various names. The names expressed what the Kikuyu thought about their God. He was known as Mwene-nyaga (the possessor of brightness). This name is related to Kiri-nyaga³ (Mt. Kenya) which, as we shall see below, was regarded as one of the resting places of God during his earthly visits. The name implies that God is the one who possesses glory and beauty as that displayed by the glittering snow-peaks of Mount Kiri-nyaga (Mt. Kenya). A second name was Murungu, which signifies the otherness, mystery, power and mercy of God.⁴ A third name was Nyene (the Great Owner), which implies that all things belong to God. Finally, there was the most frequently used name, Ngai. This name derives from the word Kugaya, meaning, to divide or distribute, and therefore, implies that "Ngai" is the "Divider" of all things. Hence, God is not only the "Owner" of all things (Nyene) but also the Divider of these things (Ngai). This name is found among other tribes such as Meru, Kamba and the Masai.

³The Kamba name for Kiri-nyaga (Mt. Kenya) is Kiima kii Nvaa. The first Europeans who came into contact with the Kamba people pronounced this name as "Kenya". This became the name of the country in which this great Mountain is found.

⁴S.G. Kibicho, "The Kikuyu conception of God, its continuity into the Christian era, and the question it raises for the Christian idea of revelation", (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1972), p. 59.

While the Kikuyu believed that God is invisible, they however, regarded his creation as the visible manifestation of his wonders and mysteries. The earth, the sky, the mountains, the waters, the sun, moon, and stars revealed the wonders of God.⁵ The Kikuyu believed that God was both transcendent (living in the skies) and immanent. The four big mountains in Kikuyuland represented God's presence (as the creator and sustainer of the universe). These include Kiri-nyaga (Mount Kenya) on the North, Kianjahi (Donyo Sambuk) on the East, Kianyandarua (Aberdare) on the west and Kiambiruiru (Ngong Hills) on the South.⁶ During prayers, the officiating elders faced these four mountains alternately.

There were certain selected trees especially the Mugumo and Mukuyu⁷ trees (fig trees) where sacrifices to God were performed. Prayer to God could be offered at any time but it was particularly offered during occasions of crises such as drought, or disease. Prayers were also offered during the four main turning points in the life of a Kikuyu, namely at birth, initiation, marriage and death.⁸

⁵ Kibicho, Kikuyu Conception of God p. 13

⁶ J. Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, (London: Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1938), p. 236.

⁷ One Kikuyu legend narrates how Ngai (God) called the father and founder of the Kikuyu tribe, known as Gikuyu, on Mount Kiri-nyaga (Kenya) and gave him the land lying on the west. This land had Mikuyu (fig) trees. The Kikuyu tribe has been named after their Great Ancestor - Gikuyu. See Kenyatta Ibid., p. 3.

⁸ Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, p. 234.

The ancestral spirits figured greatly in the religious life of the Kikuyu. This caused some early western missionaries and travellers⁹ to categorise the Kikuyus as worshippers of the ancestors.¹⁰ J. Kenyatta has refuted this point and has used some of the words used during worship to prove that the Kikuyu did not worship their ancestors. The words, guthathaiya Ngai (to beseech God), were used to refer to God only and never to the spirits, while the words, guthinjira na quitangira ngoma njohi (to slaughter and pour out beer for the spirits) were used to refer to the offerings and libations to ancestral spirits. So, he prefers the term communion with ancestral spirits" instead of the misleading term of ancestral worship.

The Kikuyu were monotheists and there were no atheists. Being a member of the society meant that one had to participate in all the activities of the society, whether social, political, or religious. Religion, thus, permeated all aspects of life. This was the religious life the missionaries found among the Kikuyu, and which they tried to replace with Christianity.

(b) Arrival of Missionaries in Kikuyuland

The missionaries had begun their work at the coast by the eighteenth century. The geographical location of the Kikuyu kept them

⁹ See C. Cagnolo, The Akikuyu (Nyeri: the Mission Printing School, 1933), p. 176; W.S. Routledge, With a Pre-historic People. The Akikuyu of British East Africa (London: Cass & Co. Ltd. 1910) p. 241.

¹⁰ "Worship" is used here in the religious sense to refer to the honour and reverence shown to a supernatural being or power.

cut of contact with the missionaries. It was not until the Kenya-Uganda railway was built from Mombasa in 1896, reaching Kisumu on Lake Victoria, in 1901, that the Kikuyu people and their land were exposed to the Europeans. Missionaries, settlers, as well as British administrators, took advantage of the railway and, before the turn of the last century, began to settle in Kikuyuland. The cool highland climate was conducive to European settlement, unlike the hot and humid coastal climate.

The race to acquire areas of influence in Kikuyuland involved a number of missionary societies. The Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) arrived in 1898 and founded a station at Kikuyu near Nairobi, and a second station in 1908 at Tumu Tumu in Nyeri. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) arrived in 1899 and founded stations at Kihuroko in 1901 and in Muranga at Weithaga in 1903, Kahuhia in 1906 and Mahiga in 1908.¹²

During the same year that the CMS arrived, the Roman Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers also arrived and founded a station at the present St. Austins, to the west of Nairobi. They were followed in 1902 by the Consolata Fathers, who by 1903 had established the following stations in Kikuyuland: Limuru in Kiambu; Mugoiri and near the town of Muranga in Muranga; Karima, near Nyeri town, and Gikondi in

¹² R.A. Oliver. The Missionary Factor in East Africa, (London: Longman, 1970 imp), p. 169.

Nyeri district.¹³ Other missionary societies in the scramble for areas of influence in Kikuyuland were the Africa Inland Mission (AIM), which founded a station at Kijabe in 1901, and the Gospel Missionary Society (GMS) which founded a station at Kambui in Kiambu in 1902.¹⁴

Having acquired a foothold among the Kikuyu, each missionary society embarked on the task of winning converts among the Kikuyu. The process of evangelization was at first made difficult by the language problem and the suspicion of the Kikuyu towards the new comers. To overcome these two obstacles, a need for a closer contact with the Kikuyu was inevitable. Various methods were used in order to get in touch with the Kikuyus. Dispensaries were opened on the mission stations and the Kikuyus were persuaded to go for treatment there. A word about Jesus would be passed to the few patients who accepted going for treatment at the mission dispensaries. Technical training and agriculture was another method. When instructing the pupils during their masonry or carpentry classes, or during agriculture lessons in the school gardens, the teacher could get an opportunity to establish friendship at least with a few pupils.

¹³Cagnolo, The Agikuyu p. 269.

¹⁴H. Thuku, Harry Thuku, an autobiography, (Nairobi Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 3.

The method that was mostly used was the formal school education. At first, it was difficult for the missionaries to get pupils for their schools. For example, H.E. Scott gives an account of how they had to induce pupils by giving them presents or even paying them money, in order to have them accept to attend the CSM school at Kikuyu station which was established in 1900.¹⁵ Before long, formal education began to be valued because those who accepted going to the mission schools were getting employed by the settlers in the estates or by the Government. To the relief of the missionaries, more pupils began to attend schools of their own free will even without being paid. The pupils hoped to be employed after getting the elementary education, mainly reading and writing. Missionaries took advantage of those who went to school and converted them to Christians. Formal education, and Christianity got merged together such that it was difficult to separate one from the other. J. Anderson has observed:

...in Kikuyuland, Christianity and formal schooling were presented together. Those who sought schooling became Christians and those interested in Christianity went to School.¹⁶

¹⁵ H.E. Scott, A Saint in Kenya, A life of Marion Stevenson, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932) p. 64.

¹⁶ J. Anderson, The Struggle for the School, (Nairobi: Longman 1970), p. 107.

The dual activity of formal schooling and Church services was called by the Kikuyu qithomo. for they could not at first see the difference between the two, due to the manner in which formal schooling and Christianity were presented to them. The same building functioned both as a school and a Church while the same person functioned both as a teacher and a preacher.

At first, the missionaries made no demands on their converts' or followers' ways of life. But as they continued to win more converts, some missionaries, and the Protestant Societies in particular, began to demand that their converts abstain from some traditional practices such as dances, beer drinking, circumcision of girls and polygamy, if they were to be good Christians. * This was just the beginning of the conflict of the aims of missionaries and Kikuyu customs in relation to the school. For the missionaries, the school was viewed as an effective means of Christianising the Kikuyu. For the Kikuyu, ~~the~~ school was regarded as the source of a new knowledge, the magic of the white man of reading and writing. Those who had gone to school and could read and write, got jobs as unskilled labourers for which they were paid. A demand for an unlimited academic education began to be voiced by those few who had tasted the fruits of formal schooling. The obscurity between qithomo in the educational sense and qithomo in the religious sense began to be unveiled. The stratification of schools right from the arrival of the Europeans into European, Asian, and African Schools, resectively, in order of superiority must have led Africans to aspire for the kind of education given to the European pupils. As early as 1913,

the Kikuyu expressed their desire to run their own schools free from mission control and interference, in which they would teach their children in the way they thought was proper.¹⁷

(c) Early Developments towards Independent schools and Churches

Two schools have been identified as being the first to express the desire of the Kikuyu people to run their own schools. The first school was built in 1913 by some CMS Church elders, at Giathieko in Kiambu. The site of the school was donated by an elder, Mukunga wa Njehu.¹⁸ Strictly speaking, this school was not completely independent since it had not only to be approved after one year by the local missionary, a Mr. Knapp, but it also accepted the teacher he sent in that school.¹⁹ The fact that Mr. Knapp approved the school shows that it was not a threat to the GMS, and he saw the efforts of those Church elders as supplementing the GMS, missionary work. After all, even after having their schools, the elders continued to be members of their Church. Harry Thuku has pointed out that unlike other missionaries

¹⁷B.M. Raju, Education in Kenya (Nairobi, Henemann, 1973), p. 6

¹⁸Anderson, The Struggle for the School. p. 116

¹⁹Ibid.

Churches who did not consult their African Church elders, the GMS Missionaries "felt that the African Church elders must have a voice in discussing mission policy".²⁰ This school was not therefore a break-away in the sense of the later 1930's independent schools among the Kikuyu.

In 1923 Mukunga sold the land on which the school was built. Under the leadership of Musa Ndirangu, the School was shifted to Githunguri and built on land given by Wilson Gathuru, who was also its first trained teacher when it was opened in 1925. It was at Githunguri that the School became independent of the mission control. By this time, resistance to mission control of schools had made its impact in other parts of Kikuyuland.

The second independent school was built in 1922 at Gakarara in Muranga. The elders of this area were brave enough to challenge CMS and CSM missionaries openly as far as the standard of education in the out-schools was concerned. Missionaries responded to the challenge by calling for a meeting with the elders, where the emerging Kikuyu grievances regarding education standards of their children would be

²⁰ H. Thuku: Harry Thuku, an autobiography, p. 10.

identified and discussed. Missionaries' solution was simple; those elders who were satisfied with the education offered in the mission schools were asked to sit on one side, and those elders dissatisfied with the mission schools' education to sit on the other side.²¹ The latter group outnumbered the former, and they immediately held a council during which:

they agreed to keep God as their advocate so that their children will get good education, without bothering anybody in trying to ask for money or telling an unwilling person to educate their children.²²

Without buildings or finance but fully armed with the spirit of determination, these elders set out to conduct the teaching of their children under tree shades and in temporary shelters. It was in 1927 when they were given permission by the Government to build their own school, which served both as a school as well as a prayer house.

Although the influence of the above two schools, namely Githieko and Gakarara, may not have gone very far from the local areas in which they were situated, they had proven to the missionaries and the Government that the Kikuyu were ready to take over the education of their children. Even more important was the fact that these schools had trailed the path on which later independent schools among the Kikuyu followed.

²¹D.M. Kiragu - Kiria giatumire Independent igie, ("The origins of the independent Church") (Nairobi Press, n.d.) p. 4. Part one of this booklet may have been written before 1952, while part two was written after 1963.

²²Ibid.

On top of the dissatisfaction with education in the mission schools, other equally disturbing issues were emerging among the Kikuyu in the 1920s. Among them was the question of land. The clan land or Muhiriga land, owned by the members of the clan communally, was being alienated from them without their consent, and was turned into European settler farms. In a memorandum written to the Colonial Government in 1924, the Kikuyu Central Association said:²³

The matter that above all else continues to give us grave concern is the question of the security of our tenure of tribal lands, now known as the Kikuyu Reserves. Deprived of our land, we Kikuyu should be dispossessed wanderers, dependent upon the white man for home and livelihood.²⁴

Unfortunately missionaries had joined settlers in the race of land acquisition for

by 1914 all the missions had applied for and taken up land on the reserves on which to build a Church; and some, like the Church of Scotland and the Consolata Mission, had taken up huge areas of land for commercial purposes.²⁵

²³The Kikuyu Central Association (K.C.A.) is discussed in the following pages.

²⁴Provincial record book, 1901-1926, Kenya National Archives PC/CP/8/1/1.

²⁵A.J. Temu, British Protestant Missions. (London: Longman 1972) p. 101.

To the Kikuyu, the missionaries were in the same category as the settlers, as far as the land issue was concerned. The land issue led the Kikuyus to be suspicious of the motives of the land-owning missions. How could the missionaries claim to be taking care of the African interests of which the question of land was one, while, at the same time they were taking up more land just like the settlers. The slogan that "gutiri muthungu na mubia", literally, "there is no difference between the European settler and the missionary", became a common saying among the Kikuyu. This slogan implied that missionaries were supporting the colonial Government in oppressing the Africans, not just in the land issues but also in other aspects.

A second issue was the registration of the employed Africans which was introduced in 1919, after the first world war. The registration was opposed not only by the Kikuyu but also by other Africans. The "Kipande", as the registration certificate encased in a metal box was called, annoyed all those people affected by it. As Harry Thuku has recorded:

First of all, you had to wear this quite heavy metal box round your neck on a string all the time, then in the columns on the paper inside there were many things that were against Africans.²⁶

A third issue that angered Africans most was the proposed reduction of their meagre wages by the European settlers. This led to the

²⁶ Harry Thuku, an autobiography, p. 19.

formation of the Young Kikuyu Association on 7th June 1921. Its aim was to try to solve Kikuyu problems that were becoming critical. But Thuku realized that this Association could not be representative of other tribes. The Young Kikuyu Association was, therefore, changed to East African Association (EAA) on 1st July 1921, so as to include other tribes. This Association did not last long because as Thuku began to tour Kikuyuland propagating the intentions of this Association and condemning such practices as African forced labour, he was considered by the colonial Government to be subversive. He was therefore sentenced to a nine year detention in 1922. Thuku had, however, planted the seeds of nationalism among his followers. Soon after his detention, the EAA died. The Kikuyu formed the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) in 1924 to look into their grievances.²⁷ Though a political party, KCA was not demanding self-rule for Africans.²⁸

²⁷ Kikuyu Central Association, Kenya National Archives, 1925-27, PC/CP/8/5/2.

²⁸ C.G. Rosberg and J. Nottingham, The myth of Mau Mau (Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1966), p.40.

It was fighting for equality and justice for the Kikuyu, especially in matters of land ownership, better education and safeguarding the Kikuyu cultural values which were by that time being condemned and undermined by Missionaries. In its aim of cultural conservation K.C.A. came into conflict with the missionaries and it became unpopular with them. It was in this respect, however, that K.C.A. played a great part in the formation of the African Independent Churches among the Kikuyus, as will be seen below.

To summarise this section, it is important to note the interplay of the various factors which led to the social unrest among the Kikuyu in the 1920s. Politically, they wanted to have a voice in the Colonial Government so as to present their problems and interests. Economically, they were disturbed by the alienation of their tribal lands, for without land to cultivate, they could not make their living. At the same time, Africans were trying to adapt themselves to the new cash economy that was being set up by Europeans. Socially, the cultural practices, such as polygamy, dances, female circumcision and beer drinking, were being attacked by missionaries in the name of Christianity.

Formal school education was seen as the key to solving their problems and as a channel through which Africans could uplift themselves to an equal standing with the other races. Yet, they felt that missionaries were offering them an inferior type of education which could only qualify them to remain as a down-trodden race. It should be pointed out that up to 1925, the education of Africans in Kenya and elsewhere in British Tropical Africa was mainly in the hands of

missionaries. It was the Phelps-Stokes Education Commission which came to East Africa in 1924, that recommended a closer co-operation between the British Government and Missionaries in promoting African Education.²⁹

It is with this background that the crisis that was pegged on the issue of female circumcision, which occurred in Kikuyuland in 1928/29, can be properly understood. It was this crisis that led to the formation of many independent schools and churches among the Kikuyu, that we discuss in the next section.

(d) The New Teaching and the Breakaway

The years 1928 and 1929 are very important in the history of the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA)³⁰. They mark the time when the malcontent Kikuyus broke away in large numbers from the mission schools and churches and began the independent school and Church movement.

It was mentioned above that as the missionaries increasingly attracted more converts and followers, they began to tighten their demands. These demands were mainly directed at the cultural practices of the Kikuyu. Among the many practices that were condemned was the circumcision of girls. This rite marks the entry of a girl from childhood to womanhood. The importance of this rite among the Kikuyu cannot be covered fully in this study, because it requires a long

²⁹ B.M. Raju, Education in Kenya, (London: Heinemann, 1973), p. 3.

³⁰ The origin of AIPCA is discussed in the next chapter.

and detailed discussion.³¹ Suffice it to say, however, that traditionally, it was not the practice of the Kikuyu to marry uncircumcised girls, for it was through this rite that girls became adult members of the society and also qualified for marriage.

The climax of attacking the rite came in 1928 from Missionaries particularly the CSM, aimed at abolishing female circumcision which they condemned not only as completely unchristian but also as a medically injurious mutilation of girls' bodies. This campaign was spearheaded by Dr. J. Arthur of the CSM at Kikuyu mission in Kiambu. Before long, the campaign had spread like a wild fire to other districts of Muranga, Nyeri, and even to Embu and Meru, where clitoridectomy was also practised.

Other missionary societies, such as the AIM, and GMS joined the CSM in the campaign.³² The CMS joined the campaign in Kiambu but declined in the other districts such as Muranga and Nyeri. The Roman Catholics did not join the Protestant Missionary Societies in the campaign against female circumcision. This is why majority of those who formed the independent schools and Churches were former converts of the Protestant missions, particularly the CSM,³³ which was most active during the campaign.

³¹ See Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, p. 132.

³² Anderson, The struggle for the school, p. 117

³³ Today, this Church is known as the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

The campaign did not go unopposed. The KCA began to oppose the abolition of female circumcision by missionaries. This controversy provided an opportunity for KCA to challenge some of the activities of missionaries especially where it concerned practices such as polygamy, dances and circumcision. In this respect "the KCA, stood as a champion of Kikuyu cultural nationalism...."³⁴ The missionaries concerned with the campaign sought the aid of the Government to abolish the practice of clitoridectomy by law, on the grounds that it contributed to the death of many babies during birth. Having seen the resistance the Kikuyu had raised, the Government only asked the District Commissioners to try to advise the Local Native Councils on the bad effects of the practice, and therefore have it either abolished or modified. The latter choice was accepted and by 1924, the Local Native Councils had set up by-laws regarding who should perform the circumcision, and how it should be performed. Only a small part of the clitoris was allowed to be removed.³⁵ Also, no girl was to be forced by her parents to be circumcised if she did not want. In Tetu, for example, there was a case whereby the daughter of Muthengia had run away and joined Tumu Tumu CSM school. She went home on one weekend, and was circumcised against her will. Her father, Muthengia, was taken to the Native Court at Nyeri and was sentenced to a six-month imprisonment.³⁶

³⁴Rosberg and Nottingham, The Myth of Mau Mau, p. 113

³⁵Female circumcision, 1926. Kenya National Archives, DC/KBU/7/3.

³⁶Interview with Dedan Ndiritu (Gatumbiro, 19/12/78).

The climax of the female circumcision controversy was reached when CSM made it an ecclesiastical requirement, that their converts and followers sign a written declaration which included two major things: to declare that one would never have ~~his~~ or her daughter circumcised; and that one would never become a member of the KCA. This declaration was nearly turned into a doctrinal oath and ran as follows:

I promise to have done with everything connected with circumcision of women because it is not in agreement with the things of God, and to have done with the Kikuyu Central Association because it aims at destroying the Church of God.³⁷

The declaration forms were dispatched to all the areas where the missions concerned had some influence among the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru. Some converts agreed but others refused to sign these forms. To illustrate this point, we shall discuss the occasion on which the breakaway occurred in Nyeri district. The CSM missionaries from Tumu Tumu wanted to ascertain that their converts were loyal to their Church. A meeting was organised in April 1928 during which CSM Kikuyu Church elders from all parts of Nyeri met with CSM missionaries.³⁸ These elders were the representatives of their respective areas. The meeting was held at the present Nyamachaki CSM school at Nyeri town.

³⁷ Kikuyu News 28/9/1929, cited by Temu, British Protestant Missions, p. 158.

³⁸ Rosberg and Nottingham - The Myth of Mau Mau, p. 115.

Ezekiel Kabora, vividly recalls the events of that day thus:

Many people had gathered about half a mile away from where the meeting was being held. They comprised of Christians and non-Christians from Nyeri who were against the abolition of female circumcision. Before we left them in order to attend the meeting, we were solemnly warned not to sell the people to missionaries.³⁹

During the meeting, each elder was asked to denounce the rite by signing the declaration forms. Those who sided with the missionaries signed the forms while those opposed to the abolition of the rite refused. Ezekiel Kabora recalls that when his turn came, R.G.M. Calderwood, one of the CSM missionaries in the meeting asked him his position and he replied, "I need more time to think about the matter before signing the declaration".⁴⁰ Other elders followed Kabora, among whom were Willy Jimmy Wambugu Maina, Gershon Waititu and Mechack Matu. After this meeting, the dissenters went back to the anxiously waiting crowd and reported the outcome of the meeting. The separation had already taken place in Nyeri, and it became the order of the day as far as missionaries were concerned that those Africans who were not supporting the Missionaries were against them.

³⁹ Interview with Ezekiel Kabora (Kiriti, 10/11/78).

⁴⁰ Ibid

While the forms were circulating in Kikuyuland, the KCA came out in 1929 with a song called Muthirigu, which was an adaptation of a swahili song called Mselego.⁴¹ Having begun in Kiambu, it was soon being sung and danced all over Kikuyuland. It became the KCA manifesto. Apart from praising those who stood firm against the missionaries, some stanzas were purposely framed to insult those converts and chiefs who were supporting the missionaries. Groups of young men went long distances singing and dancing to the song. It became a popular dance during the maambura ceremonies.⁴² The following are examples of the verses of the song.

- (i) I cannot marry an uncircumcised girl,
For a sheep with its tail uncut,
Does not perform a sacrifice.
- (ii) I will marry one uncircumcised girl
If she is unable to cultivate,⁴³
She will be climbing maariki.
- (iii) Your wife is circumcised
You are circumcised
Why tell me to marry an uncircumcised girl?
- (iv) I will break all friendship
The only friendship I will keep
Is between me and Jehovah.⁴⁴

⁴¹ J.B. Ndungu, "Gituamba and Kikuyu independency in Church and school", in B.G. McIntosh ed. Ngano. (Nairobi: East African Publishing House 1969). p. 133.

⁴² Maambura in this context is the preparatory ceremony before the circumcision of either boys or girls among the Kikuyu.

⁴³ Maariki, are the castor oil plants

⁴⁴ This song was sung to the author in Kikuyu by John Gitahi. (Muthua-ini, 23/11/78). I have given it in English.

These few verses serve to illustrate the nature of Muthirigu. The first verse shows the dilemma the young men were facing, as far as marriage was concerned. Supposing all the girls turned to the missions and accepted the declaration; from where would the young men get wives since in those days only circumcised girls could perform the "sacrifice"⁴⁵ of marriage? The second verse expresses the Kikuyu belief in those days that without undergoing the rite, a girl could not make a responsible wife because even after marriage she could continue with her former childish behaviours such as climbing trees. The third verse was directed to those who condemned the rite yet they had married wives who had been circumcised. The last verse is of interest because it expresses the fact that both KCA and those who broke away from the missionary Churches were, from the start, not opposed to Christianity, but were against the manner in which the Good News was presented to them. The religio-political nature of this song soon attracted the attention of the Government. With some pressure from the CSM, who described it as the "vile, immoral and seditious Muthirigu dance",⁴⁶ the song was finally banned in 1930 by the Government, although it continued to be sung secretly. But by the time it was banned, it had played its role of mobilising the dissenters.

⁴⁵ Among the Kikuyu, a sacrificial sheep must have its tail cut short while it was young. So, "marriage" was compared to "sacrifice" in the song.

⁴⁶ Female circumcision, 1928-1930. Kenya National Archives, PC/CP/8/1/1.

Another instrument that was used during the controversy was the very Bible that the missionaries were using when attacking the traditional practices. The few dissidents who could read looked in the Bible for those passages which they could use to justify their position. About the question of polygamy, they found that most of the patriarchs were polygamists yet they were the people of God.⁴⁷ They therefore concluded that even they themselves could be Christians and at the same time marry any number of wives. The preaching of one man one wife was therefore part of the missionaries' new teaching against polygamy, which had no support in the Bible.

On the crucial question on female circumcision, a quick reference was sought. The virgin Mary, in the Kikuyu Bible translation is called Muiritu and this is the name given to a circumcised girl.⁴⁸ Since Mary is called muiritu, they argued that she must have undergone the rite of female circumcision. Whether the virgin Mary was a Jew, a European or an African was of no importance to them. Such arguments taken from the Bible were sweet sounding to those who could not read the Bible for themselves. It was concluded that the missionaries were introducing a new teaching and were also creating new commandments on top of the Ten Holy ones in the Bible, such as the two declarations namely, "that one should

⁴⁷ Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, p. 271

⁴⁸ Rosberg and Nottingham, The Myth of Mau Mau, p. 120

not practice female circumcision" and "one should not be a member of KCA". By 1929, Dr. Arthur of the CSM, notified the Education department about the measures the missionaries had taken against the dissident group:

I determined that we would not allow teachers and others in the employment of our schools, who were not at one with us on the question of the circumcision of women, and unless they made a declaration of that they were not members of the Kikuyu Central Association and would not become so until the mission gave its consent.⁴⁹

By the end of 1929, the process of separating the loyal Christians from the aregi (dissidents) came to an end. Former teachers in the mission schools returned their "uniforms" (a small tunic dress) to the mission schools while the students, whose parents had broken from the missions, returned the slates⁵⁰ they had been given and they bought new ones for themselves in order to start anew.⁵¹

Before leaving this section one question needs to be asked, "was the female circumcision the sole factor that led to the separation of some Kikuyu converts from the missions? In answer, I will turn to the remark of D.B. Barret, who in his book Schism and Renewal in Africa

⁴⁹ Dr. Arthur to Director of Education, 5th Nov. 1929, Kenya National Archives PC/CP/8/1/1, 1928-30.

⁵⁰ A slate is a thin flat piece of stone that was used to write on.

⁵¹ Interview with Rev. Meshack Waciuri, (Gichira, 16/11/78).

has concluded that:

No one factor then, can be considered as the cause either of independency in any given case, or of the whole phenomenon of independency in Africa ... For each case there proves to be a whole complex of causes....⁵²

However, Barret goes ahead and identifies a common root cause for Church independency in Africa which he calls a "failure in Love".⁵³ But he cautions that even this one cannot provide a total explanation, "since it cannot take into account all the local features of independency in specific tribes and areas".⁵⁴ With these remarks, we can turn to the above question about the Kikuyu Schism. From Barret's caution, it would not be justified to regard the female circumcision controversy as the only cause that led to the separation in 1929. Other issues that were creating tension, whether political, social, economic or psychological must be taken into account.

When missionaries attacked this particular aspect of traditional life of the Kikuyu, namely female circumcision the Kikuyu in turn waited for opportunity to express their accumulated feelings of dissatisfaction. They therefore magnified the controversy in order to justify and make their separation from the mission schools and churches look rational.

⁵²O.B. Barrett, Schism and Renewal in Africa, (Nairobi: Oxford University Press 1969) p. 97.

⁵³Ibid. p. 154

⁵⁴Ibid.

*The way the missionaries handled the controversy by turning it into an ecclesiastical issue also contributed to the breakaway. They seemed to assume that their African converts were living in a culture that could not be adaptable to Christianity. Hence to them, Christianity was synonymous with westernisation.

A dilemma arose because the converts who were loyal to the missionaries' teaching were, from the African society's point of view, becoming bad elements of the society. On the other hand the converts who practised such things as cultural dances and female circumcision were considered by the missionaries as semi-converts. It is here that Barret's root cause of "failure in love" manifests itself in the Kikuyu case, the failure of the missionaries "to demonstrate consistently the fulness of the biblical concept of love as sensitive understanding towards others as equals, the failure to study or understand African society, religion and psychology in any depth...."⁵⁵ Thus the missionaries had failed in one important aspect in not recognising:

... that it is necessary to express a catholic vision in a wide variety of vernacular forms, forms which are not only of vocabulary and syntax but of song and dance, local custom and legend and ways of thinking and of economic organization.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Barret, Schism and renewal in Africa, p. 156

⁵⁶ F.B. Welbourn, and B.A. Ogot, A place to feel at home. (London, Oxford University Press, 1966) p. 144.

It is a Church of this kind for which the Kikuyu dissenters were looking, a Church in which they could express their Christian faith without this faith conflicting with their way of life.

It might appear from the foregoing discussion that there was no positive effect especially of the Protestant Missionaries among the Kikuyu. This is by no means the case. Firstly, it is not the aim of this study to discuss the achievements of the missionaries in Kikuyuland. Secondly, it is the shortcomings of the missionaries, rather than their achievements, that led to the breakaway of the dissidents, and schism is the central concern of this section.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FOUNDING OF THE AFRICAN INDEPENDENT PENTECOSTAL
CHURCH OF AFRICA

(a) Establishment of Kikuyu Independent Schools and Churches

After the breakaway, the children of the independents¹ were not allowed to go to the schools of the missionaries any more. Neither could the parents and their children attend Church services in the mission prayer houses. Some of the former mission out-schools had to close down due to lack of pupils. The independents set themselves the task of building schools for their children and by 1931, independent schools had begun to operate in Kikuyuland. The construction was simple, for they had mudwalls and were roofed with banana leaves. Problems began to come up. First there was the problem of getting teachers. In addition to the few teachers who had left the mission schools, the pupils with some elementary education were appointed as teachers. Secondly, there was the financial problem which remained critical all through the lifetime of this independent school movement.

When missionaries and their loyal converts saw that the independents were beginning to make headway, they began to undermine

¹The term "independents" is used henceforth to refer to those who broke away from the Mission schools and churches.

their efforts. At first, even the Government sided with the missionaries in destroying those schools; in the case of Tetu, the DC authorised the chiefs who in turn sent their men to destroy the schools. An eye witness, as well as a founder of Kiriti AIPCA, recalls that:

The men of Chief Ndiuini came to our first school at Gacuiro and they set it on fire. Then they went to Muthuaini but the school was roofed with the remains of finger millet stalks and it could not catch fire quickly. So, they cut the side posts with axes and the building crumbled down.²

This persecution came to an end when the Government began to issue licences to these schools by 1931.³ The increase of these schools called for a central body to unify their management. This resulted in the formation of the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association (K.I.S.A.) in 1934.⁴ Johana Kunyiha was elected President and Hezekiah Gacui the Vice President. KISA was not however representing⁵ all the independent schools. Some schools in South Kiambu had declined from co-operating with the others. For them, they could not entertain any dialogue with the missions. But as early as 1932, the KISA members had opened discussions with the CMS seeking for help on how they could get priests for their Church.⁵ This then could have been one cause of the

² Interview with Samson Macohi, Kiriti, 17/11/78.

³ Ibid.

⁴ J.B. Ndungu in B.G. McIntosh, Ngano, p. 135.

⁵ Andersen, The Struggle for the School, p. 119.

disagreement, and they decided to put their schools in 1933, under the Kikuyu Karinga⁶ Education Association (KKEA)⁷. Attempts to unite KISA and KKEA in 1934 did not materialize. However, differences between KISA and KKEA should not be overemphasized for both had similar objectives but followed somewhat different approaches.

On the religious side, the problem was more acute. The independents had no ordained ministers to baptise those who had not been baptised or their new followers. Even worse, the former converts had no one to administer the Holy sacraments to them. Church services were conducted simply by an elder. The problem of Church ministers became so pressing that the KISA leaders called a meeting during which Daudi Maina Kiragu (from Muranga), Stephano Wachira Rugara (from Nyeri) and Elijah Kibacia (from Kiambu) were selected as candidates to train as Church ministers in case KISA got a place to send them.⁸ On 5th July 1933 KISA leaders wrote a letter to the Anglican Bishop asking him whether he could allow the above candidates to join the Divinity School at Limuru.

A meeting to discuss this matter was held at Kahuhia CMS mission on 13th October 1933. KISA representatives from Muranga attended but

⁶ Karinga means "pure" or "true", hence KKEA implies that it was free from any external influence such as from Europeans or missionaries.

⁷ Anderson, The Struggle for the School, p. 119.

⁸ Kiragu, Kikuyu Education, p. 6.

those from Nyeri and Kiambu were refused to attend by the missionaries concerned. The outcome of this meeting was not fruitful for various reasons. First the CMS came up with conditions unacceptable by KISA. For example, if a candidate was recommended to go to Limuru, he was to be under the control of the Anglican Bishop. The whole idea of having an independent Church outside the missionary Churches was not entertained in the meeting. As R.G.M. Calderwood, a missionary from the CSM (a member of the alliance of Churches) recorded:

This meeting has made up its mind, expressing very much how it tries to oppose the Church of independents to be formed. Also this meeting has prayed that such a thing will never happen, because such a thing will be an obstacle to our efforts to bring the Churches together and be one Church, which has been the missionaries' wish for a long time.⁹

It is clear that there was a conflict in aims between the KISA and the CMS. The CMS was seizing this opportunity to have KISA attached to them in ecclesiastical affairs and, therefore, remove any idea of an independent Church. KISA, on its part, wanted only to have their candidates trained and with no more links with the CMS. Secondly, the discussion was made more difficult by the fact that the CMS had to consult the other member Churches of the Protestant Churches Alliance (which had been formed in 1918 and comprised of CMS, AIM and the Methodist mission).¹⁰

⁹ Cited in Kiragu, Kiria giatumire Independent igie, p. 9

¹⁰ Annals of the Protestant Missions, pp. 104-105

While KISA leaders were waiting for the reply from the CMS they found an alternative means of solving their problem. At Mombasa there was one of their members, James Beautah. He got in contact with the most Rev. Daniel William. Alexander D.D., Archbishop and Primate of the African Orthodox Church (AOC) in South Africa, while he was returning from Uganda where he had ordained Reuben Spartas as a priest of the AOC in Uganda.¹¹ Having learnt about Alexander, and the fact that he could ordain ministers, KISA leaders turned their attention to him. The AOC had its origins in America, where it was founded by Marcus Garvey in 1914 together with the Universal Negro Improvement Association.¹² Alexander was consecrated on 11th September 1927, as the Archbishop and Primate of the Province of AOC in South Africa by the Archbishop George Alexander McGuire, the Archbishop and Primate of AOC in America.¹³

The KISA leaders wrote a letter to Archbishop D.W. Alexander asking him whether he could come to Kenya to train and ordain ministers for them. In his reply, he indicated that he was willing to come on condition that KISA would raise one thousand shillings for his fare from South Africa to Kenya. This sum of money was quickly raised

¹¹ Rosberg and Nottingham, The Myth of Mau Mau, p. 129

¹² F.B. Welbourn, East African rebels, a study of some independent Churches; (London: SCM press 1961), p. 129.

¹³ Africa Orthodox Church, 1936-1953, Kenya National Archives, DC/NYI/2/3/3.

and sent to him.¹⁴ In a letter he sent to KISA before he came, he gave a brief description of the AOC. Some of the points he mentioned are worth noting:

The African Orthodox Church is a Catholic and Apostolic Church, not Roman Catholic but Orthodox in faith. In the African Orthodox Church every Priest is supposed to be a married man.... Members of the Orthodox Church are allowed to read the whole Bible.... It is a Church (of the African, governed by the Africans and for the Africans) to make daily supplications to Almighty God led by Priests who have the welfare of Africans at heart.¹⁵

This description must have impressed the KISA leaders. First, the Church was "African" and not connected with any of the missionary Churches in Kikuyuland. Secondly, Priests were allowed to marry. Thirdly, each member was allowed to read the Bible for himself. Finally, AOC was an African Church, meant to cater for the interests of the Africans. The aims of the AOC were therefore parallel to the aims of KISA.

¹⁴ Kiragu, Kiria giatumire Independent igie, p. 10

¹⁵ Cited by J.B. Ndungu in B.G. McIntosh, Ngano, p. 143

On 11th November, 1935, Archbishop Alexander arrived at Mombasa where he was given a warm welcome by the President of KISA, Johanna Kuniya and other KISA leaders. During his short rest at Mombasa, he was residing at James Beautah's house, where he conducted a service and baptized some KISA members¹⁶. The group then set out for Gituamba in Muranga where a house had been built for him. The large crowds that Alexander attracted did not go unnoticed by the Government, for the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) kept an eye on his activities.¹⁷ However, he was soon declared harmless, for the D.C. of Muranga (then Fort Hall district) could say that Alexander's presence was beneficial to the peace of the District.¹⁸

By December, 1935, Alexander had opened his seminary at Gituamba and the chosen students had begun their training. These included Daudi Maina Kiragu, Stephano Wachira Rugara, Elijah Kibacia,

¹⁶ J.B. Ndungu in McIntosh, Ngano, p. 143

¹⁷ F.D. Corfield, The Origins and growth of Mau Mau: sessional paper No. 5 (Nairobi: Government Printer 1959/60) p. 45.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Jasan Muhungi and Harrison Gachukia Kimanga. During his first months Alexander faced the problem of language because his students did not speak English properly. This difficulty was overcome when he established friendship with Arthur Gathuna Gatungu, a teacher at Gituamba K.I.S. Alexander began to find ways and means of getting Gatungu who had a good command of English, into the seminary. There developed some backdoor discussions between Alexander and KKEA leaders. The KKEA was facing the pressure from their followers in relation to baptism, and sacraments. Arrangements were made between KKEA leaders and Alexander, that he would recommend Gatungu (who was actually from the KKEA area of South Kiambu) to join the seminary, so that he could serve the KKEA followers in their ecclesiastical needs. Gatungu joined the seminary in March 1936.

This move, taken by Alexander, annoyed the KISA leaders. They however, realized that they could utilize this situation (the way CMS had done with KISA three years earlier) to kill KKEA. A meeting was called, attended by leaders of both Associations. It was agreed that KKEA was to dissolve, and henceforth change the name 'Karinga' to 'Independent'. A copy of this agreement was sent to the Government.¹⁹

¹⁹ Kiragu, Kiria giatumire Independent igie, p.11

But this merger never materialized for, as noted above, KKEA had no intentions of becoming part of KISA. Were it not for Alexander, Gatungu would have been expelled from the seminary prematurely by the KISA leaders, mainly because he was from Karing'a group. By June 1936 another student, Philip Kiande from Nyeri, joined the seminary. Like Gatungu, he could speak English well. These two became the interpreters of Alexander. They were also in closer contact with Alexander than the other students, a relationship that Alexander made use of later, as will be seen below.

Alexander was not restricted at his Gituamba Seminary. He made many journeys wherever there were KISA members, during which he baptised and administered sacraments which these people had not received for seven years since the 1928 controversy. Recalling his first impression of Alexander during his first visit at Mung'aria in Nyeri, Rev. Meshack Wachiuri had this to say:

Many people had come to be baptised from all parts of Nyeri. After the service, we invited the Archbishop to the food we had prepared for him. But he refused to eat the meat we had put in a separate tray for him, for he said that as African brothers, we should eat from the same tray.²⁰

Certain things that Alexander did, however, displeased the KISA members. The case of Gatungu has been mentioned above. The question of money

²⁰ Interview with Rev. Meshack Wachiuri, (Gichira, 16/7/78).

paid as baptismal fee also created some suspicion concerning the motives of Alexander, because he was taking the whole amount without leaving some to the local Church. On top of this he increased the baptismal fee from two shillings and fifty cents to five shillings towards the end of his stay in Kikuyuland.²¹ What frightened the KISA leaders was Alexander's intentions of establishing his AOC among them, and since they would be under him, all the funds collected would be sent to him at his Headquarters in South Africa. To the KISA leaders, this was unacceptable. The sweet words contained in the letter Alexander had sent them were turning bitter, because he was becoming another missionary in a different guise. KISA leaders were after a Church with no strings of dependency attached. But before the worsening relationship had reached a breaking point the time for Alexander to train the Church ministers, had expired.

On 27th June 1937, the Ordination ceremony was held at Gituamba where masses of independents gathered from all corners of Kenya. Alexander ordained Daudi Maina Kiragu from Muranga, Philip Kiande from Nyeri, Harrison Gachukia from Kiambu and Arthur Gathuna Gatungu (of the KKEA of South Kiambu). He then left Gituamba and went to stay with Arthur Gatungu at Ruthimitu in Kiambu. After holding a farewell party with the people of Ruthimutu he was escorted by Arthur Gatungu and

²¹Corfield, The origins and growth of mau mau, p. 174

Philip Kiande (his two close associates at Gituamba seminary) and he boarded a train for Mombasa on 6th July 1937.²²

(b) The Naming of the New Churches

Now that both KISA and KKEA had their own ministers, the next thing was to give names to their Church. If KISA had named its Church, it is unlikely that Archbishop Alexander would have thought of establishing his AOC among them for this would have meant a direct attack on their Church. It was after the departure of Alexander in 1937 that the Church was given a name. KISA called its Church the "African Independent Pentecostal²³ Church of Africa (AIPCA)". KKEA, under the influence of Arthur Gatungu, their minister, accepted to take Alexander's "Africans Orthodox Church". The close contact of Alexander and Gatungu, thus fulfilled Alexander's wish of having a branch of his Church in Kikuyuland.

²² Kiragu, Kiria giatumire Independent igie, p. 13

²³ The term "Pentecostal" in this case indicates that the founders of this Church were guided by the Holy Spirit, See Gategithimo ga Kirira Kia African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa, "Catechism of AIPCA" (Karatina: Karatina Printing Press 1970) p. 13. The AIPCA differs in many ways from the Pentecostal sects, for example its members do not practice the phenomenon of speaking in tongues and prophesying through the Holy Spirit.

A poor relationship developed between KISA leaders and Kiande in Nyeri due to his close links with Gatungu of the AOC. This finally led to his expulsion from KISA in 1938. He joined Gatungu's AOC and he established some schools and churches in Nyeri which he called "Orthodox". These schools were not managed by the KKEA in South Kiambu. In the same year an attempt was made, through the initiative of Peter Mbiyu Koinange to bridge up the seeming differences between KISA and KKEA.²⁴ For a moment, both Associations put their differences aside and co-operated in the building of the African Teachers Training College at Githunguri. This College was meant to train better teachers not only for KISA and KKEA schools but also for other African Schools among other tribes in Kenya.

(c) The Political Impact on the AIPCA, 1940-1952

In the 1940s, KISA and its Church, AIPCA, had a ~~gradual~~ expansion in Kikuyuland, Embu, Meru and in Mombasa. Rev. Daudi Maina Kiragu took over the apostolic role which Archbishop Alexander had played during his stay among the Kikuyu. He tirelessly toured all the areas where there were AIPCA members. He even began to ordain new Church ministers to meet the increasing demand of AIPCA. By 1950

²⁴ Anderson: The Struggle for the School, p. 122.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 123

he had ordained a total of twenty ministers, two from Nyeri, eight from Embu, eight from Muranga and two from Kiambu.²⁶

During this period, things were changing fast in the political field, which were to affect the independent schools and Churches. In 1940, KCA was banned by the Colonial Government.²⁷ It was replaced by the Kenya African Union (KAU) which was meant to represent the interests of all the tribes in Kenya and bring them into unity in order to form a strong front against the British Government. In 1945, Jomo Kenyatta returned from Britain and was elected President of KAU. At the same time he became the principal of the Kenya Teachers' Training College at Githunguri. With Mbiyu Koinange, he tried to raise the standards of the college.

To unify the people quickly, an oath of unity was introduced among the Kikuyu. The oath of unity, like the song of Muthirigu of 1929, quickly spread all over Kikuyuland. Both KISA and KKEA members got involved in the taking of this oath of unity.²⁸ By taking the oath, they proved that they were still struggling for the interests of the Africans, at large. After all, there was no problem of a person being a member of a political party and at the same time being an adherent of either AIFCA or AOC. This oath was connected with a radical movement which emerged around 1948 among the Kikuyu which was known as

²⁶ Kiragu, Kiria giatumire Independent igie, p. 18.

²⁷ B. Kaggia, Roots of Freedom, (Nairobi, East Africa Publishing House 1975), p. 64.

²⁸ See D.L. Barnett and Karari Njama: Mau Mau from Within (London: Monthly Review Press 1966) p. 114-124, for details of the Oath.

"Mau Mau". The activities of this movement were widely known, but the meaning of its name remained unknown or ambiguous.²⁹

The independent schools of KISA and KKEA were accused of being not only the political platforms of agitators like Kenyatta, but also as the places where the oath was being administered. The independents were therefore lumped together with the Mau Mau movement. L.S.B. Leaky, writing in 1952, said that the leaders and followers of Mau Mau were drawn:

from the thousands of so-called Christians, nominally, but only nominally, adherents of one or other of the Christian missions, or from the many thousands of others who belong to separatist Kikuyu Churches....³⁰

By 1952, the Mau Mau movement had become too subversive to be taken for granted. In October of the same year, a State of Emergency was declared in Kenya which was followed immediately by the arrest and detention of the KAU leaders. Just before the declaration of the State of Emergency, some tension had risen up in the administrative machinery of KISA. The cause of the disagreement was the Beecher Report, the outcome of an Education Commission appointed by the Government to "inquire into the scope, content and methods of African Education, its administration and finance and to make recommendations".³¹

²⁹ D.L. Barnett and Karari Njama, Mau Mau from Within, p.153

³⁰ L.S.B. Leaky, Mau Mau and the Kikuyu, (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd. 1952) p. 61.

³¹ The Beecher Report. (Nairobi: Government Printer 1949) p.1.

Johana Kuniya, the President of KISA and also the President of Nyeri Native Court, accepted the recommendations of the Beecher Report. Willy Jimmy Wambugu Maina from Nyeri and Peter Gatabaki from Kiambu (both influential KISA leaders) were closely linked with KAU and they therefore opposed the Beecher Report on the grounds that it was meant to slow down the pace of African Education and also bring the Independent Schools under Government control.

Johana Kuniya could no longer attract the support from his former followers and he was finally ousted from his seat during the elections held at Gikumbo in Nyeri in 1950. Peter Gatabaki and Willy Jimmy Wambugu Maina took over the leadership of KISA.³² Johanna Kuniya however managed to win the support of eight schools in Nyeri which accepted the Beecher Report while the rest opposed it under the influence of Peter Gatabaki and Willy Jimmy Wambugu Maina.

(d) The closure of the independent schools and Churches

The declaration of the State of Emergency in Kenya in 1952 opened a sad phase in the history of the independent Schools and Churches in Kikuyuland. As noted above, they were regarded by the British authorities as centres for the Mau Mau operations. In an effort to suppress the movement, "Emergency Regulation 12A"³³ was promulgated

³²Anderson, The Struggle for the School, p. 122

³³Corfield, The origins and growth of Mau Mau, p. 190

on 24th October 1952, giving the member for Education the power to close down any school he thought was connected with the movement. The final death blow came on 14th November 1952, when both KISA and KKEA were declared illegal associations and their schools and associated Churches banned. The only schools that escaped this blow were those under Johana Kuniya (which had accepted the Beecher Report) and were handed over to the District Education Board.

There followed an intensified destruction of the schools believed to be Mau Mau centres. Rosberg and Nottingham have illustrated that situation in the following words:

The land of many known "terrorists" was legally confiscated, their houses and shops pulled down. The KISA and Karinga School buildings were razed to the ground or converted into mission schools. Githunguri was transformed into a Divisional Administrative Centre.³⁴

To illustrate this situation a little further, we take the Kiriti case. A stone Church building had been started in 1948 under the leadership of Samson Macohi (one of its founders in 1929). In 1950, Macohi was appointed a Sub-Chief of that area. Therefore even when independent schools and churches were banned in 1952, he continued to carry on the building of the Church. But he began to be suspected, for how could he be expected to be suppressing the

³⁴ Rosberg and Nottingham, The Myth of Mau Mau, p. 296

Mau Mau while at the same time be building a Church officially banned due to its connections with the Mau Mau? He however managed to overcome the charges and the work continued. But in 1956, another wave of accusations came up and this time Machohi was sent to detention on the grounds that it had been established beyond any doubt, that he was supporting Mau Mau.³⁵

Kiriti Church fell into the hands of the PCEA³⁶, who completed the roofing, and then posted Rev. Meshack Murage there. What became of this Church after Kenya became independent will be discussed in the next section. Without permission to hold any prayer meetings on Sundays, or any other time, the independents had two alternatives open to them: either they could forget the past and become members of any of the missionary Churches (which were pro-Government in condemning Mau Mau) or they could remain in their houses on Sundays and pray privately. It was now a matter of personal choice because, apart from most of their leaders being in detention, they could not get permission to hold a group meeting to decide what to do.

Some people joined the missionary Churches to seek some shelter

³⁵ Interview with Samson Machohi (Kiriti 17/11/78)

³⁶ The CSM had been changed to "The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in 1943.

for a time, hoping that things would get better soon and they would return to their Churches. Others felt that they could not join the missionary Churches for this would be tantamount to condemning the Mau Mau movement. If they were identified with the loyalists, they would be attacked by the Mau Mau. Others feared going back to the missionary Churches because it would be shameful for them to be looked at like the "prodigal son" (Lk 15:11-32) who finally returned to his father after things got worse for him. It was, therefore, a situation in which decision making was upset by various factors. One had to decide where to pledge loyalty, whether to the Colonial Government, and the Missionary Churches and therefore be anti-mau mau, or to be loyal to the mau mau and therefore be anti-missionary and anti-Government, or take a middle course through which one shared his loyalty between the two opposed sides depending on the circumstances of the day. The independent schools and churches remained closed throughout the period of the State of Emergency, until 1963 when Kenya achieved her political independence.

(e) The AIPCA re-opened

During all the time when their Churches were banned, the AIPCA members, especially those who had not joined missionary Churches, were anxiously looking forward to a time when they would assemble again in their Churches. With the attainment of the internal Self-Government in Kenya on 1st June 1963, their dreams began to come true. Arrangements began for reviving the AIPCA, for the members were confident that once

Kenya attained her Independence, they would be allowed to re-open their closed Churches.

In Nyeri, for example, Rev. Meshack Wachiuri, wrote a circular letter on 10th September 1963, to all AIPCA leaders in Nyeri District telling them that the time had come for them to revive their Churches.³⁷ A meeting was organised and held on 16th September 1963, at Muthinga in Nyeri during which the late Willy Jimmy Wambugu Maina addressed the assembled leaders. The aim of the meeting was to discuss how the Churches were to be re-opened. From this time, Rev. Meshack Wachiuri used to go to ask permission from Nyeri Police Station in order to hold prayer meetings on Sundays. Since their former prayer house had been razed down, they used to assemble on the site where their Church once stood. Other AIPCA Churches began to appear in other parts of Kikuyuland once again.

After Kenya became Independent in 1963, the AIPCA was given an official permission to reopen their Churches and work of reconstructing the Churches began. Slowly some of those who had sought shelter in the missionary Churches began to return to their former Churches

³⁷ Interview with Rev. Meshack Wachiuri (who still has a copy of the circular letter that he wrote) 16/11/78.

but some have opted not to go back to the AIPCA. As more Churches were re-opened, there arose a demand for more Church ministers. A training course was organised and Kiriti AIPCA in Nyeri was chosen as the Divinity School. It was mentioned above that Kiriti was taken by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in 1956. After 1963, the AIPCA members of Kiriti raised a loud voice demanding their Church back. After a hot controversy, they finally got their Church back, which was officially re-opened in 1965.³⁸

In 1966, the training course began and there were about thirty students drawn from all parts where AIPCA had members. Interesting enough, Philip Kiande, who had been expelled by KISA back in 1938, and who had founded his Orthodox schools and Churches in Nyeri (which were also banned during the Mau Mau crisis) became the first teacher at Kiriti. The old communal effort was rekindled, for the women of Kiriti area provided food, water and firewood to the students during their four years' stay at Kiriti. The students were paying about forty shillings per term.³⁹ In 1969, the students were ordained, being the

³⁸ The most Rev. Archbishop Benjamin Kahihia of the AIPCA, resides at Kiriti.

³⁹ Interview with Archdeacon John Ndungu (a student of the Kiriti School at that time - Gatumbiro, 16/12/78).

first lot to be ordained since the State of Emergency was declared in 1952.

Something about this school should be mentioned at this point. Unlike other seminary schools with established classrooms, halls of residence and libraries, the Kiriti school is composed of three buildings. There is the big stone Church, a house of the Archbishop and a third small house. The Church serves as the classroom, while students squeeze in the other two houses for their accomodation . Without a library, the teacher is the source of all the teaching which centres mainly on the liturgical activities. Some Church history, especially of how the Orthodox Church came to Africa, is also taught. Entry qualifications are simple. Academic qualifications do not matter much; what matters is the recommendation of the Church elders from one's area. In order to attract young people to become ministers in the Church, the marriage qualification which was required in the past, has been overlooked and unmarried ministers are being trained.

In the 1960s, the AIPCA was looked at, with some justification, as the Church of the old people. Kungu Gatabaki, writing in 1967 about Githunguri AIPCA, observed that:

Here it is not the majority of young men and women who have come to worship God. It is not the young priest found in most of the other Churches, who is giving the sermon; and it is not in English that most people are speaking. But here are gathered old men and women, most of them in their sixties and seventies, flanked by their grand children.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Kungu Gatabaki, "The Pentecostal Church: resurgent", Kenya Weekly News 2146, 31/3/1967, p. 13.

This characteristic of the AIPCA is slowly changing. With young people joining the Church and young priests officiating during the Church services, this Church is no longer a monopoly of the old people. The old have realized that the future of their Church will depend on the young people who will be its future leaders.

In what ways has the AIPCA provided a Church in which its members can feel at home? The AIPCA members select to abandon those traditional practices which, from their religious point of view, are regarded as unChristian. These include witchcraft, magic, and activities of medicine men. Such practices are condemned; those practices which are regarded as not conflicting with Christian teaching are still practised. Female circumcision, which was magnified and used as the cause for Schism in 1929, has lost much of its former value. There are reasons for explaining this. First, the old people who would have liked to practice it have no young girls, for their daughters are people with families. Secondly the influence of educated girls of other Churches, who do not undergo this rite has made the girls in the AIPCA to refuse to undergo this rite. But this does not mean that this practice has completely died out. It is still practised although by a few and the frequency of its occurrence differs from region to region. The AIPCA on its part, has not condemned this practice. Hence, whether one wants to practice it or not is left to the individual to choose, and it has nothing to do with Church membership.

Polygamy has not yet become a sin in the AIPCA "because a man can marry any number of wives as his material wealth can allow

him to support.⁴¹ The taking of snuff is still practised by some members. One often observes, either before or after the Church service, the social activity of passing the snuff box among the snuff takers. Beer drinking is however condemned due to its undesirable after-effects. Other aspects of the traditional practices and beliefs which some AIPCA members have retained will be discussed in the chapters that follow. But it is noteworthy that the above practices are outrightly condemned as unChristian by other Churches such as the PCEA and CPK,⁴² to name only a few.

For administrative purposes, the areas covered by this Church are divided into four regions, each called a diocese which is under a bishop. There are four dioceses as shown in the following table. (See also map III. p. 53)⁴³

⁴¹ Interview with Elijah Gakuu, Kiriti, 3/11/78

⁴² The former CMS Anglican Church is today known as the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK).

⁴³ The AIPCA has been accepted as a member of the National Christian Council of Kenya this year (1979). See Target no. 289, 16/6/79.

TABLE I

	<u>NAME OF DIOCESE</u>	<u>AREAS COVERED</u>	<u>NAME OF BISHOP</u>
1.	NOTHERN DIOCESE	- Nyeri District - Nyandarua "	Archbishop Benjamin Kahihia
2.	CENTRAL DIOCESE	- Muranga District - Kiambu " - Kirinyaga " - Nairobi Area - Mombasa Area - Ukambani	Bishop George Muhia
3.	EASTERN DIOCESE	- Embu District - Meru "	Bishop Nathan M'mkunga /
4.	RIFT VALLEY DIOCESE	Mainly in Nakuru - District - Western Province	Bishop William Mureithi

Source: Interview with Archbishop Benjamin Kahihia (3/11/78, Kiriti)

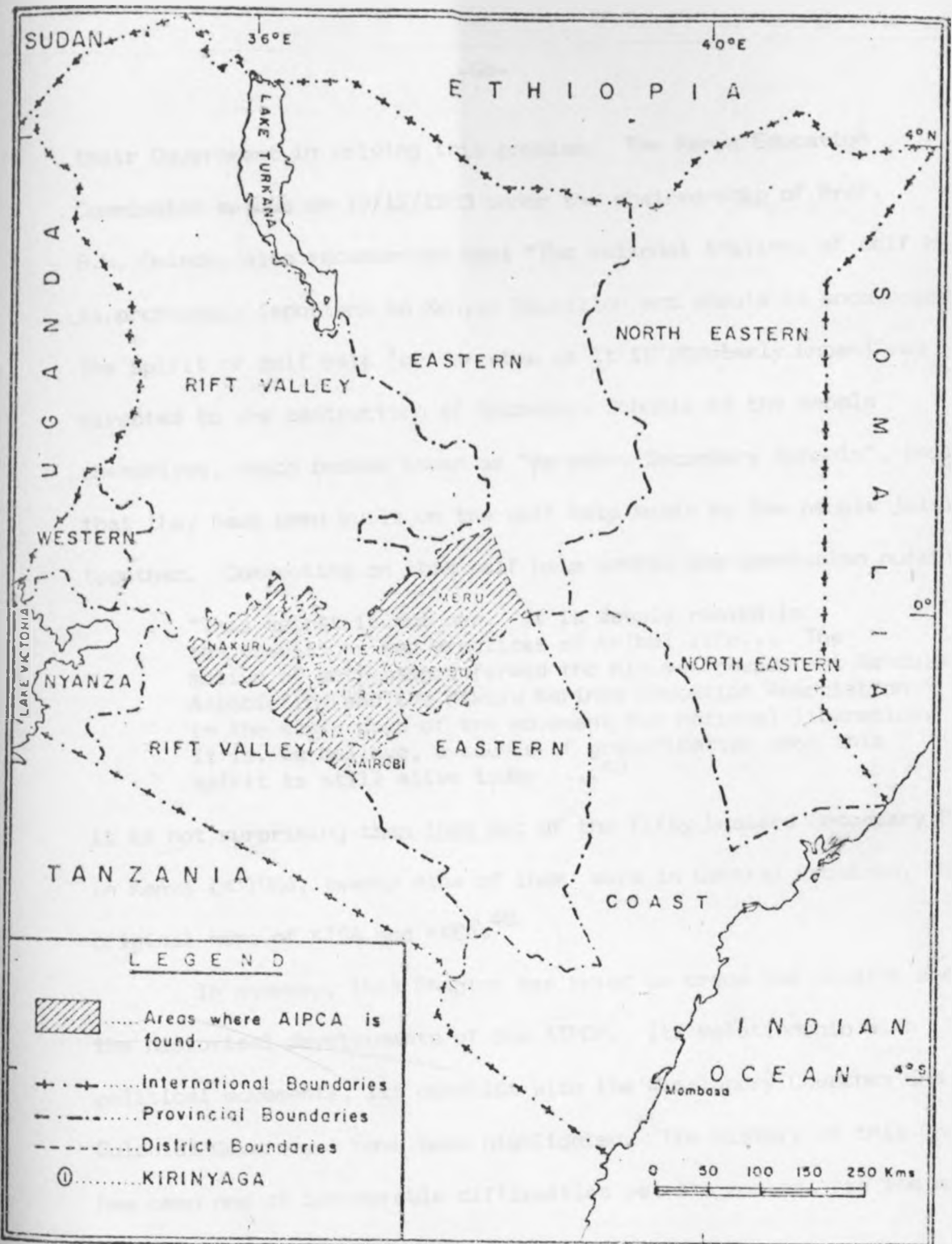
: Interview with Bishop Mureithi (10/8/81, Nakuru).

In 1966, there were about 18,000 members of AIPCA. The number had risen to 496,000 in 1971⁴⁴. This number has risen since then. One of the Churches visited during the research, Muthua-ini AIPCA, which has a stone building, is being enlarged because more members have joined the Church and it cannot accommodate all those who go for service on Sundays. The author observed a congregation of over two hundred and fifty people at Muthua-ini Church. From Table I, it can be seen that the AIPCA is still mainly found among the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu people. It is, however, beginning to take roots among other tribes such as the Kamba, the Maasai, the Luhya and the Kalenjins.⁴⁵

So far, no reference has been made to the former KISA and KKEA Schools. These schools were not reopened when the Churches were revived for two main reasons. First, the KISA and KKEA leaders were satisfied with the Education being handled by their Government. After all, all their efforts were directed at having educated people who would get rid of the white man. Secondly, there was a more urgent problem which attracted their efforts than their former primary schools. This was the gap that existed between the primary education and secondary education. Despite the Kenya Government's efforts to open more secondary schools, only a few primary school leavers could get places in those secondary schools. The people were told to join hands with

⁴⁴ David B. Barret, G.K. Mambo, J. McLaughlin
M.J. McVeigh ed. Kenya Churches handbook, the development of Kenyan Christianity 1493-1973. (Kisumu Evangel Publishing House, 1973), p.232.

⁴⁵ Interview with Bishop William Mureithi (10/8/81, Nakuru).



MAP 3 AREAS WHERE THE AIPCA IS ESTABLISHED IN KENYA

Note: New AIPCA Churches are being established in Ukambani (Eastern Province) and in the Rift Valley. (Source: Interview with Bishop William Mureithi, 10/8/81, Nakuru).

their Government in solving this problem. The Kenya Education Commission set up on 19/12/1963 under the chairmanship of Prof. S.H. Ominde, also recommended that "The national instinct of self help is profoundly important to Kenyan Education and should be encouraged..."⁴⁶ The spirit of self help (or Harambee as it is popularly known) was directed to the construction of Secondary Schools by the people themselves, which became known as "Harambee Secondary Schools", implying that they have been built on the self help basis by the people joining together. Commenting on this self help spirit the commission noted:

"This spirit is not new. It is deeply rooted in the traditions and practices of tribal life... The motive of self-help informed the Kikuyu Independent Schools Association and the Kikuyu Karinga Education Association in the early days of the movement for national liberation. It is, we believe, a source of gratification that this spirit is still alive today....."⁴⁷

It is not surprising then that out of the fifty unaided Secondary Schools in Kenya in 1964, twenty nine of them were in Central Province, the original home of KISA and KKEA.⁴⁸

In summary, this Chapter has tried to trace the origins and the historical developments of the AIPCA. Its relationship with political movements, its conflict with the Missionary Churches and the Colonial Government have been highlighted. The history of this Church has been one of innumerable difficulties yet its members see the mighty

⁴⁶ The Kenya Education Commission (Nairobi: Government Printer, 1964), Part I, p. 12.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 73

hand of God directing this history, for it is his will that they have at last gone back to their churches to worship him. In their interpretation of eschatology, as we shall see later, they look back to their sufferings as part of the fulfilment of Jesus' predictions about the last days before the end of the world comes. It is among these members of AIPCA that we shall find out how they understand the concept of "eschatology". But first, the next chapter will trace how this concept developed in the Old Testament period and then during the New Testament period.



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Most Rev. Daniel William Alexander, D.D.



The first AIPCA Archbishop, the Archbishop Benjamin Kahihia.



Top: Kiriti AIPCA, which functions as a seminary.

Below: The house to the right is the home of the AIPCA Archbishop.



Top: Muthua-ini AIPCA

Below: Kabage AIPCA

CHAPTER THREE

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "ESCHATOLOGY"
IN THE BIBLE AND THE WORD "END" IN KIKUYU

(a) The Term "Eschatology"

The term eschatology is formed from two Greek words, eschatos, meaning last and logos meaning discourse. Etymologically then, eschatology means discourse about the last things or the eschata. The whole idea about the last things is a complex one. S. Mowinkle, after stating the fact that the term eschatology has occasioned much confusion among biblical scholars says:

Eschatology is a doctrine or a complex of ideas about the last things which is more or less organically coherent and developed. Every eschatology includes in some form or other a dualistic conception of history and implies that the present state of things and the present world order will suddenly come to an end and be superseded by another of an essentially different kind.¹

By stating that the doctrine of eschatology is "coherent and developed" Mowinkle implies that this doctrine developed over a period of time before it attained its coherent form. The reference to "every eschatology" implies that there are various forms of

¹S. Mowinkle, He that cometh, Tran. by G.W. Anderson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1959), p. 125.

eschatology representing various views of eschata or of the last things .

According to Mowinkle's definition, one can only talk of eschatology as a coherent doctrine in the last parts of the Old Testament (OT) and in the New Testament (NT). J. Bright sees, however, eschatological ideas taking their roots in the OT during the prophetic period or even earlier.² R.E. Clements, like Bright, also advocates for a definition that includes the eschatological ideas found in the OT period.

Eschatology is the study of ideas and beliefs concerning the end of the present world order and the introduction of a new order.³

From this brief survey on the problem of definition, it becomes evident that no discussion on eschatology can avoid taking into account the background of the eschatological ideas in the OT. It is only in the light of this OT background that the NT ideas about the end of the world can be understood.

For the purpose of this study, we shall use the term eschatology to mean the Christian belief about a coming end of the present world order and the establishment of a new order which will

²J. Bright, Covenant and promise (London: SCM Press 1977) p. 19

³R.E. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, (London: SCM Press, 1965) p. 105.

include especially the return of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgement. Due to shortage of time, we cannot discuss in detail how the doctrine of eschatology developed. It is important, however, to mention some of the social, political and cultural conditions in which the eschatological thought was formulated. This will be important when comparing how the AIPCA members interpret eschatology in the light of their present life situations, and experiences.

(b) Eschatology in the Old Testament

After the death of Solomon, the golden age for the history of the Israelites began to decline. The kingdom was divided into the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. The political stability and economic prosperity enjoyed during the reign of David came to an end. The nation of Israel was now facing threats of invasion from the neighbouring nations especially Assyrians. Worst of all, Israel had turned her back against her God, Yahweh, and was practising idolatry (1 King. 12: 28-33).

During such a troubled period, the people inevitably wished that Yahweh would intervene and restore the lost glory of the Davidic period. The people began to look forward to a day when their God, Yahweh, would remember them and come to deliver His people

from their sufferings and oppression.⁴ This day became popularly known as the "Day of Yahweh". This was the situation in the two kingdoms by the time the writing prophets appeared. The pre-exilic prophets had a negative view towards the day of the Lord due to the total misbehaviour, social injustice and negligence of religious observances in Israel. For them, the expected day of the Lord would not be a day of victory but a day of punishment (Am. 5:18-20; Am. 5:9; Is. 1:4-5; Jer. 1:4-16). In spite of utter hopelessness of the situation the prophets however still believed that Yahweh would at least save a remnant (Am. 9:8-15; Hos. 2:16-25; Is. 7:14-17; Jer. 3:17).

In the sense of eschatology as the end of a particular historical period to be followed by quite a different one, the pre-exilic prophets can be regarded as eschatological. R.E. Clements has termed their eschatology:

... an eschatology of doom in which the existing order between Yahweh and Israel was threatened with extinction.⁶

For the pre-exilic prophets, the end of the present world order would be marked by the invasion of the nation of Israel by a foreign nation after which God would restore a remnant of the

⁴S. Mowinkle, He that cometh p. 145

⁵The pre-exilic prophets include Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Zechariah and Jeremiah.

⁶Clements, prophecy and Covenant, p. 110.

faithful in a new world order under his divine guidance.

During the period between the Exile (587 BC) up to the time the book of Daniel was written (about 165 BC)⁷ remarkable developments of the ideas about the end of the world took place. The misfortune which had fallen upon the people of Israel of being taken captives to Babylon, may have influenced their religious outlook. Without a king, the hope of a coming messiah (the ideal King) must have been a great consolation to them.

According to the post-Exilic prophets the exile into Babylon was a kind of Yahweh's judgement (Is. 40:1-2; 51:17-20)⁸. After the punishment, God would come back to his people and save them from their oppressors (Is. 51:21-23). On top of the national salvation of Israel, the writer of the book of Isaiah entertained some hope that the whole world would have a share in God's salvation through the commission of the servant of Yahweh (Is. 42:1-4). The passages about the servant of Yahweh laid a basis on which later messianic interpretations were made, especially in the early Christian Church in relation to the person of Christ (Act. 8:32-33). Another idea which emerges in Deutero-Isaiah is the idea of "the world to come"

⁷The book Daniel is regarded as the last book of the Hebrew Scripture.

⁸(Exile refers to the Jews' captivity in Babylon)

Chapters 40-55 of the book of Isaiah are regarded as the work of a later writer not the prophet Isaiah who was active around 740-701 BC: This prophet is referred to as Deutero-Isaiah i.e. Second Isaiah.

being not in this world but other-worldly. This other-worldly view was due to Persian influence.

In the book of Daniel, a new idea emerges about the symbolic figure of one like the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13). Also, the writer talked of the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12:1-4). The writer was answering the question raised by the problem of martyrdom of the faithful Jews during the Maccabean revolution.⁹ In connection with this problem, the writer brought forward the idea of rewards after death for the faithful and punishment for the wicked people. Thirdly the writer of Daniel was thinking of a world beyond this world. The Persian influence of Dualism (a belief in this world and a world beyond) meant a considerable strengthening of the other-worldly element in the beliefs about the end of the world, during this post-exilic period.¹⁰

During the inter-testamental period, there was an intensification of some eschatological thoughts. The coming messiah was the one who would conduct the final Judgement (1 En. 45:3). The theme of death and resurrection was greatly coloured with many speculations. As T.F. Glasson has observed:

the inter-testamental literature abounds in ideas of the geography of the next world, and the locations of paradise and hell as the destinations of the good and the bad people respectively, are elaborated at a great length.¹¹

⁹B. Metzger, -- New Testament background, growth and content, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965) p. 20. (For the origins of the Maccabean revolution see pg. 79)

¹⁰Mowinkle, He that Cometh p. 267.

¹¹T.F. Glasson, The Second Advent, (London: Epworth Press, 1963) p. 16

To sum up this section, it should be noted that the beliefs that the Jews had developed about a coming messiah or ideal King, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgement were not realized by the time the O.T. was written. It was in this situation of expecting the promised messiah that Jesus emerged whose person and work form the core of the New Testament.

(c) Eschatology in the New Testament

The central message of Jesus' preaching is the imminence of the Kingdom of God. On more than one occasion, he claimed that the dawning of the Kingdom of God in his mission was the fulfilment of the O.T. prophecies. To his disciples he once said:

Happy are the eyes that see what you are seeing:
I tell you many prophets and Kings wished to see
what you see, yet never saw it, to hear what you
hear, yet never heard it (Lk 10:23-24).

What the prophets and Kings had desired so much to see was nothing less than the Kingdom of God, which Jesus now claimed not only to have dawned upon his hearers but actually to be present among them.

Besides Jesus' emphasis on the presence of the Kingdom, he seems at the same time, to have reserved a phase of the Kingdom, its final consummation, to be seen in the future (Mk.9:1). The sayings about the Son of Man coming on the clouds (Mk.13:26; 14:62) point to a future direction of the Kingdom. Even the so called

parables of the parousia,¹² which include the parable of the thief in the night (Mt. 24:43), the ten virgins (Mt. 25: 1-13) the door keeper (Mk 13: 33-35) the talents (Mt. 25:14-30) can also be included in this category of Jesus' teaching about the consummation of the Kingdom at the parousia.

The tension between the sayings about the presence of the Kingdom on the one hand and the Kingdom as a future phenomenon on the other runs through the N.T., as G. Bornkamm has observed:

We must not separate the statements about the future and the present, as is already apparent from the fact that in Jesus' preaching they are related in the closest fashion.¹³

While Jesus endorsed O.T. ideas such as the resurrection of the dead (Mk 13:26) a coming judgement (Mt.19:28) and a consummation of the Kingdom by the Son of Man (Mk 8:38) he declined, however, from giving a date when the end of the world would take place. The apocalyptic discourse in Mk. 13, is no criterion for timing the end. As G.E. Ladd has stated, "the Olivet discourse describes no signs by which the end can be calculated".¹⁴ According to Jesus, the

¹²Parousia refers to the second coming of Christ.

¹³G. Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth, Tran. by Irene M. McLuskey and J.H. Robinson. (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1960) p. 92

¹⁴G.E. Ladd, Jesus and the Kingdom, (London S.P.C.K. 1969) p. 322.

arising of false messiahs and wars will not be a sign of the end because after these things "the end is still to come" (Mk.13:8).

In concluding this section on the eschatology of the N.T., it is worth noting that its central theme is on the parousia. The end of this world order then, will be associated with the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the transformation of the living and the last judgement. Thus, the three themes of parousia, resurrection and last judgement form the core of the Christian belief of the coming end of the world.

(d) How the Kikuyu express the idea of the "end"

According to Kikuyu belief, Ngai (God) and his creation are there to stay, from generations past to generations to come. History will continue without coming to an end. The only end the Kikuyu know of is that of an individual person's earthly life which comes at a person's death. Such Christian beliefs as eschatology (the coming end of this world order) are lacking in the Kikuyu religious beliefs. J. Mbiti has emphatically stressed this total lack of any eschatological ideas among Africans in the following words: "... we find not even the remotest idea or parallel in African background".¹⁵

¹⁵ J. Mbiti, New Testament eschatology in an African background (London, Oxford University Press, 1971) p.39.

The Kikuyu language is however rich in words which express the idea of an end, though not the end of the world. Some of these words are examined in this section because they have been used to translate biblical eschatological ideas in Kikuyu. The word guthira literally means to be finished, to come to an end, die out or perish.¹⁶ Derived from this verb is the word muthiro which while it may refer to an end, it is used mostly to refer to epidemics during which people or animals die in large numbers. Such an epidemic, then, can be referred to as a muthiro wa andu or muthiro wa nyamu, literally, the mass death of people or animals. The term muthiro has acquired an eschatological significance among the Kikuyu Christians. They use it to refer to the coming end of the world hence the phrase, muthiro wa thi, literally, the end of the world. The following verses of some of the hymns sung by the AIPCA Christians serve as an illustration:

Hymn 106.

1. Muthiro wa thi ni mukinyu.
Wa kunyariruo kwa aria atheru.
Mambate mucii wa matu-ini
Mathina mothe ma guku thi.
Na mbaara iria ciothe mucnaga.
Na ma cierekeire guthira.

¹⁶ See. T.G. Benson, ed. Kikuyu-English Dictionary (London Claredon Press, 1964) p. 516.

Literally: The end of the world has come for the saints
to be persecuted (then) they go to the heavenly
home.

All the problems of this world,
And all the wars that you see,
For sure, they are coming to an end.

Hymn. 136

1. . Muthiro wa thi ni mukinyu
Tonde wa uru muingi
Umanite na irindi cia thi
Nduriri-ini ciothe.

Literally:

The end of the world has come
Because of too much evil
which has been brought about by the
people of this world,
Among all the nations of the earth.¹⁷

Another term derived from guthira is ithiriro or ithiriro-ini.

It refers to the point at which things come to an end. In the book
of Ecclesiastes, for example, the phrase "from beginning to end"

is translated as "kuuma o Kiambiriria o nginya ithiriro".

(Eccles. 3:11)¹⁸. In the book of Daniel, this term is used in the
eschatological sense to refer to the coming end of the world: "No we

Danieli - ri, ndeto iria nyandike ibuku-ini, uchihingire ho na
ucicinirire muhuri, nginya hindi iria ithiriro rigakinya,...."

Literally, : But you, Daniel, keep the words secret and seal the
book till the time of the end comes (Dan. 12:4).

¹⁷ Nyimbo cia Kiroho, "Book of spiritual songs", (Kijabe: Kijabe
Printing Press, 1979 imp.)

¹⁸ The Kikuyu Bible used in this study is "Ibuku ria Ngai" (Nairobi:
The Bible Society of Kenya 1965).

Similarly, the eschatological phrase in the apocalyptic discourse in the gospel of Mark, "but the end is still to come" is translated as "ithiriro ti ikinyu" (Mk. 13:7). The other word is riika, which means to come to an end or to be completed. The completion may be of a discussion, an event or a piece of work. Derived from this word is the term kirikiriro. While this term refers to an end, there is the idea that the end in this case is a destiny, a fate or an outcome. In the book of Daniel, this term is used eschatologically when the writer enquires what will be the fate of the world when all the things about the end of the world are fulfilled: "... Atiriri Mwathani wakwa, Kirikikiriro-ini kia maundu macio gugakinya atia?" meaning, "Oh my Lord, what shall be the issue of these things?" (Dan. 12:8 Rsv). Carrying the same meaning is the word irigiririo, which is derived from the verb rigia, meaning to be last or to come last. Irigiririo does, however, stress the idea of finality or conclusion. The words muthia and muico are both used in the Kikuyu language to indicate the end, such as the end of a discussion. The Kikuyu Christians have taken up these words and have used them to express the biblical ideas about the end of the world.

The word niina, (or miina) means to finish or to complete an activity or a piece of work. It also means to consume, destroy completely or put to an end something. In case of an epidemic, the disease is said to claim or to put to an end the lives of people or animals: "Murimu ni uraniina andu na nyamu, literally, "The epidemic

is killing both people and animals", the disease is the cause of the death. When the word is used by the Kikuyu Christians when referring to the coming end of the world it is God who is said to perform the action of bringing the world to an end: "Ngai ni akanina thi", literally, "God will destroy the world".

Finally, the words tene and thutha need to be mentioned. Strictly speaking, tene is a name of one of the earliest ruling generations of the Kikuyu people. Besides this meaning, this name together with Ndemi and Matwathi, which are also names of early ruling generations of the Kikuyu has been used to refer to the past. When stressing that something happened very very long ago, the word tene is used repeatedly, "tene tene". The word tene can also be used to refer to a distant future. Thus, the Kikuyu Bible has used the word tene in the form of tene na tene to translate the idea of eternity, for ever and ever, or everlasting. "Nao andu acic nimagathii kuria kuharithanagirio. tene na tene; no riri, aria athingu nimagatonya muoyo-ini wa tene na tene", meaning, "And they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous will enter eternal life". (Mt. 25:46). Thutha means after or at the back. It implies that something else has gone before or has happened after which another event takes place. For example in the book of Ecclesiastes, it reads; "... na uria gugatuika tutha-ini no uria gwatarii tene...", meaning, "...and whatever is to come has been already" (Eccles. 3:15).

(e) Summary of observations

From the foregoing survey on the ways the terms "end" and "eschatology" are used, the following conclusions can be drawn. In the O.T., the idea of a coming end is related to the written prophets (750-167 BC). The end which was expected during this period was a change of the present world order to a better world order, to be experienced in this world. The change was to be effected by Yahweh.

Towards the end of the OT period, the hope of a coming messiah who will establish the divine rule on earth dominates. Also there occurs a shift from a this-worldly eschatology to an other-worldly eschatology, whereby the new order will not be realized here on earth but in heaven. The OT, however, closes up without the hope of the messiah or the divine rule having been fulfilled.

We have observed from the NT that Jesus claimed that the OT prophecies had been fulfilled and the Kingdom so long awaited, had come through his work, which was to culminate in his death and resurrection. The primitive Church in turn confessed Jesus as the awaited messiah. The relationship of the OT and the NT has been summarised thus: "The religion of the Old Testament is one of Promise and Pilgrimage, that of the New Testament one of achievement and fulfilment."¹⁹

¹⁹ C.K. Barret, "Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews", in W.D. Davies, ed. The background of the New Testament and its eschatology, (Cambridge 1956), p. 382.

While in the OT the Jews expected a messiah who would help them re-establish a political kingdom like the one David had once established, in the NT Jesus appears as a proclaimer of the presence of the Kingdom of God, which is non-political, unlike the one the Jews had expected. For Jesus, the Kingdom he has established is for all nations not for Jews alone. Whereas in the OT it is Yahweh who will be the judge, in the NT, Jesus, the Son of Man takes over the role of the Judge. Also the title "Lord" which in the OT refers to Yahweh, is in the NT used to refer to Jesus.

As it has been observed while the NT is full of notions of fulfilment of OT hopes and promises, there however emerges a new eschatological hope, the hope of the return of Jesus, to consummate the inaugurated Kingdom. It is around this second coming or the parousia that the eschatology of the NT revolves, and the eschatological ideas and imagery of the OT are re-applied with a new vigour in reference to the parousia. T.F. Glasson has put it thus:

In a sense, the doctrine of the Parousia was not new, all the essential details are found in the OT description of the coming theophany. Broadly speaking, the Christians took over the OT doctrine of the Advent of the Lord, making the single adjustment that the Lord was the Lord Jesus.²⁰

²⁰Glasson, The second advent p. 183

Unlike in the OT where the individual person does not figure very much, in the NT the end of the world is mainly centred on the destiny of each person because it is the individual who will face the coming judgement (Mk 9: 38-41, Mt. 25:14-30).

The world wide or universal aspect of eschatology is still maintained in the N.T., especially by Paul's move to concentrate his missionary activities among the Gentiles. One of the many signs to precede the parousia is that the Gospel must first be preached to all the nations (Mk. 13:10).

It was noted that in the Kikuyu religious beliefs, there is no belief comparable to the biblical concept of eschatology. To make up for this lack, the Kikuyu Bible translation has taken up those words which refer to "an end" (though not the eschatological end) to express ideas about the expected end of the world. At this point, one thing to be noted is that the Kikuyu know ~~of~~ one "end" that is beyond any doubt, the end of a person's earthly life, marked by the inevitable hard fact of death. Hence, the place of death in the eschatological drama will be the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

ESCHATOLOGY AND THE AFTER-LIFE

In the last chapter, three Christian beliefs about eschatology (the end of the present world order) were mentioned, namely, the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgement. In this chapter the idea of the resurrection of the dead will be examined as it relates to the question of the destiny of man. The term resurrection is used in this chapter to refer to the coming back to life of the dead in new and different bodies. The first section will examine how the idea of resurrection developed in the Old Testament (OT). Then the belief of resurrection in the New Testament (NT) will be discussed. The third part will examine the Kikuyu view of death and the after life. Finally the way the members of African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa interpret death and resurrection will be discussed.

(a) Death and the After-life in the Old Testament

In the OT the death of a person brings to an end the person's life in this world. To die at an old age is the normal death (Gen. 15:15). To die old and leave children to perpetuate one's name "was the hope of every member of the people..."¹ Premature

¹E. Jacobs, Theology of the Old Testament, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), p. 300.

death was regarded as a bad death.

Jews believed that the dead continued to exist in the abode of the spirits in the underworld called sheol. But the life in sheol is not worth living, neither is it a life to which one can aspire because sheol itself is described as a land of "deep darkness, the land of gloom and chaos". (Job 10"21-22)

Consulting of the dead however, seems to have been practiced by some of the Jews. For instance King Saul is reported to have asked the medium of Endor to call for him from the dead the spirit of Samuel in order to seek guidance in connection with his imminent war with the Philistines (1Sam 28: 3-18). Sheol was therefore the destiny of all the dead, and there was no belief in the resurrection of the dead.

The belief in the resurrection of the dead was developed by the time the book of Daniel was written (about 165 BC). This was a time of social crisis among the Jews. The Seleucids who were ruling the Jews by then, "felt themselves called to be apostles of the Greek culture (Hellenism) throughout their dominions, and encouraged the use of the Greek language and the adoption of Greek customs".²

² B. Metzger - New Testament background, Growth and Content (London: Lutherworth Press 1969). p. 18.

Some Jews accepted the Greek culture but there was a conservative group called the Hasideans (the Pious Ones) which opposed the new culture. In 167 B.C., the Hasideans led by a priest known as Mattathias and his five sons, rose in an armed struggle to defend themselves. This struggle, known as the Maccabean revolution, lasted up to 164 B.C., when a peace treaty was signed by Judas (3rd Son of Mattathias, nicknamed Maccabees, hence the name of the struggle) and Lysias the Syrian general. Although the Hasideans won the war, many of them had died during the struggle.

The martyrdom for the faithful Jews raised a religious problem. How could God fail to reward those who had died fighting for the religion of Yahweh? The old belief of sheol as the destiny for all the dead could not provide a solution. The belief in the resurrection of the dead from sheol, followed by a judgement, leading to rewards and punishment for the faithful and the wicked respectively, was developed to provide a solution:

... many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake, some to everlasting life and some to the reproach of ternal abhorence. (Dan. 12: 1-2).

In the intertestamental literature, the belief of resurrection was further developed. The account in II Mac. 7:9 illustrates this belief. One of the seven sons about to be killed for their refusal to denounce Judaism during the Maccabean revolt expressed their hope of being raised **up** to an everlasting life at the time of the **final resurrection**.

The pharisees (a pious religious sect of Judaism) shared this belief while the Sadducees (a politically influential sect of Judaism) refuted it.³ This was the situation when Jesus appeared, concerning the beliefs about life after death.

(b) Death and Resurrection in the New Testament

The Kerygma (the proclamation of the early church) was in fact a preaching about the risen Jesus (Acts 2:22-24, 3:13-15, 5:29-32). The christian church therefore can be regarded as a church founded on this belief of the resurrection of Jesus. As J. Moltmann has put, "Christianity stands or falls with the reality of the raising of Jesus from the dead by God".⁴

Jesus' resurrection was thus seen as an example of what the Christians expected on the day of resurrection of the dead. This is then the NT point of departure from the ideas of resurrection in the OT. The ideas in the OT were mainly based on reasoning and speculation. But in the NT, the hope of resurrection is based on the event of Jesus'

³ For more information on religious sects among the Jews, see B. Metzger, New Testament background growth and content, p. 39

⁴ J. Moltmann, Theology of hope, (London. SCM press, 1967), p. 174.

resurrection. The early Church, in expressing their hope of resurrection, however, "made use of the terminology and thoughts that were readily available from Judaism".⁵

The NT view of death and the after-life can be summarised as follows. The hope of resurrection of the dead is based on the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection will take place on the return of Jesus, during which the dead will be raised in new spiritual bodies (1 Cor. 15:43-44) while the living will be transformed in order to have the new spiritual bodies (1 Thess. 4:13-18). In the NT, resurrection will be universal in the sense that, both Jews and Gentiles (all mankind) will be included in the resurrection. This will then be followed by the last judgement. In the NT sheol is not the destiny of the faithful Christians, their destiny is to be with Christ in heaven. This can be regarded as the Christians' hope, a hope which considers the life after death as better than the present~~y~~, and therefore a life worth striving for.

(c) Death and the after-life among the Kikuyu

In chapter two, it was noted that the Kikuyu do not have a belief of a coming end of the world. Rather than the world having an end, it is the people whose physical death brings them to an end

⁵C.F. Evans, Resurrection and the New Testament. (London, S.C.M. Press, 1970), p.20.

as far as their life in this world is concerned. Death, however, does not mean an extinction of a person's existence. It only marks the end of one mode of existence and the beginning of a new mode of existence, in an afterlife. This belief of an existence after death is expressed by Kikuyus when they say, "ng'ania ni arathire", literally, "so and so went", when they want to say that someone died. The idea that the dead person has gone implies that he has only changed the residences. Before death, he was a member of this world of physical bodies, but after death, he goes to the world of spirits.

The Kikuyu believe that at death a person becomes a spirit, which they call ngoma.⁶ The ngoma is believed to retain not only the characteristics of the person before he died, but also to continue to play the role the person used to play before the person died.⁷ Thus,

⁶ While the term ngoma, in Kikuyu refers to spirits, whether good or bad, it is used in the Bible and by Christians to translate the "evil spirits or Satan and devil". For example in Mk 5:2, the unclean spirit is called "Ngoma thuku and the dumb spirit in Mk. 9:17 is called ngoma itaaragia. When the word spirit is used in a good sense in the Bible, the Kikuyu word for spirit (ngoma) is not used. Thus in Mk. 1:12, spirit is translated by a Swahili word, Roho, while the Holy Spirit is translated, Roho Muthuru. The word ngoma has become a derogatory term in its usage by Christians.

⁷ C.W. Hopley, Bantu beliefs and magic. (London, Frank and Cass Ltd. 1967 impression) p. 29.

even after a head of a family has died, his ngoma continues to take interest in the affairs of the family. In case someone acts contrary to the wish of the deceased, the ngoma will be quick in punishing the disobedient person. The respect that the elder was given continues to be shown to his ngoma. Even the share he used to get especially during a feast, is still given to his ngoma, be it a piece of meat that is thrown on the ground, or some beer that is poured on ground. As C.W. Hobley has put it, "the spirits must not be forgotten, for are they not of the blood kin? If neglected they will be angry and punish their children".⁸

Sometimes when problems arise in a family, say, a family member falls sick, the medicine man may be consulted in order to find out if it is a ngoma which has been offended and also to say what can be offered to appease the angry ngoma.⁹ When offering something to ancestral spirits, they are called by their kinship status term such as ngoma cia baba (spirits of my father) or ngoma cia maitu (spirits of my mother).¹⁰ The person can even be addressed by his or her name, and told to eat the meat or drink the blood or beer offered.¹¹

⁸C.W. Hobley, Bantu beliefs and Magic, p. 22

⁹J. Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, (London, Secker and Warbur, 1938) p. 240.

¹⁰The use of ngoma in plural in this case may imply that the spirit is not alone, it is accompanied by the ancestral spirits of those who died before.

¹¹M.N. Kabetu, Kirira Kia Ugitovu. "Customs and traditions of the Kikuyu" (Nairobi: EALB, 1947) p. 66.

According to J. Kenyatta, there are three groups of spirits, namely, ngoma cia aciari (parental spirits), which are concerned with the welfare of the family. Then there are ngoma cia muhiriga (clan spirits), which are concerned with the affairs of the clan and its welfare. Finally there are ngoma cia riika (age-grade or tribal spirits), which are concerned with the welfare of the whole tribe.¹² The clan and tribal spirits sometimes behave in a similar manner like the parental spirits when they are neglected or offended for various reasons. In some cases, when a disease affects members of the clan or tribe, the clan and tribal spirits have to be appeased.

The official abode of the spirits is, according to Kikuyu belief which is in this case similar to the Hebrew belief, in the underworld, known as miri-ini ya mikongoe, literally, in the roots of the sisal plants. The Kikuyu also believe that the spirits, like Ngai (God), are not static at one place, hence, they are ubiquitous. Unlike the Jews who thought that life in Sheol was dull, for the Kikuyu, the spirits are active in the underworld. Some spirits even possess domestic animals such as cattle, sheep and goats.¹³ Also, the spirits are not restricted in the underworld for they can come

¹² See J. Kenyatta, Facing Mt. Kenya, p. 266-267, for details on spirits.

¹³ W.S. Routledge, With a pre-historic people, The Akikuyu of British East Africa, (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. 1968) p. 243.

back to the world of the living and reside in their former homesteads, or other places such as the waterfalls, in big trees, in big stones or they can possess people or animals. But it should be noted that objects and animals do not have ngoma, only people have ngoma.¹⁴

The relationship of the living and the dead is sometimes paradoxical in the sense that if the spirits of the departed come back too often to their living relatives, the people will try, through offerings, to send them away. The Kikuyu do not like the ngoma to be too near to them and this may explain why in the former days the homestead was shifted after the death of an elder, and his hut pulled down so that if his ngoma came back it would not find a place to live in.¹⁵ At the same time, the Kikuyu do not like the ngoma of the departed to be too far away because as noted above, they should be present during any feast that is held in the home. Also, as Kenyatta has noted, ancestral spirits must accompany the elders during a sacrifice to God.¹⁶ Thus, the Kikuyu want the spirits to keep their distance but not disappear out of sight.¹⁷ In this case the world

¹⁴ Hobley, Bantu beliefs and Magic p. 28

¹⁵ Interview with Kiruhi Tumuti - (Kabage - 28/11/78)

¹⁶ J. Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya, p. 248.

¹⁷ See J. Mbiti, New Testament Eschatology in an African background (London Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 134 where he has made a similar observation among the Akamba people.

of the spirits is geographically in the underworld, yet in the minds of the people the world of the spirits merges into the world of the living because the ngoma can be addressed as something is offered to it, which implies that the ngoma is there close to the living, although it cannot be seen.

The relationship of the living and their ancestral spirits, as discussed this far, is effective so long as there are members in the family who can remember the departed person. Once all those who can remember the departed person have died, the relationship is loosened and the influence of the ngoma of the departed likewise loses its former powers over that family¹⁸. For a ngoma to be forgotten in a family, it may be upto four or five generations after the person died.¹⁹

The above relationship of the living and the dead may help to explain one importance of children among the Kikuyu in relation to their belief of life after death. To start with, it is the children whom a person has left who provide his ngoma with its requirements in the world of the spirits, and also, it is especially among his children that a ngoma makes its presence to be felt. Hence, without children a ngoma has no one to realize its needs or its presence and this is a bad situation in which to be. This, then, explains why among

¹⁸ According to J. Mbiti, African Religions and philosophy, (London: Heinemann, 1969) p. 163, when the spirit is remembered, it is a "Living-dead" and after all those who can remember it die, then it is a spirit. The Kikuyu do not have this differentiation. Once a person dies, he becomes a spirit, which, after it is forgotten, joins the other forgotten spirits in their abode in the underworld.

the Kikuyu, one of the worst deaths is the death of an unmarried person or a childless married person, because one does not leave behind children to take care of him (his ngoma) after his death.

Another aspect of the importance of children is that of the naming of children. Among the Kikuyu, names are not mere labels to differentiate one person from the other. Names represent the personality of the person called by that name. The significance of a name is well illustrated by the naming system among the Kikuyu.

Children are named after the members of their father's and mother's families. The first born son is named after the husband's father while the first daughter is named after the husband's mother. The second son and daughter are named after the wife's father and mother respectively. The other children will be named after their parents' brothers and sisters in the same pattern.²⁰ Even if a person is dead or alive, when his or her turn comes to be "born" (that is, a child is born to be named after him or her) the child has to be named after him or her. In other words, it is the position according to the age of the persons to be named after, which matters, not whether a person is living or dead.

If a mother got a baby boy and later on the baby died, on getting another baby boy she could call him Kariuki or Muriuki.²¹ This name derives from the word riuka, meaning to rise back to life or

²⁰ Kabetu, Kirira kia Ugikuyu, p. 8

²¹ In case of a baby girl, she could be called Njoki

resurrect. Thus, the naming of a child after a departed person is sometimes regarded as an act of raising the person partially from the dead (kuriukia mundu). But the idea of resurrection as used by the Kikuyu is not the same as in the biblical usage. The Kikuyu do not think of having the dead body raised from the grave. But the naming of a child after a departed person, ensures that he is kept in the memory of the family. As it was noted above, the influence of a ngoma will depend on whether there are members of the family who can remember it. The child named after a departed elder of a family acts in that family like a signpost to remind the family members that the ngoma of the elder is not gone it is still among them.

Thus, so far as the name of a person is remembered in the family or society by having a child or children named after him, that person is regarded as still alive. But if a person dies without leaving someone particularly his own child to perpetuate his name, he disappears quickly from the minds of the family, and likewise his ngoma will have little influence for there are no children to recognise its coming back or its needs. J. Mbiti has summarised the significance of children and names in the following words:

To lose one's several names is in effect to lose one's personality and 'human' existence...to raise a family with many children is to extend and more or less perpetuate one's names, one's humanity one's personality. That is the way to become 'immortal' as far as the world of man is concerned.²²

²² J. Mbiti New Testament Eschatology in an African Background. p. 133

From the foregoing discussion on the Kikuyu view of death and afterlife, the following conclusions can be made. First, death is not the end of a person's existence because it marks only the end to the physical life of a person, after which, one enters into the spirit world. Secondly, there is no idea of rewards or punishments when a person enters the spirit world. As it was noted above, a spirit continues with the occupation the person was having while he was in this world. In this case, the world of the spirits is in many respects similar to this world, because the activities done here are also reproduced in the world of the spirits. Thirdly, even after a person has physically died, there continues a relationship of his ngoma and the living members of his family. But, as far as the Kikuyu are concerned, there is no belief of a bodily resurrection of the dead. Children are named after their relatives, and when such relatives die, they are considered as still continuing to live on in these children or adults who bear their names.

Fourthly, after all those who can remember a 'ngoma' have died, the Kikuyu do not say who becomes of the ngoma. But there are no ideas of the spirits leaving their world to go to a better or worse place such as the Christian heaven or hell. Once the spirit is forgotten by the living members, it seems that it retires into the community of the other forgotten spirits and continues to exist in the world of spirits, in the underworld, miri-ini ya mikongoe. So, to become a spirit, a retired spirit, is the destiny of man as far as the Kikuyu view of death and the afterlife is concerned.

(d) Death and the afterlife among the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) members

Before we examine how the AIPCA members understand and interpret the ideas of death and resurrection, we first make some remarks on how they interpret the idea of the end of the world. There are two types of the end of the world. The first is related to the individual person and the second is concerned with the whole world and all that is in it.

With regard to the first type when a person dies, he comes to his end of life in this world. In this case, "a person dies but leaves the world as he found it when he was born".²³ As far as this view is concerned, therefore, the world itself does not come to an end. Rather, "it is the people who live in it who come to an end".²⁴ The following Kikuyu saying expresses this idea of the end of the world as marked by a person's physical death; "Thi ithiragira unakua", literally "the world comes to an end to him who dies". The past age-sets and ruling generations, such as Iregi, Ndemi and Mathathi, are used as examples to show that they once lived in this world, came to the end of their life in this world, but the world itself has continued to exist. The implication is that the world itself does not come to an end; rather it is the people who come to an end of their life in this world at death.

²³ Interview with Grace Wahito. Kiriti 14/11/78.

²⁴ Interview with P. Kirathe Kabage, 11/12/78.

The second type of the end of the world is that which will occur during the second coming of Jesus. Those who will be alive will witness the end of the world. They will be transformed while the dead will be resurrected.

The members of the AIPCA who hold the first view do, however, acknowledge that there still remains the eschatological end which will be realized on the return of Jesus. Thus, those who have died will be raised from the dead and face the last judgement. Those who hold the second view do not consider the death of a person as marking the end of the world for that person. To them, "the death of a person is a ticket to the waiting room for the coming end of the world".²⁵ The implication is that those who die before the eschatological end of the world will witness this end of the world order at the parousia.

The hope of the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of those who will be alive on the return of Jesus is strongly emphasized among the AIPCA members. This is particularly expressed during the burial ceremony of a fellow Christian. A few of the texts read during the funeral ceremonies will illustrate this.²⁶

Jn. 11: 25-26

I am the resurrection and
I am life
If a man has faith in me, even though he dies,
he shall come to life
and no one who is alive and has faith shall ever die,

²⁵ Interview with Rev. P. Ndiritu, (Njogu-ini 11/12/78)

²⁶ Observed during a burial ceremony at Muthua-ini, 22/11/28. (This passage is used by other Churches during burial ceremonies).

(ninii kuriuka na ninii muoyo, uria wihokote
nii, ona aakua no agatuura muoyo
Na mundu owothe wi muoyo,
na akehoka nii
ndari hingo agakua).

Job 19: 25-27;

But in my heart I know that my vindicator lives,
and that he will rise last to speak in court;
and I shall discern my witness standing at my side,
and see my defending counsel, even God himself,
whom I shall see with my own eyes
I myself and no other.²⁷

(Ninjui ati munguuri e muoyo, na ni akarugama
thi ino o ithiriro-ini, ona ikonde
Ciakwa ciarikia kwiha, ni ngona Ngai
ona itari na mwiri wakwa, na ni ngamwiyonera nii
mwene, na maitho makwa kiumbe, nimo makamwiyonera
na ti mundu ungi.²⁸

²⁷ This passage from Job is debated upon by biblical scholars as to whether it refers to resurrection of the dead. But as far as the AIPCA is concerned, the passage refers to the resurrection of the dead.

²⁸ AIPCA, Ibuku ria Mahoya "Prayer book". n.d. p. 25-32.

Other texts which are read include Psalms 39 and Revelation 21: 1-7.

The resurrection of the dead will not be reserved for Christians only. Non-Christians will also be raised in order to face judgement. "Even those who died long ago, such as the Kikuyu ancestors, who died before Christianity was brought into Kikuyuland, will be raised".²⁹ But their judgement will be based on how they worshipped and obeyed God during their time. For those who have refused to become Christians, this Church does not offer funeral services to them when they die. The criterion used for a person to be given a funeral service is to have been baptised in this Church. But if someone is, for one reason or another, excommunicated from the Church or commits suicide he is not given a funeral service.³⁰ Even if the AIPCA members attend the burial ceremony, they will go as ordinary neighbours not as Christian brothers or sisters of the deceased person, and no hymns or Bible passages are read. This explains why unbaptised people ask to be baptized when they are seriously sick.

The hope of resurrection is also expressed through many of the songs sung in this Church. To be sure, hymns are the main media of conveying the message of the Bible to those members who cannot read for themselves. The following song is about the events that will

²⁹ Interview with Harrison Mwema, Muthua-ini, 23/11/78.

³⁰ AIPCA, Ibuku ria Mahoya "Prayer book", p. 25 (Even other Churches like the PCEA, and the RC, do not offer burial services to non-Christians).

take place on the day of the parousia: (Song 116)

- (2) Many people will hear
The sound of the trumpet
Both the dead and the living
- (3) Those who will hear the sound of the trumpet
The dead will be raised first
Then we shall be transformed.
- (4) The saints will be raised
At the resurrection for life
So that they will go to the place of joy
- (5) The evil doers will be raised
At the resurrection for judgement
So that they will be thrown in the fire.³¹

The ideas of the return of Jesus, the resurrection and judgement leading to rewards and punishment are brought together in this gong. As far as the resurrected bodies are concerned, there are references in the NT which are used as examples. These include the reply that Jesus gave to the Sadducees when he was answering their question on resurrection of the dead, when he said, "when they rise from the dead, men and women do not marry; they are like angels in heaven" (Mk 12:25). This passage is used as a basis for believing that, "the heavenly bodies will be like those of the angels".³² The

³¹ Nyimbo cia Kiroho ("Book of spiritual songs"), Kijabe, Kijabe Press 1979 impression) p. 119.

³² Interview with Paul Karugu, Kiriti, 12/11/78.

appearances of Jesus after his resurrection as recorded in the gospels are also used as an example; due to the fact that Jesus could enter a closed room (Jhn. 20:19-20), it illustrates that he had a spiritual body, and it is such a body that people will have after the resurrection. Paul's views on the resurrected body also confirm the belief in a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15: 35-49).

When discussing the Kikuyu view of death and the afterlife, it was noted that after death, the spirit is called ngoma, which continues to have influence among the members of the family. It was also noted that the term ngoma has become synonymous with Satan, or devil, in the Christian usage. The AIPCA is no exception because its members do not refer to their departed relatives as ngoma. Instead the term used today is mutiga iri (literally, one who has left everything in good order and peace). It implies that one has died in a state of being blessed and leaving blessings to those he left behind. As regards the relationship of the living and the spirits of the dead, the AIPCA members are divided into three groups:

The first group thinks that once a person is dead, the spirit goes "up" and "that is the end of any communication between the deceased and the living".³³ It is only when the other members will die that their spirits will meet. The other chance of seeing each other will be on the day of the parousia when all the dead will be raised and the living

³³ Interview with Rev. J. Ndungu, (Gatumbiro, 16/12/78).

transformed, but this will depend on whether they will be in the same place, either in heaven or in hell. As far as identification is concerned, the parable of Dives and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) is taken as a basis for believing that people will be able to identify the people they knew while they were on earth. The important point, according to this view, is that, "the spirit of the departed person does not come back to the relatives on earth".³⁴ The only relation there is, is in form of prayers when the living members pray for the spirits of the departed to be kept in peace. This means that no sickness or any other problems in the family can be attributed to the spirits of the departed.

The second group believes that the departed person goes "up" after his death. He is not however, completely restricted to that place because "he can appear to his relatives and friends through dreams and visions".³⁵ Like the first group, this group "does not attribute family problems to the spirits of the departed.

The third group believes that although the spirits of the departed may have gone up somewhere, they are not so far away and they continue to take interest in family affairs of those relatives still living. In short, this group maintains the traditional view of the Kikuyu that such problems like sickness or lack of children can be

³⁴ Interview with E. Nyambura, Muthua-ini, 25/11/78.

³⁵ Interview with Rev. P. Ndiritu, Njogu-ini, 11/12/78.

attributed to the spirits of the departed. A problem that this group faces is with the term ngoma cia aciari, literally "parental spirits". As we noted above, the term ngoma has become a bad term and is used to refer to Satan or the devil. As a Christian, therefore, no one would like to accept the idea of the ngoma of his parents, coming back or causing problems in the family. This explains why this view is rarely discussed, for it is considered unchristian to attribute problems to the ancestral spirits.

As long as there are no problems in the family, the ancestral spirits are believed to be "up there"; as soon as problems arise, ancestral spirits are considered to be near. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, especially if it is a matter of life and death, some people go to medicine men to find out which spirit has been offended and the nature of the offence and also what should be done or offered, in order to appease it. As it was noted in Chapter one, however, although the AIPCA allows practices like polygamy and taking of snuff, it condemns the practice of consulting diviner-doctors. If a member is known to have gone to a diviner-doctor, he is suspended from attending the Church, as a disciplinary measure. But despite this stand of the Church, cases were reported in all the five areas where this study was carried out of members having gone to diviner-doctors when there were problems in their families. People usually go to consult diviner-doctors in distant places where they are not known, or if they go to nearby diviner-doctors, they go during the night to ensure a high degree of secrecy.

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³⁶ There is one well known medicine man called Wakabucho, who lives next to Muthua-ini AIPCA.

Among the cases that were given as examples of the nearness of the ancestral spirits, was one whereby a mother was frustrated by her son, so much so that she had to seek aid of her departed husband. She went near the grave of her husband and, calling him by his name, gave all her complaints and then returned home. A few hours later, the son was brought to her mother unconscious and those who brought him said that he had fallen down as he was walking with them.³⁷

The fact that the mother called her dead husband by name shows that, for her the spirit is not far from them. The fact that the son fell sick soon after his mother had complained near the grave, led those who witnessed the incident to conclude that the spirit of the husband had come to her aid in disciplining the disobedient son. What is interesting is that in this case, this woman was not disciplined by Kiriti AIPCA leaders for asking the aid from the departed spirit, a practice which is a traditional Kikuyu practice.³⁸

From what has been said about the relationship of the living and the dead, it can be concluded that as far as the AIPCA members are concerned, there remains a tension in this relationship. There is on the one hand, the attempt of the Church to have the members believe

³⁷ Interview with Sarah Njeri, 12/11/78, Kiriti.

This incident was also reported by other informants in Kiriti village where the incident had taken place.

³⁸ Asking help near a grave, was, however, not very common among the Kikuyu. One diviner doctor (Wanjiro Gathumbi) said some people could seek help of the dead person at the grave.

that the spirits of the dead do not come back to them. On the other hand, the realities of life lead some members to acknowledge the traditional Kikuyu belief of the presence or the coming back of the ancestral spirits for good or evil, to the living relatives. Writing in 1933 concerning this belief, C. Cagnolo observed that:

It is strange to realize that this strong belief in immortality, although denied in their spoken discussions does in fact dominate a great part of their life.³⁹

It was strange for Cagnolo because he was among the early missionaries who did not expect to find Africans who had an idea of life after death. But his words can still be applied in a new setting. Is it not strange that up to the present time the influence of the departed is still acknowledged by some Kikuyu Christians? It may be possible that although the influence of the spirits is denied by many AIPCA Christians in their spoken discussions, as Cagnolo had noted during his time, that even now this belief dominates a great part of the life of these Christians. These AIPCA Christians may not, however, be an exception because this belief is held by others, Christians and non-Christians. As E.B. Idowu has observed, modern sophisticated man may laugh at stories about spirits haunting some places but:

... deep down in the minds of thousands of men, and women of every level of spiritual or intellectual attainment is the belief, at least the persistent notion, that the deceased still have a part to play, for better or for worse in the lives of the living.⁴⁰

³⁹ C. Cagnolo, The Agikuyu (Nyeri: The Mission Printing School, 1933) p. 140.

⁴⁰ E.B. Idowu, African traditional religion, a definition, (London, SCM, 1973) p. 178.

This belief in the nearness of the spirit world and its influence on the living members will be taken up later in this study.

To summarise the points in this chapter, it has been noted that the idea of resurrection was developed at a late period in the Old Testament. The Jews hoped that their former physical bodies would be raised again. In the New Testament, the hope of resurrection is based on the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection is expected to take place on the return of Jesus, when new spiritual bodies will be given to those who will be raised, while those who will be alive will be transformed, so as to have the spiritual bodies. As far as the Kikuyu view is concerned, it was noted that there is no idea of a bodily resurrection from the dead, but they have a strong belief of a continued relationship between the living and the spirit of the dead. The AIPCA members share the hope of resurrection, but during times of family crisis some acknowledge the nearness of the spirits of their departed relatives, a situation which manifests the interplay of the NT and Kikuyu ideas of life after death.

In the following chapter, the question of what will follow after the final judgement, as found in the NT, and as the AIPCA members interpret it, will be discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIFE IN THE WORLD TO COME

(a) Heaven and Hell

In the foregoing chapter, mention was made of the last judgement which will be conducted by Jesus on his return. On the basis of that judgement, the good people will be rewarded while the wicked will be punished. According to Christian belief, the destiny of men in the world to come is thus expressed in terms of heaven and hell. In this chapter, we discuss the way the life in heaven and hell is expressed in the New Testament and the way the AIPCA members understand these eschatological concepts of heaven and hell.

The word heaven has been used in many ways in the Bible. Heaven is the abode of God (Gen. 1:1) and also his throne (Mt. 23:22). In heaven the will of God is done, and the Kingdom of God which was the core of Jesus' teaching comes from heaven (Mt. 6:10). In the NT heaven is regarded as the dwelling place of Jesus with his Father. After his resurrection Jesus ascended into heaven (Act. 1:9). Between his ascension and the parousia, Jesus is to remain in heaven for "he must be received into heaven until the time of universal restoration comes..." (Act 3:21). On the day of the parousia, Jesus will come down from heaven (1 Thess. 1:10) and take with him the faithful believers (1 Thess. 4:16). Heaven

is therefore, not only the home of Jesus but will also be the eschatological home of the Christians.

The word hell has also been used in various ways. Sometimes hell is used to mean the Hebrew sheol, the abode of all the dead. In this case, hell is not a place of punishment. In the NT the Greek form of sheol is hades. Thus, according to the book of Acts, Jesus, after his death and burial descended into hades but "he was not abandoned to Hades", (Act. 2:31, RSV). This means that Jesus did not remain in sheol but was resurrected. The word hell is also called gehenna, the place of torment, where the wicked people will be thrown after the last judgement.

In this study, we shall use the term heaven to mean the place where the faithful believers will go after the last judgement. Similarly, hell will be used to refer to the place where the wicked people will be taken for their punishment.

(b) After-life in heaven and hell

Having discussed the various ways in which the words heaven and hell are used in the Bible, we can now discuss their eschatological significance particularly as they relate to the Christian hope of life in the world to come. In the attempt to express the nature of the after-life, which will be lived either in heaven or in hell, the NT writers used various

symbols¹, some of which we shall examine below.

Heaven is regarded as a country located in the above where Christians are heading as pilgrims:

Those who use such language show plainly that they are looking for a country of their own. If their hearts had been in the country they had left, they could have opportunity to return. Instead, we find them longing for a better country, - I mean the heavenly one. (Heb. 11: 14-15).

Christians are thus longing for the heavenly country where they will live after the parousia.

Another symbol is that of a city. In heaven, there is the holy city of God where the righteous will dwell after their resurrection. Paul, for example, told the Philippians that Christians "are citizens of heaven" (Phil. 3:20). The heavenly city is sometimes identified as the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21: 9-27). Even the earthly Mount Zion, on which the earthly Jerusalem is built, has its counterpart in heaven, as the author of the Apocalypse of John says: "Then I looked, and on Mount Zion stood the Lamb..." (Rev. 14:1).

¹ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, one of the meanings of the word symbol is: "something that stands for, represents or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestion or by some accidental or conventional relation); especially a material object representing or taken to represent something immaterial or abstract, as a being, idea, quality or condition...". In our usage of the term symbol, in this section, we need to bear in mind this definition, which implies that behind the symbol stands a reality which may not always be explicit.

The symbols of city, New Jerusalem and the country above, are locational symbols. They depict heaven as the eschatological abode of the righteous. Other symbols are used to illustrate the reward of the faithful. As Jesus told his disciples during the last supper:²

You are the men
who have stood firmly by me in my time of
trial, and now I vest in you the Kingship
which my father vested in me, you shall
eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom...".
(Lk 22: 29-30).

On another occasion, Jesus spoke of many people who "will come from east and west to feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt. 11:8). What should be noted about these symbols of eating and drinking is that those who dine with the King (Jesus) are thereby accorded a high privilege. Furthermore, the feast takes place in the Kingdom. The act of eating itself then is not the heart of the matter. Rather, it is the fact of "being with Jesus in his kingdom".

Another symbol related to heaven is that of treasure. Jesus taught his followers to "store up treasure in heaven, where there is no moth and no rust to spoil it, nor thieves to break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also" (Mt.5:6) It should be noted that, apart from the security of the treasure in heaven, the emphasis is on the relationship of the treasure and its owner. The owner directs his mind to where his treasure is, namely, heaven.

²The last supper is the last passover feast that Jesus celebrated together with his disciples before his death. (Mk. 14:12-25).

The symbols used for hell are, with no exception, fear-instilling. Hell, or gehenna, is a place of darkness, the place of wailing and grinding of teeth (Mt. 8:12). The most popular symbol for hell is the unquenchable fire (Mk. 9:43, Mt. 18:7-9).

To appreciate the ideas or the reality behind the symbols, "it is necessary to peel away the surrounding husk of ancient language and concept".³ In other words, failure to interpret the reality behind a symbol may cause the message which the biblical writer intended to convey to be missed.⁴ Among the symbols we mentioned in connection with heaven were the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, the heavenly country and paradise (a term also used interchangeably with heaven to mean the destiny of the good people.)⁵

³ J.B. Bauer, ed. Encyclopedia of biblical theology, Vol. I (London: Sheed and Ward, 1970), p. 359.

⁴ Among those who have argued for a re-interpretation of the biblical symbols is Rudolf Bultman. In his article, "New Testament and Mythology", in H.W. Bartsch ed. Kerygma and Myth, translated by R.H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1972), he argues that the world view of the Bible is unintelligible to modern man living in a scientific world. He goes on to say that the Kerygma is incredible to modern man since it is tied up with a language of mythology. His argument, then, is that we should "demythologize" the Kerygma from its mythical framework. Whether one agree or disagree with Bultman's view, there is need to search for the theological insights behind a myth.

⁵ In this discussion, our problem is not on whether heaven and hell exist as places; rather our interest is on what it means "to be in heaven or to be in hell".

These are all locational symbols. They symbolise, however, the heavenly abode where God and man "will live" together. The main idea common to these symbols is the "fellowship" of God and man. To think, therefore, of a city of God or a better heavenly country, without taking into account what "living" in that city or country means, distorts the reality behind the symbols. If we take paradise, for example, it reminds us of the Genesis account, where the first man (Adam) lived with God before his fall (Gen. 2:15). The symbol of an eschatological paradise carries the message of the restitution of the fellowship of God and man.

From our earlier discussion, we noted that the terms heaven and paradise are used interchangeably. In this case heaven can also be regarded as symbolizing a state of relationship or fellowship of man and God, which is made possible by the reconciliatory work of Jesus Christ.⁶ To be in heaven, then, does not mean only to be in a city or country "up there" but also implies the restored and enhanced oneness of redeemed man and God. Such ideas as going into heaven or living in heaven carry the same meaning as being with God in the world to come. Heaven, in this sense, as a state of being, stands for the final, "self-fulfilment of man in God through the transforming power of his love mediated through Christ".⁷

⁶ See J. Macquarrie, Principles of Christian theology (London: SCM Press, 1966), p. 326.

⁷ R. Aldwinkle, Death in the secular city (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1972) p. 120.

Hell, on the other hand, is the opposite of heaven. If heaven symbolizes the final oneness of fellowship of God and man, then hell symbolizes the separation of man from God. Like heaven, hell could be regarded as a state of being and not just a place where God will throw some people for eternal punishment. The symbols such as unquenchable fire or wailing and gnashing of teeth in gehenna symbolize the pain and suffering of man having missed his final goal or destiny, namely, to be with God. The state of alienation from God "involves suffering by that very fact of separation".⁸

To summarise this section, we have argued that heaven and hell are symbols and they illustrate the nature of the after-life, according to Christian beliefs. The same applies to other symbols such as paradise, city, New Jerusalem or a heavenly country. If the ideas behind the symbols are overlooked and the symbols only taken literally, then, the message of the biblical writer is similarly missed or misunderstood. Having argued that heaven should be looked at as symbolizing a state of being in final oneness or fellowship with God, and hell as symbolizing the state of final alienation of man from God, we need to ask the question whether these states of being can be present experiences or they await the return of Christ, when the last judgement will take place. Such discussion leads us into the whole question of the Kingdom of God and the problem of time. We shall turn to this question in the next Chapter. In the meanwhile let us

⁸R. Aldwinkle, Death in the Secular City, p. 116

examine how the AIPCA members have understood the concepts, heaven and hell.

(c) After-life in heaven and hell among the AIPCA members

The Kikuyu world view has important similarities with that found in the Bible. For them, there is matu-ini meaning the place in the sky.⁹ A synonymous term for matu-ini is iguru meaning above. Below the sky lies the world or the earth known as thi. The third division is the underworld, which has no specific name, but as we noted in Chapter three above, the abode of the spirits (ngoma), which is called miri-ini ya mikongoe, is believed to be located in the underworld. As far as the Kikuyu religious beliefs are concerned, heaven is exclusively the abode of God (Ngai), the earth is the abode of the created beings both living and non-living, while the underworld is the abode of the spirits. God and the spirits were also believed to be ubiquitous. The Kikuyu never think of man, whether during his earthly life or after his physical death, going to heaven as his destiny. The Kikuyu view is very similar to the Jewish belief before the idea of resurrection leading to rewards and punishment after the last judgement was developed towards the end of the O.T. period.

⁹ Matu-ini is derived from Matu (which means clouds or the skies) (sing. itu).

As we noted in chapter three, the Kikuyu have no idea of rewards or punishment awaiting a person after death in the world of spirits. They believe that a spirit retains the qualities a person had before he died whether they were good or bad. Thus, the Christian ideas of heaven as a place for rewarding the good people and hell as the place for punishing the bad people after their death, have no counterparts in the Kikuyu religious beliefs. This explains the lack of a name for hell among the Kikuyu. What the AIPCA members believe about heaven and hell is, therefore, derived mostly from the Christian teaching.

The symbols we have discussed above about heaven and hell form the basis on which the after life is conceived by the AIPCA members. The idea of a heavenly city or a New Jerusalem, for example is a popular one, as the hoped for eschatological abode of the faithful Christians. The word city is translated as mucii in Kikuyu.¹⁰ But mucii, apart from meaning a town such as Nairobi or Mombasa or even smaller towns, can also mean a home. Towns are a new phenomenon among the Kikuyus because they did not exist in Kikuyuland before Kenya fell under British Colonial rule. Towns in present day Kenya are important places in various ways. They are the seat of Government headquarters, and also commercial industrial centres. Job opportunities, and particularly white-collar jobs are mainly found in towns. The standard of living in the towns is higher than in the rural areas in Kenya.

Some of the people, especially the old ones living in the rural

¹⁰ See J. Mbiti, New Testament eschatology in an African background (London, Oxford University press 1971) p. 76 where he states similar views among Akamba people.

areas of Kenya, have only visited the small towns in their areas.¹¹ They only hear of the wonders in the city of Nairobi "where people do not cultivate or herd cattle yet they never go hungry".¹² Also, they hear of the big beautiful multi-storied houses and the lighted streets filled with so many vehicles. Having seen or heard about the wonders of the city, the idea of a heavenly city is more intelligible in the sense that such heavenly city is conceived of in a material sense. The city as a symbol becomes an actual city located "up there" in heaven. Such phrases as "to enter, to reach or to arrive" in the city of heaven are used. The city of heaven is, in this case, thought as, "already built by God to await the arrival of the believers."¹³ It is therefore the destiny of the faithful Christians as far as the AIPCA (and other African Christians such as the Akorino and PCEA members are concerned. A few of their hymns will illustrate this point:

Hymn 105:

v. 1 The end of the world has come
For the Saints to be persecuted
And they ascend into the city of heaven

¹¹ Some of the people among whom this study was done have never visited the city of Nairobi.

¹² Interview with John Ngunjiri, Muthua-ini, 28/11/78.

¹³ Interview with Jackson Wanjuki 18/11/78, Kiriti.

Hymn 147;

v.1. We are in the city of holiness
The new Jerusalem
It is a very beautiful city
A city worthy preparing for.

Hymn 208:

v.1 Jerusalem the beautiful city
for which we hope
Twelve gates of the City are now open
For the saints to enter and have rest.

Hymn 349:

v.1 The city of the Lamb is a beautiful city
Built with gold which shines like the sun.
No sinner will enter that city
All sinners will be left outside.¹⁴

The word mucii can also mean a home. It is used in this sense when referring to the individual's abode in heaven. Thus, "once a person's house is complete, God calls the owner to go and occupy it."¹⁵ The belief of a person having a home in heaven is based on the text of John's Gospel where Jesus told his disciples: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me.

¹⁴Nyimbo cia Kiroho, Book of Spiritual Songs", (Kijabe: Kijabe Printing Press, 1979 imp.)

¹⁵Interview with Mrs. Mugutu, 14/11/78. Kiriti.

In my father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" (Jn. 14:1-2 RSV).

According to this view, the city of heaven is comprised of the homes (or rooms) which will be occupied by the faithful after the last judgement.

"There are no houses for the sinners. Since their reward will be in the fire of hell".¹⁶ The following hymns illustrate this view:

Hymn 156

v.1 Each day we boast ourselves
With that city (or village¹⁷) of ours
It is the one being built for us in heaven
Jesus is the builder.

v.s.2 And the houses of that city
Are like gold
They are by far better
Than the houses built by people.

Heaven is also viewed by the AIPCA members as the heavenly country which is, by far, better than any earthly country. To be sure, Kikuyuland, as we saw in Chapter one, is a productive agricultural part of Kenya. To talk of a better country or the heavenly country is not in terms of more rainfall or more food production. Rather, it is

¹⁶ Interview with Rudia Wanjiru, Muthua-ini, 22/11/78.

¹⁷ The term used is itura, which can also mean a village.

in terms of not working on the soil that people view the heavenly country. It is therefore a country like the Garden of Eden, where man will be provided with all his needs by God. In short, a country of no sorrow but rest and joy, as the following verses show:

Hymn 41:

Chorus: We shall be very happy
When we cross the river of death,
And go to heaven,
In the country of the Saints.

Hymn 44:

vs. 6 I ask myself whether I will arrive
The country which I hope for
And I depart from this country of tears
And I go to where there is no tears.¹⁸

The beautiful heavenly country for the righteous has its counterpart, namely "a bad country where Satan and his followers will go after the last judgement and lead a sorrowful and miserable life".¹⁹ The fire of hell is thought of as an actual fire which will be tormenting the sinners eternally.

¹⁸ Nyimbo nia Kiroho, "Book of Spiritual Songs".

¹⁹ Interview with Ezekiel Kabora 10/11/78, Kiriti.
(He believes there are actual places for the good and the bad people in heaven).

From these few examples the AIPCA members view of heaven and hell can be summarised as follows. Heaven and hell, and their associated symbols such as the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, heavenly country are taken literally to mean actual places; hellfire is also understood literally. Christians have their homes built in heaven while unbelievers have the fire of hell awaiting them. When the symbols of the after life are thus taken literally, eternal life becomes a reward in heaven, which will be realized by the faithful people when they arrive in heaven. The Christian, while in this world, is called a mugendi (traveller) who is on a rugendo (journey) to heaven, where his "home" is built, and where he will be rewarded with eternal life as the following verse puts it:

Hymn 22

vs.1. This world has no place to rest
I am a traveller going to heaven
In my heart I have the hope
of a great wealth in heaven.²⁰

The 'journey' to heaven is said to be a difficult one, characterised by wars against Satan and other earthly problems such as diseases, poverty, and hatred from other people. But, if a person perseveres through these difficulties and remains firm in confessing Jesus,

²⁰ Nyimbo cia Kiroho "Book of Spiritual Songs".

then he will be rewarded with eternal life in heaven.

Hymn 44:

vs.8 When I arrive in heaven I will rest
 And live there in joy
 Together with my friends who have ascended.

9. My friends, do not fear
 Even if you are troubled do not fear
 When we arrive in heaven we shall be paid
 for all the wars we have fought.²¹

The AIPCA members' interpretation of the after-life in heaven and hell in geographical terms is not peculiar to them. Other African Christians seem to be giving a similar interpretation. J. Mbiti identified among the Akamba AIC Christians the same type of interpretation of these symbols. For example he noted that they look forward to getting into the heavenly "physical and colossal city hanging up somewhere in the distant heavens, waiting for them to go there just as Nairobi and Mombasa wait for young people to go there when they finish their schooling".²²

The belief of a heavenly country is similarly viewed, from a geographical point of view by the Akamba Christians. To them, "it is exclusively pictured in materialistic terms: fertility, water, singing... with comfortable homes, and secure from sorrows and .

²¹ Nyimbo cia kiroho (Book of Spiritual songs).

²² J. Mbiti, New Testament Eschatology in an African background, (Oxford University Press, 1971) p. 75.

troubles".²³

Thus, it seems that other African Christians also give a literal interpretation to the symbols used in the NT to symbolise the nature of the after-life. The members of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) have hymns which are similar to the ones we have cited above. The following verses illustrate how they also use symbols like country, good home, and a comfortable place when referring to the life to come in heaven.

Hymn 280:

vs. 2. There is a good country
It is for resting
And there is no struggle there
People love each other.

3. There is a good city (home)
Without any problems
And those who are our friends
We shall see them there.

Hymn 319:

vs.4 They will live with Jesus
In a good city (home) of light
They will be given new clothes
When they leave all evils on this earth.

²³J. Mbiti, New Testament Eschatology in an African background
p. 75.

Hymn 323 :

vs. 2. There is a beautiful city in heaven
Where God's children will be taken
It is a home of happiness since it is God's.
Nothing evil will go there.²⁴

We mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter that in order to get the message of the biblical writers, there is need to interpret the symbols they used in expressing the religious ideas about the after-life. We also argued that heaven and hell can be taken as symbols which symbolize either man's full fellowship with God, or his final separation from God respectively. From what we have said about the AIPCA members' view of life in heaven and hell, and their associated symbols like city, country, home, and fire, it seems that these symbols have been taken literally, to mean only actual places located up there where material rewards and punishments await the faithful and the wicked respectively. The communion of fellowship, and the separation of man and God, which are the main ideas of the concepts of heaven, and hell, may easily be overshadowed by such materialistic interpretation of these symbols.

²⁴ Nyimbo cia kuinira' Ngai, "Sikuyu hymn book," (Uzima Press Ltd. Nairobi, 1974). This hymnal is used by other denominations such as the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Methodists.

To think of eternal life as a reward in heaven, which will be enjoyed by the Christians who will finish the "journey to heaven successfully", raises the question as to whether the whole idea of the Kingdom of God has been correctly understood by these Christians. To think of eternal life as a reward in heaven, implies that the Kingdom of God is also found in heaven because the Kingdom and eternal life cannot be divorced from each other. The question of the Kingdom of God and its relation to time will be discussed in the following Chapter.

To summarise what we have said in this Chapter, we have seen that in order to understand the biblical ideas about the after-life, there is need to interpret the various symbols the biblical writers used to express these ideas. Failure to do this, and therefore, to take the symbols literally, leads to a distorted conception about heaven and hell and their associated symbols. To think of heaven and hell as actual places, for example, where material rewards and punishments await the faithful and the wicked tends to overlook the "present" dimension of the Kingdom of God, as preached by Jesus. Furthermore, if we maintain our argument, that heaven and hell can be viewed as symbolizing states of being characterised by the full fellowship or total separation of man from God respectively based on accepting or rejecting Jesus Christ, then, the question arises as to whether such fellowship or separation can be a present reality here and now or awaits the parousia. To this question, we now turn in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND TIME

(a) Some interpretations of the Kingdom

In Chapter two above we noted that the teaching of Jesus was about the Kingdom of God. We also observed that Jesus spoke about the Kingdom of God in two ways. First, he spoke of the Kingdom as "at hand" (Mk. 1:15) and even as "present among his listeners (Lk 11:20). Second, he spoke of the Kingdom of God as "future" event, yet to come (Mk 9:1; 14:25). The tension in Jesus' teaching of a present and a future Kingdom has occasioned an age-old debate among New Testament scholars. The controversy revolves around the relationship of the Kingdom of God and time. In other words, the question can be put thus: "In Jesus' teaching, is the Kingdom of God present or is it yet to come in the future?" In answering this question, the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God has been interpreted in various ways, some of which we need to mention before we look at the AIPCA members' understanding of the Kingdom of God.

For the purpose of our study, however, we need not enter into the details of the debate about the Kingdom of God.¹ Our main

¹See N. Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus. (London: SCM Press 1963); for a summary of the main schools of thought.

interest is to bear in mind some of the main schools of thought when examining the AIPCA members' interpretation of the Kingdom of God.

(i) One school of thought is the one of "consistent or thorough going eschatology."² It is associated mainly with Johanness Weiss and Albert Schweitzer. According to them, the Kingdom of God, as taught by Jesus, was not a present Kingdom but a future Kingdom yet to come. Weiss argued that there are no stages in the coming of the Kingdom, for "either the Kingdom is here or it is not yet here".³ In connection with Mk.14:25, where Jesus said that he would not drink of the fruit of the vine until he drank it anew in the Kingdom of God, Weiss asked "Is stronger proof needed to show that Jesus parted from this life with the painful realization that the Kingdom of God which he had proclaimed to be so near, still had not been established?"⁴ Schweitzer also shared the same view with Weiss, that, in what Jesus did and taught, he was the "Messiah to be" who would return after death and resurrection as the Son of man in glory and only then would he establish the Kingdom of God.⁵ According to this school of thought,

²The term 'Consequent eschatology' is also used. This school of thought emerged in the 1900s under two main scholars, J. Weiss (1892) and A. Schweitzer (1916).

³J. Weiss, Jesus proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Translated by R.H. Hiers and D.L. Hoiland (London: SCM Press 1971). p. 73.

⁴Ibid. p. 84

⁵A Schweitzer, The mystery of the Kingdom, (London: Adam & Charles Black 1956) P.262.

then, the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus remains a wholly future event which will be realized on the return of Jesus.

(ii) A second school of thought is that of "realized eschatology" which is mainly associated with C.H. Dodd. The views of Weiss and Schweitzer about a futurist Kingdom of God did not pass unopposed. Dodd was among those who were not convinced by the way the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom had been interpreted, particularly by Schweitzer. In the preface to his book, The parables of the Kingdom, Dodd said: I found myself unconvinced by his own formula of "consequent eschatologie".⁶ In reacting against the extreme views of a futurist Kingdom, Dodd interpreted the sayings and parables about the Kingdom of God, from a "present" point of view, and he formulated his theory of a "realized eschatology". For Dodd, the Kingdom of God has come in its fullness, in the person and ministry of Jesus. "The eschaton has moved from the future to the present, from the sphere of expectation into that of realized experience".⁷ In Jesus, God has acted once and

⁶C.H. Dodd, The parables of the Kingdom (London: James Misbet & Co. Ltd. 1965 imp.) p. vii. The first book appeared in 1935, in which he put forward his arguments for his theory of a "realized eschatology" meaning that the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus is present.

⁷C.H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom p. 34

for all, the powers of evil are disarmed (Lk.11:20), the power of the Kingdom has been manifested among men (Lk.10:23-24). All that remains is for men to make a decision for or against the Kingdom.

(iii) A third school of thought is that which has identified the one-sidedness of both the schools of futuristic and realized eschatology.⁸ According to this school, there are elements in Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom of God as a present event as well as a future event. This school attempts to find a key to solving the tension between a present and future Kingdom without neglecting any aspect of Jesus' teaching.⁹ J. Jeremias, for example, supports the view that in the coming of Jesus, the Kingdom of God had dawned and would be consummated in the future at the return of Jesus. He used the term "eschatology in the process of realization" in order to accommodate both elements of a present and future Kingdom.¹⁰ A.M. Hunter prefers the term "inaugurated eschatology" to Dodd's "realized eschatology".¹¹ For this school, the

⁸See R. Schanackenburg, "The Kingdom of God", in J.R. Bauer ed. Encyclopedia of Biblical theology (London: Sheed and Ward 1978 imp.) p. 455-470.

⁹For the various supporters of this school, see N. Perrin, The Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus, p. 23-38.

¹⁰J. Jeremias, The parables of Jesus, (London: SCM press, 1947 imp) p.1

¹¹A.M. Hunter, Introduction New Testament Theology (London: SCM Press 1974 imp.) p. 27.

Kingdom of God has made its beginning in the person and ministry of Jesus. but the Kingdom has not been consummated. Hence, the future dimension of the Kingdom of God, will be its consummation which will be realized at the return of Jesus. This school of thought, therefore emphasizes both the present and the future aspects in the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom of God.

Having outlined the various ways the Kingdom of God, as preached by Jesus, has been interpreted, we can now turn to the AIPCA members and see how they understand the Kingdom of God.

(b) The AIPCA members' view of the Kingdom of God

The AIPCA members' understanding of the Kingdom of God can be summarised under three categories. First there is that group which regards the Kingdom of God as a future event. For this group, the Kingdom of God cannot be thought of as being present on earth because it is only in heaven where it will be found. It would therefore be idle talk for a person to speak of "entering" or "seeing" the Kingdom while in this world. The following remarks illustrate this point; "No one can enter the Kingdom of God while in this world"¹². Another respondent put it thus; "No one can enter the Kingdom of God while he is in this world. One has to prepare for it but the fruits of his labour will be seen in heaven".¹³

¹² Interview with Rev. Paul Ndiritu. (Njogu-ini, 11/12/78).

¹³ Interview with Rev. Japhara Wambugu (Kiriti, 11/11/78).

As far as this view of the Kingdom of God is concerned, a Christian has to prepare or work for the Kingdom while he is in this world. It will be only in heaven that those who laboured for the Kingdom during their earthly life, will "enter" or "see" it. The Kingdom of God "is like a dairy cow, which you have to feed first before you can milk it".¹⁴ The Kingdom is, in this sense, both a gift and a task. In this earthly life, a Christian has the task of preparing for the Kingdom. The 'entry' into the Kingdom will be the gift which Christians will receive in heaven. The idea of the Kingdom of God as a future event which will be realized in heaven is also illustrated by the following songs:

Hymn 14:

Chorus: We shall sing hymns there
We shall be very happy when we arrive in heaven.
We shall also see the Kingdom of Jesus,
When we arrive in heaven.

Hymn 65:

vs. 2. The time will come for us to enter
In the Kingdom without end
And we shall see the face of our Father
And the happiness and pleasures of heaven.

¹⁴Interview with Samson Macobi (Kiriti, 17/11/78).

Hymn 137:

vs.3: Those of this world will see
Jesus coming with the Kingdom
At that time all the joys and pleasures
of this world
Will come to an end.

Hymn 151:

vs.1: What are we waiting for in this world
We are waiting to go to another new world
That is where we shall rest
Waiting for the Kingdom of our Father.¹⁵

The second category is of those who think that the Kingdom of God may be present but people cannot know whether they have entered it or not since the last judgement has not yet taken place. It is therefore "difficult for a person to know whether he has entered the Kingdom of God when he is in this world, until he goes into heaven".¹⁶

Strictly speaking, this view does not differ from the first one since even if the Kingdom may be present people cannot know whether they have been chosen for it because the last judgement has not taken place. Both views take the last judgement to be the crucial event during which those chosen for the Kingdom will "enter" the Kingdom. If a person will know whether he will be a citizen of the Kingdom of God only after the last judgement, then it follows that the Kingdom remains a future event to be hoped for by the Christians.

¹⁵ Nyimbo cia Kiroho "Book of Spiritual Songs".

¹⁶ Interview with Rebecca Nyaguthii (Muthua-ini, 21/11/78).

The third category is of those who believe that the Kingdom of God is already here. "Those who have accepted Jesus as their saviour are regarded as having begun their life in the Kingdom of God here and now".¹⁷ For this group, then, what remains is the realization of the fullness of the eternal life when Christ returns during his second coming.

This view is in line with the third school of thought discussed above. It considers the Kingdom of God as already inaugurated and awaits the consummation. The AIPCA members who share this view have the right approach to the NT eschatology. They do incorporate the two dimensions of the presence and future aspects of the Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus. For those who have accepted Jesus, they have already started to share in the life of the Kingdom. "Eternal life begins when a person proclaims Jesus as his saviour".¹⁸

At this point, we should mention that in the AIPCA catechism, there is an article which, although it relates to the Sacrament of Baptism, is relevant to our present discussion. The article explains the significance of the Sacrament of Baptism and runs thus:

RITWA RIAKU RIA UKRISTIANO NI RIRIKU?

Ritwa riakwa ria ukristiano ni "N" kana "M".

¹⁷ Interview with Bishop Mureithi 10/8/81 (Nakuru)

¹⁸ Interview with E. Mugo 16/8/81. (Kiriti)

WAHEIRWO RITWA RIU NUU?

Ndaheirwo ritwa riu ni arugamiriri
akwa, hindi iria ndabatithirio,
na ngitherio kuuma wihia-ini wa nduire.
Na atiriri, ni hindi iyo ndatuikire
Kiiga gia Kristo, na no hindi iyo ndagairwo
uthamaki wa iguru.¹⁹

Literally this article runs thus:

WHAT IS YOUR CHRISTIAN NAME?

My Christian name is "N" or "M".

WHO GAVE YOU THAT NAME?

I was given that name by my God-parents when I was
baptized, and cleansed from the original sin. It
was at that time that I became a part of (the body of)
Christ and also it was at that time that I inherited
(or was given) the Kingdom of heaven.

We are particularly interested in the last sentence of this
article; "It was at that time that I inherited (or I was given) the
Kingdom of heaven". The term ndagairwo is derived from the word

¹⁹Gategithimo ga Kirira gia African Independent Pentecostal
Church of Africa, ("The Catechism of the teaching of the AIPCA")
(Karatina: Karatina Printing Press 1970. p. 8.

kugaya, meaning to inherit.²⁰ The term ndagairwo, as used here, means "I was given as inheritance" the Kingdom of God at my baptism. What is important to note is that this word ndagairwo is in the past tense, and therefore it refers to an event that occurred in the past. In other words, a baptized person "was given" or "inherited" the Kingdom of God at the time he was baptized. According to this argument, the Kingdom of God is 'present' because it would be contradictory to speak of having inherited or having been given at one's baptism, that which is non-existent.

Although the catechism teaches the Kingdom of God as present, we observed above that some of the AIPCA members mainly understand the Kingdom as a future event, which will be seen only in heaven. There is therefore, a tension between what is taught, on the one hand, and what the people actually think about the Kingdom of God, on the other hand. The following reasons may help to explain this tension.

(i) One of the reasons why the Kingdom of God is considered to be a future event seems to be the way it is interpreted. The whole idea of

²⁰In Chapter One we noted that one of the Kikuyu names of God is Ngai, (the great divider) and is derived from the word Kugaya, (to divide).

"entering" or "seeing" the Kingdom implies a "realm" or "territory" where God rules as the King. Such a spatial conception of the Kingdom is similar to what we said in chapter four about the materialistic interpretation of such concepts like heaven, and hell. When the Kingdom of God is interpreted as a place in heaven where the chosen will go, it becomes difficult to think of the Kingdom as present on earth.

(ii) A second reason is the belief in a last judgement. The last judgement is understood in legal terms. Thus, as in the law courts, a person will be declared a citizen or a non-citizen of the Kingdom of God, depending on his earthly conduct. Since it is believed that the last judgement will take place after the parousia, it is only after that, that the blessed will enter the Kingdom.

(iii) A third reason follows from what we observed in Chapter four about eternal life as the reward which Christians hope to be given on arrival in heaven. The idea of eternal life, as the life without end which will be lived in the Kingdom of God, is opposed to the life in this world which is characterized by such difficulties as diseases, wars and death. In short, it seems that the superiority accorded to heaven as the eschatological home and the resting place for Christians makes it difficult to conceive this world as a possible place where such rewards as eternal life and Kingdom of God can be realized. A Christian

in this world is, therefore, a pilgrim, heading to heaven where he hopes to enter the Kingdom of God and have eternal life free from suffering, sorrow and death after the last judgement.

The tendency to think of the Kingdom of God as a "realm" or "territory" in heaven leads to a one sided interpretation of the whole concept of the Kingdom. We noted at the beginning of this Chapter that in Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God, both the "present" and "future" aspects of the Kingdom occur throughout. The present dimension of the Kingdom seems to be put aside, as far as some AIFCA members' interpretation of the Kingdom is concerned.²¹ Their catechism however teaches the Kingdom as present. Through baptism, a person accepts Jesus and by making this very decision, he has got hold of eternal life (Jhn. 3:15, 18). If eternal life, the life which will be lived in the Kingdom, can be experienced here on earth, then, one can also talk of experiencing the rule of God or the Kingdom of God, here on earth, and waits for the consummation or the full manifestation of God's rule at the return of Christ, on the day of the parousia.

²¹This one sided interpretation is not peculiar to the AIFCA members. J. Mbiti, observed that the eschatology taught by the AIC: in Ukambani is "exclusively futurist". (New Testament eschatology p. 60)

(c) Dating the Parousia

In this study, we have made many references to the Parousia, or the return of Jesus. According to Christian belief, the parousia is of great importance since it will be the occasion of fulfilment of such hopes as the resurrection of the dead,²² and rewards and punishment of the faithful and the wicked, respectively. In the light of the importance of the parousia, the question of when it will take place remains a central one particularly in a discussion on eschatology like this one.

In his teaching about the Kingdom of God, Jesus declined from giving a date of his return in glory. According to the Olivet discourse in Mk. 13, he warned his disciples that the rise of false messiahs, international wars and earthquakes would not be a sign of the end itself; rather it would be a beginning of the events marking the end. These events would indicate that the Son of Man is about to return although the precise time of his return remains unknown, as Jesus said: "But about that day or that hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son, only the Father (Mk.13:32)

²² See Chapter Four above where the theme of resurrection of the dead is discussed.

In his teaching , Jesus emphasized the need for watchfulness, for the Son of Man can come at any time, like a thief in the night (Mt. 24: 42-43), or like a master returning from a journey at any time of the night (Mk. 13: 33-37). The parable of the ten virgins stresses the need to remain prepared all the time (Mt. 25: 1-13). When the disciples asked Jesus whether it was time for him to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel, he replied, "It is not for you to know about dates or times which the Father has set within his own control... But you will receive power... and you will bear witness for me in Jerusalem, and all over Judaea...". (Act. 1:68)

A similar warning was re-echoed by St. Paul to Thessalonians. After assuring them that Jesus would return soon (1 Thess. 4:13, 18) he, however, cautioned them not to be over concerned with the date of the parousia. As he put it, "But you, my friends, are not in the dark, that the day should overtake you like a thief" (1 Thess. 5:4-6).

The question of the time of the parousia was raised in the early Church by some of the new converts, who were troubled by the delay of the promised return of Jesus. The writer of II Peter addressed himself to this question. He reminded the believers that they should not forget that, "with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like a day" (II Pet. 3:8). The writer explained of God's mercy in order to give men more time to repent (II Pet. 3:9). Like Jesus and Paul, the writer declined from giving a date or a day for the parousia. As he

puts it, "But the Day of the Lord will come, it will come unexpected as a thief", (II Pet. 3:10).

Although the AIPCA members do not speculate on the day or date of the parousia, they do, however, believe that some of the preceding signs, as foretold by Jesus, have been seen. A few examples will illustrate this point. The signs from nature which are mostly mentioned include earthquakes and the eclipses of the sun and moon. Among the old people, they particularly recall an earthquake which occurred in 1928 that was of greater intensity than any other that has occurred since in the area. One respondent recalling that earthquake as one of the seen signs said, "We had gone for night prayers. We left for our homes at about 10 p.m. There occurred a great earthquake which shook the houses up and down".²³ Other signs such as eclipses of the sun and moon have been seen. The latest notable eclipse of the sun was in 1972. With such texts as Mt. 24:29 and Mk. 13:24, these natural phenomena are understood as part of the fulfilment of what Jesus said about the last days before the parousia.

The predictions of Jesus about the social crisis in the last days before his return are also considered by the AIPCA members as already partially fulfilled. For example, the increase of wars between nations is interpreted as the fulfilment of the words of Jesus that, "... nation will make war upon nation, kingdom upon

²³ Interview with Samuel Kamunya (Muthua-ini 26/11/78.)

kingdom...", (Mk. 13:8). The Second World War (1939-1945) and the Mau Mau war for political independence in Kenya, which lasted between 1952 and 1956, is seen as a case in point. It shows that even in their own home country wars have been fought. During the Mau Mau crisis, there occurred one type of family problems that the Kikuyu people had not encountered before. The oath to unify the Kikuyus had led to the division of the Kikuyus into two groups, namely, a pro-Mau Mau group and a pro-colonial Government group (loyalists). Those who had not taken the oath of unity were regarded as traitors of the people. Some people denied their relatives if they refused to take the oath of unity. There was also the practice by some of the loyalists of taking the property of their relatives who had gone into the forests as Mau Mau fighters.²⁴ We noted in Chapter two that the AIPCA was banned during the Mau Mau crisis on the grounds that it was supporting the Mau Mau movement. These social problems, which are still remembered especially by those who fell victims, are regarded at least partially as the fulfilment of Jesus' predictions about the last days.

The mushrooming of Christian sects has also been viewed as a sign of the last days.²⁵ Each of the rising sects claims to be

²⁴ Interview with Cornelius Kinyanjohi, an ex Mau Mau fighter, Kabaga 23/12/78.

²⁵ The AIPCA members regard their Church together with the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK or Anglican), the Consolata Catholic Mission (CCM) and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) as the Old Churches in the area. Others such as the Jehovah's Witness, the Akorino, the Full Gospel (Kibiritika), to name just a few, are considered to be new sects in the area.

the true Church of Christ, a phenomenon which is interpreted in the light of Jesus' warning about the rise of false messiahs (Mk.13: 5-6).²⁶

On top of the signs that we have so far mentioned, there is a Pauline text which is referred to quite often by the AIPCA members in showing that the end-time has come. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul warned him of what he should expect of the last days. As he wrote:

You must face the fact: the final age of this world is to be a time of troubles. Men will love nothing but money and self. They will be arrogant; boastful and abusive; with no respect for parents, no gratitude, no piety, no natural affection, they will be implacable in their hatreds, scandal-mongers, intemperate and fierce, strangers to all goodness, traitors, adventurers, swollen with self-importance. They will, be men who put pleasure in the place of God, men who preserve the outward form of religion but are a standing denial of its reality. (11 Tim. 3: 1-5)²⁷

²⁶ Among the questions that I was asked during my field research was, "Are you coming to introduce the teachings of a new sect?" This implies that there has been others before me to these people with the intention of winning them for their sects.

²⁷ On three occasions, I was given the Kikuyu Bible and asked to read this passage for myself.

This passage mentions many things which are happening today in many societies. These include cases of robbery with violence, disrespect of the old people by the youth, the refusal of some people to accept Christianity, the backsliding of some believers and the struggle for material wealth. The increase of technological knowledge and particularly the attempt of scientists to explore the other planets and the moon, is also regarded as part of the fulfilment of the biblical predictions of the last days. Whatever is taking place in the society or in nature is therefore not by accident, for, "all these signs and the evil which we are seeing is not the will of the people. It is because the promises of Jesus are being fulfilled now".²⁸ Thus, "signs of the end-time have been seen. It is only the return of Christ in glory which is remaining".²⁹

Some of the songs also emphasize the fact that signs which were predicted by Jesus to be seen before his return, have been seen. The time we are living in is therefore the end-time and Jesus is about to return. The following verses will illustrate this point:

Hymn 5:

vs. 3. The days of the end are only these we are
 living in.
 A wise man should know that the Holy Spirit
 is about to ascend.

²⁸Interview with Sarah Njeri (Kiriti, 12/11/78)

²⁹Interview with Evan Gicuhi (Muthua-ini 21/11/78).

4. Signs have been seen, we are waiting
for the Lord
And the sound of the horn,
the spirit is about to ascend.

Hymn 123:

- Vs 1. The Saviour is near,
And he is the one who died for us,
He will gather his chosen people
Near, Jesus is near
He is near at the door
He will come, he will come,
He is standing at the door.

2. Signs have shown us
That he is near
And those whose names are written
in heaven,
Are waiting for him.

Hymn 136:

- vs. 1. The end of the world has come,
Because of the increased evil
From the people of the world
Of all the nations.

Hymn 326:

- vs. 1. This is the time of the end,
In the days of the end,
People will deny God
They will love the joys of this world. ³⁰

According to the AIPCA members, the signs preceding the parousia have been seen (or are being seen), and therefore, this time is the end-time. The day of Jesus' return may not be known, but since the signs have been seen, that day is not far. This belief in the nearness of the return of Christ calls for the need of the people to be prepared, so that when Christ comes they will go with him.

As already stated earlier in this Chapter, the nearness of the parousia as held by the AIPCA members is not peculiar to them.

J. Mbiti, for instance, observed a similar belief among the Akamba Christians of the Africa Inland Church (AIC) Christians. They believe that the return of Jesus, is very near because the signs preceding the return have been seen. Among the signs mentioned include famines, rumours of wars, earthquakes and the increase of knowledge. The same texts used by the AIPCA members as evidence for the imminence of the parousia, such as I Thess. 4:16, II Tim. 3:1-5, II Peter 3:3-4, Mk. 13 and the book of Revelation are also used by the Akamba Christians of the Africa Inland Church (AIC).³¹

In concluding this Chapter, we have observed that Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God has been interpreted by Christians generally, mainly in three ways. First, there are those who emphasize the futurity of the Kingdom (consistent eschatology). Second, there are those who emphasize the presence of the Kingdom (realized eschatology).

³¹ J. Mbiti, New Testament Eschatology p. 53

Finally, there are those who hold on the two aspects of the Kingdom (inaugurated eschatology).

As far as the AIPCA members are concerned, they fall into two categories in their interpretation. There are some who lay emphasis on the future aspect of the Kingdom. These are in line with the "consistent eschatology" school of thought, and also the Akamba AIC Christians. The main reasons for viewing the Kingdom as a future event have been noted.

The second category are those members who believe that they have already started enjoying a foretaste of the life of the Kingdom here and now. The basis for their belief is that salvation starts when a person proclaims Jesus as his saviour. According to this group, all what they are waiting for is the consummation of the Kingdom when the fullness of life in Christ will be realized. This group is in line with the "inaugurated eschatology" school of thought, which seems to the author to be in agreement with the NT teaching about the Kingdom of God.

We also noted that the AIPCA members, like the Akamba AIC Christians, regard the present time as the end-time. The basis for this belief is that the signs mentioned in the Bible which will precede the return of Christ, have been seen. Hence, this is the time for decision making, either for or against Christ and to be ready and watchful because the end of the world is at hand.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters, we have surveyed how the AIPCA members interpret the New Testament concept of eschatology, or the belief that the present world order will come to an end and a new and radically different order will be established in its place. In this last Chapter we shall summarise the conclusions arising from the findings of this study.

The NT teaching, on the coming end of the present world order is based on the OT, which, as we saw in Chapter Three, developed very slowly in the Jewish history. According to the NT teaching, the signs of end time have come. God has fulfilled what he had said through the prophets in the OT. The Messiah, who is Jesus, has come and proclaimed the Kingdom of God among men. All that remains is his return in glory to consummate his work. On that day of his return, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgement followed by rewards and punishment for the faithful and the wicked people respectively will take place.

As far as the AIPCA members are concerned, they do believe in the coming end of the present world order and the establishment of a new order in heaven. We noted in Chapter three that the Kikuyu, like other African peoples (such as the Akamba studied by J. Mbiti) had no belief in a coming end of the present

world order. What they knew was the end of a person's physical life in this world. Thus the belief in a better world to come or heaven (for the faithful Christians) and a worse world or hell (for the wicked people) as held by the AIPCA members and other Christians, is a result of the teachings of Christianity. This teaching goes farther than the Kikuyu view of the destiny of man. While the Kikuyu's (and other Africans') destiny of man is to become a spirit and continue living in the world of spirits, for Christianity the destiny of man is to be re-united (be-at-one) with God in heaven.

This hope of being together with God plays an important part in the understanding of eschatology among the AIPCA members. To them; those who will go to heaven will see God physically, having been cleansed of all their sins during the time they were followers of Jesus before they died. This belief is not peculiar to AIPCA Christians as other Christians of other denominations also share a similar hope.

The question of what becomes of a person between death and the day of resurrection remains a perplexing one among the Protestant Christians generally. One wishes that the NT would offer an answer out it does not. The problem is whether a person goes to "heaven" or "hell" soon after death or awaits the day of the parousia, when the resurrection and the last judgement will take place. It should

be noted that during burial ceremonies the AIPCA (and other Christians) express their hope and prayers that the dead person, especially if according to them he was a faithful Christian, goes to heaven and be with God straight away. The question of the last judgement during the parousia, when faithful Christians will be with God seems to be put aside during the burial.

We noted that although the AIPCA members believe that the spirits of the dead go "up" there, yet during times of crisis in the family, the spirits are regarded by some to be among their living relatives. Such family problems include diseases and lack of children. The Christian belief in the spirits of the dead ascending up after death and not coming back to earth has not displaced, at least for some AIPCA members, the Kikuyu belief in a continued relationship between the dead and the living. The spirits of the dead are believed by some AIPCA members to be responsible for some problems in the family.

It seems to the author that the Kikuyu belief in a continued relationship between the living and the dead, (a belief found among most African peoples) could be made a basis for the teaching of the Christian doctrine of "Communion of the Saints". Dead Christians would not then be seen as having gone to an excluded abode of their own "up there". They would be seen as

actively involved in the affairs of the community of Christians (both living and dead) waiting for the return of their Lord Jesus.

From our study, we noted that some members of the AIPCA think of the Kingdom of God as a future event. The main reason is the fact that they think of the Kingdom from a materialistic point of view. Hence, one cannot talk of being in a Kingdom which is not seen now. Thus, the Christians will see the Kingdom when they go to heaven, but not when they are in this world. Life in this world is a preparatory stage during which a person makes the decision or labours for the Kingdom of God. The fruits of the labour, remain to be enjoyed in heaven after the parousia.

Apart from the spatial conception of the Kingdom, there is the tendency to interpret the various symbols related to the Kingdom of God from a materialistic point of view. Such symbols as a New City of Jerusalem, a heavenly country or the judgement seat, when taken only from a literal point of view, lead to a conclusion which supports a futuristic view of the Kingdom. It would be difficult for instance, to speak of having seen the Kingdom when in this world while one has not yet faced the final judgement or seen the New Jerusalem. This is the argument that some of the AIPCA members raise in supporting the view that the Kingdom will be seen in heaven.

The materialistic conception of the Kingdom raises a

theological issue. The Kingdom of God, as found in the NT does not refer to a territory over which God is the King. It refers to God's rule or reign among men. A Christian, (a follower of Christ) is one who has accepted Jesus as his saviour and continually tries to follow his example of fulfilling the will of God. In other words, a Christian is under God's rule in the sense that he tries with the help of Christ or the Holy Spirit, to live according to the teaching of Jesus. In this sense, a Christian has already made a start of the life in the Kingdom of God because he has begun to do the will of God while he is in this world.

In Saint John's Gospel, which is a theological reflection on Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom, John equates the Kingdom with 'eternal life'. For John, the eternal life is available here and now. All that a person needs to do is to make his decision for or against Jesus. The decision thus made is tantamount to a judgement; for to accept Jesus is to have eternal life and to reject him is to lose the eternal life (Jn. 5:24-25).

In the teaching of St. Paul, a person who has been baptised in the name of Jesus has died and risen with Jesus and walks "in the newness of life". (Rom. 6:1-5). For Paul and John then, Christians have a foretaste of the eternal life here and now. A few of the AIPCA members share this view, that they are already enjoying the Kingdom of God partially now by having been born anew through baptism and accepting Jesus as their saviour. But for the majority

of the AIPCA members eternal life will be experienced by the faithful Christians, when they arrive in heaven. The main reason for this view is the hard fact of physical death which both good and bad people face while in this world. The AIPCA members are not the only ones holding this futuristic view. As we observed, the Akamba AIC Christians also hold to a futuristic eschatology. Other African Christians could also be holding a similar belief.

While most AIPCA members think of the Kingdom and eternal life as future phenomena, they do however, lay emphasis on the nearness of the parousia. To them, just like the Akamba Christians, the signs of the end-time have been seen and are still being seen. Hence, all that remains is the day of the return of Jesus.

Future Outlook

There is much discussion about making the gospel message relevant to the Africans today.¹ This presupposes that the way the Gospel message has been presented to the Africans by the Western Missionaries has been faulty. The Christianity that was brought to Africa during the 19th century was mixed up with the Western culture.²

¹ See for instance, K.Y. Best, African Challenge, (Nairobi: Trans-Africa Publishers, 1975), Chapters One and two.

² In Chapter One, we observed for example how the term githomo was understood by the Kikuyu to mean both the Church services and the formal school education.

The Africans' cultural background was condemned and it was demanded of them that they must renounce much of their traditional religion and take up the teaching of Christianity. As A. Shorter has stated what is required today is:

.... to discover those values and life-situations in contemporary African societies which can form a basis and a framework for ...developing an African Christianity, a Christianity relevant to Africans.³

Such Christianity relevant to Africans can be achieved by interpreting the biblical message from the Africans' past and present backgrounds.

From our study of the AIPCA in Chapter One, we noted that one of the aims of founding this Church was to have a Church where its members could practise Christianity without forfeiting all their cultural heritage. There are many other independent Churches which have been formed with similar aims.⁴

These independent Churches could be laying the foundation for the future development of an African Christian theology.⁵ This calls

³A. Shorter, African culture and the Christian Church (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1973) p.2.

⁴See, D.B. Barrett. Schism and renewal in Africa. p. 166.

⁵The term African Christian Theology has been used widely by African theologians. Although its definition has not been clearly stated it points to an interpretation of the scriptures and the Christian doctrines from the Africans' point of view and cultural background in order to make the biblical message more intelligible and relevant to them. (For more information on African Christian Theology; See K.Appiah-Kubi and S. Torres, ed. African theology sprouts. (New York: Orbis Books, 1979).

for more research work in the way these Churches interpret the Scriptures. It is out of such studies that a comparative analysis can be carried out to discover how different Churches in Africa interpret the Scriptures.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE USED DURING THE FIELD-WORK

Section A. - ON DEATH

1. What does the death of a person mean to you?
2. What are your feelings towards the death of (a) a Christian?
(b) a non-Christian?
3. Is there any death that you can consider to be good? (If yes, give reasons).
4. Is there any death which you can consider to be a punishment from God?
5. Does this Church offer burial services to non-Christians? (If no, why?).
6. What would you say in connection with the following Kikuyu beliefs?
 - (a) That the parental ancestral spirits can cause the death of a person if they are neglected.
 - (b) That a medicine-man can give a causal-explanation of the death of a person.
7. Do you think contact with a corpse of a relative entails any uncleanness?
8. What is your attitude towards walking on a grave or near a graveyard?

SECTION B - THE END OF THE WORLD

9. Do you believe that the world will come to an end? (Give reasons for believing or not believing).
10. When is this end of the world expected to come?
11. What do you think will be the nature of the end of the world?

12. Are there any signs to show that the last things preceding the end of the world, have appeared? (name some of the signs if any).
13. Is there anything that the Christians can do in order to hasten the coming end of the world?
14. What do you understand by the term "Kingdom of God?"
15. Has the Kingdom of God come or will it come after the end of the world? (Give reasons).
16. Can a Christian enjoy the life of the Kingdom of God while he is in this world?

SECTION C . - LIFE AFTER DEATH AND THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

17. What is your hope in the face of the coming end of the world?
18. Do you believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead? (Give reasons).
19. What form do you think the resurrected lot will have?
20. Do you expect to see people like Abraham, Isaac, Peter and Paul in heaven?
21. Do you hope to see the Kikuyu ancestors such as Gikuyu and Mumbi, during the resurrection?
22. What are your hopes concerning the life to come, as a Christian?
23. What happens to a person between death and the time of the return of Christ?
24. Are the curses of parents effective nowadays after the parents die? (If yes, show in what ways).
25. Do you think the spirits (Ngoma) are still active among the Kikuyu?
26. What can a person do in order to avoid the Last judgement?
27. Do you think there is any communication between those Christians who have died and those who are living?

28. Once a person is baptized, does he automatically become a potential participant in the Kingdom of God?
29. Can a person face his punishment for evils done while on this world or has he to wait till after the Last judgement?
30. Can material wealth be an obstacle to a person's entry into the Kingdom of God?

SECTION D. - HEAVEN AND HELL

31. What do you understand by the terms heaven and hell?
32. Where do you think heaven and hell are? Give reasons.
33. What do you think is the nature of heaven and hell?
34. Can one talk of experiencing heaven or hell here in this world?
 - (i) If yes , give reasons.
 - (ii) If no, give reasons.
35. Is there any relationship between the Kingdom of God and heaven?
36. What would you say are the main differences between heaven and hell?

(a) KIRITI .

APPENDIX IIBACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE INFORMANTS

NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	OCCUPATION
1. Arch. Bishop B. Kahihia	66	Std. 5	1 ¹	Archbishop of AIPCA
2. Elijah Gakuu	Over 80	" 4	2	Peasant/Church elder
3. Ezekiel Kabora	" 80	" 4	2	Peasant/Church elder
4. Paul Karugu	59	" 3	1	Peasant
5. John Kimotho	70	" 2	2	Peasant
6. Elijah Kibe	72	" 2	1	Peasant
7. Rev. Johana Wambugu	75	" 3	1	Priest & Peasant
8. Jackson Wanjuki	60	" 6	1	Teacher
9. John Wamunjiri	57	" 3	1	Peasant
10. Samson Machohi	70	" 4	1	A retired sub-chief

¹ Indicates one wife and² indicates 2 wives

	NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	OCCUPATION
11.	Solomon Gathura	65	Std. 1	1	Peasant
12.	Sarah Njeri	53	illiterate	1	Housewife
13.	Grace Wahito	56	"	1	Housewife
14.	Mary W, Muguto	36	Form 2	1	Family Planning Adviser
15.	Ruth W. Ndiritu	45	Std. 4	1	Housewife
16.	Anna Mugutu	60	Std. 2	1	Housewife
17.	Eunice N. Harman	36	Std. 5	1	Housewife
18.	Rev. Micheck Waciuri	Over 80	Std. 2	1	Priest/peasant
19.	Rev. J. Wanjuki	40	Form 2	1	Priest/peasant
20.	Elijah Muriithi	30	Form 4	1	Teacher/priest

(b) MUTHUA-INI

NAME	AGE IN YRS
21. Evan Gichuhi	71
22. Rudia Wanjiru	50
23. Mrs. A. Gikonyo	65
24. Joseph Ndirangu	40
25. John Gitahi	60
26. Willy Mathu	60
27. Francis Kaboci	70
28. Amos Matherge	48
29. Rebbecca Nyaguthii	56
30. David Ndiangui	42

EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	OCCUPATION
Std. 3	1	Sub-chief
" 1	1	- Housewife
" 1	1	- Member of Church Committee Housewife
" 7	1	Peasant
" 3	1	"
" 3	2	"
" 1	2	"
" 6	1	Secretary of the Church
" 1	1	Housewife
" 4	1	Chairman of Church Committee/ Peasant

NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION
31. Peter Wachira	60	Std. 8
32. Johnson Ngunjiri	72	" 3
33. Hemdan Mathenge	35	" 7
34. Paul Materu	20	Form 4
35. Charles Wambugu	17	Form 3
36. Harrison Mwema	Over 80	Std. 1
37. Samuel Kamunya	67	" 3
38. Rahab Njoki	54	illiterate
39. Priscilla Wanjiru	35	Std. 6
40. Elizabeth Nyambura	40	Std. 7

MARITAL STATUS

OCCUPATION

2	Teacher
1	Church Treasurer
1	Peasant
single	Student
"	"
2	Peasant
1	Peasant
1	Housewife
1	"
1	"

(c) GATUMBIRO

NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION
41. Rev. John Ndungu	60	Std. 6
42. Elsaphan Wandere	75	" 2
43. Jesan Gitahi	60	" 4
44. Keren Nyiha	50	" 1
45. Phrutuna Gatuku	35	" 4
46. Dedan Ndiritu	65	" 6
47. Moses Wachira	70	illiterate
48. Peter Ngatia	60	Std. 3
49. Bernard Kinyanjui	65	Std. 1
50. Raban Matiru	19	Form 3

MARITAL STATUS

OCCUPATION

1	Arch deacon
1	Peasant
1	Carpenter
1	Housewife
1	Housewife
1	Teacher
2	Peasant
1	Peasant
1	Peasant
single	Student

NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION
51. Joseph Ndiritu	16	Form 2
52. Joshua Wachira	70	Std. 1
53. John Ndungu	35	Form 2
54. George Matiru	Over 80	Std. 1
55. Mary Wambui	50	illiterate
56. Miriam Nyambura	60	Std. 2
57. Leah Njoki	40	Std. 5
58. Peter Ndirangu	64	Std. 2
59. Rebecca Wanjugu	55	Std. 1
60. Ruth Wambui	60	Std. 1

MARITAL STATUS

OCCUPATION

single

Student

2

Peasant

1

Teacher

2

Peasant

1

Housewife

1

Housewife

1

Housewife

1

Peasant

1

Housewife

1

Housewife

NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION
61. PAUL NDIRITU	35	Form 2
62. Charles Wamuhito	65	Std. 1
63. Philip Wairuhi	70	" 2
64. Grace W. Gichohi	60	" 1
65. Dorcas Wangechi	40	illiterate
66. Miriam Watetu	35	Std. 4
67. Lea Wangechi	65	illiterate
68. Samuel Kabara	75	Std. 2
69. Epherene Wanjira	40	Std. 1
70. John Kimondo	70	Std. 2

MARITAL STATUS

OCCUPATION

single

Priest/peasant

1

Church elder/peasant

2

Peasant

1

Housewife

1

"

single

Housewife

1

Housewife

1

Church elder/peasant

2

Housewife

1

Peasant

NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	OCCUPATION
71. Samuel Muruthi	60	Std. 4	1	Peasant
72. Jane W. Wamuhito	75	Std. 3	1	Church elder/Peasant
73. Maritha Njoki	40	Std. 2	1	Housewife
74. Isaac Murage	72	Std. 1	1	Peasant
75. Zakayo Nderui	70	Std. 2	1	Peasant
76. Rahab Nyawira	40	Std. 4	1	Housewife
77. Peter Gitahi	17	Form III	single	Student
78. Esther Kabatha	52	illiterate	1	Housewife
79. Paul Wandemi	60	Std. 2	1	Peasant
80. Moses Ndiritu	45	Std. 8	1	Peasant

(e) KABAGE

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NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	OCCUPATION
81. Ezekiel Ndiritu	50	Std. 5	1	Priest/peasant
82. Isaiah Kirathe	70	Std. 2	1	Peasant
83. Simon Mwaniki	45	Std. 6	1	Forest Dept. employee
84. Jeseo Kamau	55	Std. 3	2	"/Church elder
85. David Karimi	57	Std. 1	1	"
86. Jeremiah Karanja	75	Std. 2	1	Peasant/Church elder
87. Jane Wakarima	35	illiterate	1	House-wife
88. Jane Muthoni	40	"	1	Housewife
89. Jerioth Nyawira	46	Std. 7	1	"
90. Michael Murage	35	Std. 8	1	Forest Dept. Employee

NAME	AGE IN YRS	EDUCATION
91. Naftali Mwangi	30	Std. 7
92. Joyce Nyagatare	45	illiterate
93. Jacob Kimondo	75	Std. 2
94. Mary Wanaiyu	60	illiterate
95. Lea Njanja	55	illiterate
96. Rahab Wanjuku	40	Std. 3
97. John Mathenge	65	Std. 1
98. Eunice Nyambura	50	illiterate
99. Abraham Ndungu	70	Std. 2
100. Peter Thumbi	35	Std. 6
101 Esther Wangari	40	Std. 7

MARITAL STATUS

OCCUPATION

1	Forest Dept. employee
2	Housewife
2	Peasant
2	Housewife
2	"
1	"
1	Peasant
1	Housewife
2	Peasant
single	Forest Dept. employee
1	Housewife